

Inspection of Saint Albert the Great Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Acorn Road, Bennetts End, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire HP3 8DW

Inspection dates:	29 and 30 April 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The executive headteacher of this school is Daniel Hewitt. This school is part of All Saints Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stephen Wheatley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Anthony Leahy. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. The school's values, such as kindness, resilience and inclusion, shine through the way pupils conduct themselves in lessons and around the school. Relationships between pupils, and between staff and pupils, are warm and respectful.

Overall, pupils behave well. The school puts support in place to help any pupils who find it tricky to manage their feelings and behaviour. This helps these pupils to meet staff's high expectations and learn well.

The school's extensive outdoor environment offers pupils many opportunities to be physically active. Pupils in all year groups appreciate these and play happily at lunch and breaktimes. Indoors, classrooms are calm, purposeful spaces where a culture of learning and aspiration prevails.

The school has high hopes for pupils' achievement. It has established a culture of ambition for all. Pupils work hard in lessons and strive to meet staff's expectations. Increasing numbers of pupils achieve well.

Pupils relish the experiences on offer that develop their character and extend their skills and talents. Some pupils take on leadership roles such as well-being ambassadors and sports leaders. Others run lunchtime clubs for younger pupils. There is a strong sense of belonging to a caring community, where everyone supports each other.

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

The school has reviewed and refined its curriculum. In most subjects, and in the early years, the curriculum sets out precisely what pupils should learn, the sequence of learning and important subject-specific vocabulary. This supports pupils to build a secure body of knowledge gradually, starting in early years. However, in a small number of subjects, the school has yet to complete this work. In these subjects, the curriculum is less precise and the purpose of learning is not as clear. Consequently, pupils do not build their learning as securely as they could.

Overall, staff deliver the curriculum confidently. They help pupils revisit and build on what they know, often in a fun and memorable way. For example, in geography, Year 2 pupils recall the seven continents by singing a special 'continents song', before learning in more depth about Kenya. Staff use a variety of strategies to check how well pupils are learning. Typically, staff adjust their teaching according to pupils' needs. However, occasionally, staff do not identify gaps in pupils' understanding or pupils who are ready to move on to more complex learning. This means some gaps persist and some pupils are not stretched appropriately.

The school has improved its systems for identifying and meeting pupils' needs. It puts appropriate provision in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff set clear, short-term targets for these pupils. Most pupils with SEND access

the curriculum alongside their peers, with adaptations or additional resources to help them learn well. A small number of pupils with more complex needs learn in the 'Acorns' provision. Pupils here have a bespoke curriculum that matches their needs and helps them experience success.

Reading is a high priority. Staff share high-quality texts with pupils from the moment they join the school. In the Reception Year and key stage 1, pupils learn early reading skills in daily phonics lessons. These enable most pupils to become fluent readers by the end of Year 2. If pupils need extra help, staff provide them with effective, focused support. This develops their confidence and fluency. In key stage 2, pupils extend their repertoire of reading skills and discover a range of authors through daily reading lessons.

Staff's expectations of pupils' behaviour are clear and consistent. Early years staff start to build relationships with children before they join the school. These are strengthened throughout pupils' time here. These relationships, and clear routines in early years and beyond, support pupils' typically positive attitudes and behaviour.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is extensive. Through the curriculum and a programme of assemblies, the school promotes its core values, as well as British values such as the rule of law and democracy. Pupils learn about a range of religions as well as Christianity. They are respectful of difference in all its forms. A carefully thought out programme of trips and visitors enhances pupils' learning of curriculum subjects. Older pupils are prepared for later life by learning about peer pressure and consent.

The school has been through a period of significant change. While some staff have found this unsettling, they understand trust and school leaders' vision. The school and trust prioritise staff training. They ensure staff are equipped to carry out their roles effectively. Governors and trustees are well informed about the school's strengths and next steps. They provide robust support and challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, staff's checks on pupils' understanding are not as effective as they could be. At times, some pupils' gaps in learning are not identified or addressed. At other times, pupils who are ready to move on are not given the opportunity to deepen their learning. The school and trust should support staff to use assessment effectively and consistently, so that all pupils' gaps in knowledge are addressed and pupils progress as well as possible through the curriculum.

- In a small number of subjects, the school has not mapped out the curriculum as well as it has in others. It has not identified precisely the key knowledge that pupils should learn in each year group. As a result, teaching in these subjects does not build pupils' knowledge as securely as it does in others. The school and trust should ensure they complete the process of curriculum improvement in these subjects, so that pupils learn equally well across the curriculum.

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	149741
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10323796
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	205
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anthony Leahy
CEO of the trust	Stephen Wheatley
Headteacher	Daniel Hewitt (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.albertthegreat.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Albert the Great Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy, joined All Saints Catholic Academy Trust in July 2023.
- When the predecessor school, St Albert the Great Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- There have been significant changes to the school's leadership structure since the start of this academic year. The executive headteacher took up post in September 2024. A new senior leadership team, comprising a deputy executive headteacher, assistant headteacher and special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has been established recently.
- The school runs its own internal specially resourced provision for pupils with complex SEND. This provision currently serves six pupils with a range of needs, from Reception to Year 3.
- The school does not use any external alternative provision.

- The school is registered to admit nursery-age children. However, there were no three-year-olds on roll at the time of the inspection.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Westminster. The last section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in June 2023. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of this date.
- The school runs its own wraparound care, before and after school.

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 met with a range of senior leaders, including the executive headteacher, deputy executive headteacher, assistant headteacher and the leader responsible for pupils with SEND (SENCo). The lead inspector met with a group of governors and trustees, including the chair of governors and chair of trustees. She also met with the CEO and the school effectiveness partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, and spoke with some pupils about their learning. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work and listened to several pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work and the curriculum in other subjects.
- An inspector visited the school's internal alternative provision with the SENCo.
- 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 reviewed a range of school documentation and policies. These included the school development plan, school self-evaluation form and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.

- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They reviewed the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys. In addition, inspectors spoke with pupils, parents and staff to gather their views of the school.

Inspection team

Caroline Crozier, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Georgina Nutton

Ofsted Inspector

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