

Inspection of St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Colchester

Clairmont Road, Lexden, Colchester, Essex CO3 9BE

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 January 2025

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Early years provision **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since January 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

The headteacher of this school is Becky Maguire. This school is part of the Rosary Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief accounting officer, Bridget Harris, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Fenning.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils flourish and succeed. They leave with strong academic outcomes and an exceptionally well-developed social and moral compass.

Pupils look out for each other. The oldest buddy up with the youngest to help them at playtimes. They genuinely celebrate other pupils' successes. They talk about how they love seeing the smiles on each other's faces when awarded a merit certificate in assembly.

Pupils benefit from the strong ethos of respect and compassion for each other. They seek to follow the quote from St Teresa, 'Let us do little things well today', doing small things to help each other, picking up books in the classroom or helping a friend out. They have a strongly developed understanding of moral responsibility, raising money for charities and a local hospice.

The school has high expectations for both pupils' academic work and their behaviour. These expectations are well understood by pupils and they rise to meet them. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils feel well supported and safe. They work very hard, supported by subtle adaptations from adults where needed for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

The school has a highly skilled team of teachers who deliver the ambitious curriculum to an excellent standard. This means that pupils make rapid progress, are knowledgeable and remember what they have been taught. The school ensures that continuous professional development keeps staff members' skills and knowledge up to date.

Reading is taught very well. Pupils who need additional teaching to develop early reading skills receive this. Pupils suggest books to add to the classroom libraries, which helps to create a buzz around what new books the class might read. Teachers read many high-quality books to their classes, especially in Reception. The school has additional collections of books focused on themes such as diversity for pupils to choose from.

The 'doing little things well' approach extends to the classrooms. Staff have regular focused discussions with pupils while they are working. This helps all pupils, but particularly those with SEND, make small changes to what they are doing to improve. Pupils' written work improves rapidly over time. Pupils are enthusiastic to write and make use of their wide vocabulary in this work.

Curiosity is a core aspect of the school's curriculum. Pupils love to find out more about their learning. They learn to research and then share their ideas confidently with each other. This starts in Reception. For example, children investigated a circuit toy and came up with excellent ideas about how it worked. Adults expertly developed children's scientific vocabulary.

The school has an increasing number of pupils with SEND. Staff are well trained to identify and meet pupils' individual needs. The school is highly inclusive and staff are knowledgeable about how to adapt learning to enable pupils to succeed. Pupils with SEND use a wide range of resources where necessary, including technology, to help them succeed. They access the same rich curriculum as others. The new 'Hive' provision for pupils with more complex needs supports pupils to develop communication and language skills. This also helps them work in their main class as much as possible.

Behaviour is impeccable. Children in the early years concentrate for extended periods. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and work hard. They enjoy their learning. They appreciate the many trips and practical activities that help bring their lessons to life.

Parents and carers value the support that staff give their children when they start so that they make a racing start to their education. This continues throughout the school, creating a strong sense of working together between families, staff and the wider community.

Pupils learn to discuss and debate issues. They develop a strong understanding of how global issues can have two sides, for example when discussing environmental issues such as deforestation. Pupils understand that people may have different opinions, but these should be respected. They know a lot about different ways of life and other religions, both in this country and beyond.

Pupils have many, varied leadership responsibilities. They help with the running of the school and they lead assemblies. The 'Mini Vinnies' organise lots of events to raise money for charity. Pupils develop strong skills in working with others right from the start. For example, a large group of Reception children played together as doctors treating Frida Kahlo, developing turn-taking, writing and speaking skills.

Staff, in all roles, are highly positive about how they work together closely as a team. They work together determinedly to share knowledge and expertise to develop the quality of provision further. Staff feel very well supported by leaders at all levels. They are challenged and supported to a high level by the local governing committee.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	138311
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345341
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Fenning
CEO of the trust	Bridget Harris (Chief Accounting Officer)
Headteacher	Becky Maguire
Website	www.st-teresas.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Christian character. It is part of the Catholic Diocese of Brentwood. The school's last section 48 (denominational) inspection took place in March 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due in the academic year 2025 to 2026.
- The school is part of the Rosary Trust.
- The school provides its own breakfast club and after-school clubs.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke to the headteacher and other leaders. They met with members of the local governance committee and the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors considered responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.

Tessa Holledge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alice Early

Ofsted Inspector

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