

Inspection of The Cathedral School of St Mary

Cecil Street, Stonehouse, Plymouth, Devon, PL1 5HW

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Parents value the care and support their children receive. Pupils are safe and they feel safe. They know that they can speak to an adult if they are worried. Bullying is rare. Leaders take swift and effective action to resolve any bullying issues.

Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes toward learning. They enjoy sharing their learning with adults. For example, pupils take part in a regular writing challenge. Pupils relish this opportunity to demonstrate their writing skills.

Pupils appreciate how leaders celebrate success. For instance, leaders give 'heart of gold' awards to pupils who demonstrate the school's virtues. Pupils, too, can nominate their peers to receive an award.

Pupils enjoy making contributions to their local community. For example, they took part in a mini-police programme and planted seeds in a local park. Pupils on the school council identified the need to reduce litter in the local area. Leaders helped them to put this into action.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. However, the quality of how well this is put into place is variable. Teachers' subject knowledge is weak in some areas. As a result, pupils do not gain enough knowledge in some subjects.

When the teaching of the curriculum is strong, pupils gain subject knowledge well. In history, for example, older pupils integrate new knowledge into larger ideas successfully. Younger pupils recall some historical knowledge. However, the teaching of the curriculum in some subjects does not ensure that pupils gain knowledge in a logical sequence.

In mathematics, pupils learn number facts. Teachers use assessment to help pupils embed this knowledge. However, the teaching of mathematical problem-solving is weak. Consequently, pupils cannot apply their mathematical knowledge well.

Leaders prioritise teaching pupils to read. The phonics knowledge that pupils need is precisely set out. The books that pupils read are closely matched to this knowledge. Leaders track pupils' progress through the curriculum. If pupils have gaps in their knowledge, they receive timely support. As a result of the effective early reading curriculum, pupils learn to read fluently and accurately. This provides them with a firm foundation for future learning.

Teaching does not consistently meet the needs of all pupils. Consequently, some pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they could. This includes some pupils

with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND, but pupils are not supported well enough to follow the curriculum successfully.

In the Reception Year, children are well cared for. They enjoy listening to stories. They develop their physical abilities. However, the focus on developing pupils' spoken language is not sharp enough.

Leaders have devised a coherent personal development programme. Leaders have planned opportunities for pupils to have experiences in the arts, sciences and outdoor education. Pupils develop a sense of civic duty and learn about democracy.

Pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. They learn about how to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. Pupils understand that all people should be treated with respect. They learn that discrimination should never be tolerated.

School and trust leaders are keenly focused on improving the quality of education. Trustees and local governors provide appropriate support and challenge. Leaders have identified the professional development that teachers require and have started to provide it. Leaders are considerate of staff's workload and well-being. Therefore, staff feel well supported by leaders. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. They identify pupils who need support and take effective action. This includes making referrals to safeguarding partners when required. Leaders work tenaciously to secure the help that children need.

Leaders develop pupils' understanding of risks, both off and online. The school has an appropriate curriculum, policy and practice in relation to sexual harassment and abuse. There are effective arrangements for the safer recruitment of staff and the management of safeguarding concerns about adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of the curriculum are not consistently well implemented. As a result, pupils do not always gain enough knowledge and skills for future learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum, in all subjects, supports pupils to build up their understanding in an incremental way.
- The curriculum is not suitably adapted for some pupils. This means that such pupils, including those pupils with SEND, do not learn the curriculum as well as

they could. Leaders should ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to learn the curriculum successfully.

- In the early years, there is not a sharp enough focus on developing children's spoken language. As a result, children are not as well prepared for future learning as they could be. Leaders should ensure that they pay closer attention to the development of children's language in the early years.

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](#)' 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	140785
Local authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	10227968
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	110
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth Ruth O'Donovan
Headteacher	Mark Dyson (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.cathedral-school.eschools.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust.
- The school is a Roman Catholic academy in the Diocese of Plymouth. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2021.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, curriculum leaders, trust leaders, a member of the board

of trustees and members of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised the single central record of adults working in the school. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and examined the school's safeguarding records. Inspectors also spoke with a range of pupils and staff about safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff survey and Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

James Oldham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Lovett

Ofsted Inspector

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