

Inspection of St Francis Xavier's Primary School

Venns Lane, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 1DT

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive, succeed and love being at school. This is shown in their regular attendance and exceptional attitudes to learning. They flourish socially, academically and emotionally due to the excellent standard of education and nurture that they receive.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are mature, polite and well mannered. They demonstrate high levels of care and consideration for each other and are very respectful to staff and visitors. Pupils say bullying is rare and dealt with effectively if it happens. They feel safe and are confident to report any concerns to staff.

Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils. They have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know, do and remember. The cleverly devised acronym 'ROCKS' (Remember Our Curriculum Knowledge and Skills) acts as a basis for teachers' planning and pupils' learning.

Pupils relish the exciting opportunities offered. Visits to the school's 'immersion room' provides pupils with sensory experiences linked to different topics. This brings their learning to life.

Parents have nothing but praise for the headteacher and staff. They appreciate the care and support shown during the recent lockdown periods. They recognise and value the lengths staff go to in order to understand their children as individuals.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher and all staff are resolutely focused on providing an outstanding education and exemplary care. Leadership at all levels is outstanding. Subject leaders have dedicated time to carry out their roles and monitor their subjects. Governors have high expectations of school leaders. They have a firm understanding of the school's work because they ask questions, visit the school and are well informed.

In all subjects and year groups, leaders have established clear and ambitious curriculum plans. These plans capture prior learning for teachers to build on. Subject vocabulary, content and skills are explicit. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and teach content in the order leaders expect. Regular checks are carried out in lessons to check pupils' understanding. This ensures pupils develop the in-depth knowledge needed and achieve at a high level in all areas, especially English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support from staff. Highly trained and skilled staff, especially in the early years, identify pupils early. Support is put in place quickly to make sure that the needs of these pupils are met from the outset. Individual pupils, including those with physical

difficulties, benefit from suitable adjustments to the curriculum. This means that these pupils access all subjects and are fully included in every lesson.

Reading is given the utmost priority. It is threaded into every subject area. Phonics is well structured and expertly delivered. Staff check systematically which sounds pupils know. They make sure that the books pupils read match the sounds they learn. Exceptionally high-quality books are available across the school. Pupils are enticed to read and develop their love of literature through inviting 'book nook' areas in classrooms and the well-stocked library. Most pupils are confident and avid readers. This aids their success in other subject areas. Well-trained staff provide daily support for those who struggle. As a result, these pupils catch up quickly.

The teaching of early reading and mathematics is the cornerstone of the highly successful curriculum offer. Children build the skills that they need to succeed during their time in Reception. A strong focus is also given to developing children's communication and language skills. This enables them to discuss and explain their learning from an early stage. Staff focus sharply on ensuring that children gain a wide vocabulary in all areas of learning. They build on this foundation as they move through the school. The same high expectations for behaviour and respect are set and quickly become embedded. As a result of high-quality provision, children are well equipped for Year 1 and beyond.

The work and opportunities pupils encounter add significantly to their personal development. Pupils take part in an excellent range of clubs and cultural visits. Disadvantaged pupils are rightly prioritised for these experiences. Pupils have many positions of responsibility in school. These include house captains, behaviour ambassadors and head boy and girl. These roles enable pupils to contribute to school events and represent their peers.

Leaders make sure that pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. This helps deepen their knowledge of the world around them. Pupils respect the views and beliefs of others. They readily welcome pupils from different backgrounds and countries and include them fully in their friendship groups.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong and well-established culture of safeguarding in this school. Keeping pupils safe is at the heart of the school's work. Leaders harness and make excellent use of the safeguarding expertise of governors to ensure systems are robust and staff are well trained. Training records are stringent and well organised.

Staff are vigilant and know how to raise and report concerns. Information is shared with the right agencies to make sure that pupils at risk are protected and supported. All safer recruitment checks are carried out when appointing staff to ensure they are suitable to work with pupils.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	116884
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10201051
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Sylvia Cockroft
Headteacher	Diana Pearce
Website	www.st-francisxaviers.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 June 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- St Francis Xavier's Primary School has a Roman Catholic Christian faith-based ethos.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in May 2015.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, teachers and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspectors held a meeting with the chair and vice chair of governors. A telephone interview with a representative of the local authority was conducted.

- The inspectors did deep dives in reading, mathematics, art and geography. They visited lessons, talked to teachers and pupils and looked at pupils' work. They observed pupils reading to a familiar member of staff.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at break and lunchtimes and talked to them informally about behaviour, bullying and their well-being.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan and curriculum plans. They looked at records of behaviour, exclusions and attendance.
- As part of the safeguarding checks, the inspectors looked at the school's single central record and talked to staff about the training they have received and how they ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day and considered 43 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered 34 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 36 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sian Williams

Ofsted Inspector

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