

St Benedict's Primary Catholic Voluntary Academy

Mersey Road, Redcar, North Yorkshire TS10 1LS

Inspection dates

16–17 May 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Under the skilled and tenacious leadership of the headteacher, the whole-school community has pulled together to provide the best possible opportunities and experiences for all pupils. Leaders are determined to eradicate anything that is second best.
- Leaders' robust evaluation ensures that they know the school inside out. As a result, school improvement planning is incisive and detailed and actions are evaluated regularly.
- Children in the early years make strong progress. An above average proportion of children reach a good level of development by the time they leave the Reception class. They are well prepared to start Year 1.
- In key stages 1 and 2, current pupils are making good progress from their individual starting points. Standards by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics are above average.
- As a result of consistently good teaching, pupils learn quickly. Teachers and teaching assistants alike are skilled at supporting pupils' learning.
- Leaders' continuing actions to improve teaching even further are bearing fruit. However, further work is needed to develop pupils' reasoning skills in mathematics.
- Teachers generally match work accurately to pupils' varying abilities. Occasionally, work can lack challenge and the pace of learning slows.
- Leaders are making effective use of the pupil premium funding and so the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is rising. However, their attainment still lags behind that of other pupils nationally. Too few disadvantaged pupils reach levels of greater depth in learning.
- The leadership of the well-planned curriculum ensures that pupils are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning. Subject-specific skills are effectively planned and taught.
- Pupils' presentation of work in mathematics and English books is of good quality, but not yet matched by work in topic books.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are outstanding. Their behaviour is good, rooted in the respect and care they have for each other. Occasional lapses in concentration can interrupt learning for a few pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - continuing to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils so that differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally is diminished
 - increasing the proportion of disadvantaged pupils that reach greater depth in their learning.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning by:
 - further developing pupils' skills in explaining and justifying their thinking in mathematical reasoning activities
 - ensuring that the pace of learning and level of challenge enable pupils to maintain their concentration and engagement in tasks
 - checking that the standards of presentation of pupils' work in topic books matches the good quality of work found in English and mathematics books.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The skilled, determined and dedicated headteacher has been unwavering in her ambition to eradicate all aspects of underperformance and ensure a good standard of education for pupils in this school. She embodies the whole-school ethos to provide an environment in which pupils can grow as individuals and thrive. In a short period of time, she has led actions which are transforming and improving the quality of teaching across the school.
- This ambition to improve all aspects of school life and excel is shared by leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and highly skilled governors – a formidable team indeed. As a consequence, pupils are making strong progress and have a confident approach to learning.
- The school improvement plan is rooted in accurate self-evaluation because leaders know the school inside out. It rigorously monitors the effect of actions on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils. Targets are clear and measurable. Progress against these targets is updated termly. This allows governors to hold senior leaders to account and provide both challenge and support.
- Systems and procedures to evaluate the quality of teaching are incisive and detailed, especially in English and mathematics. Leaders stick closely to the week-by-week planned programme of monitoring and they record findings carefully.
- The school's curriculum is rich and balanced and reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests. A recent review of the curriculum has ensured that teachers plan and teach subject-specific skills across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils' progress against these age-related subject-specific skills is now assessed and tracked in most, but not all, subjects. These systems are new and becoming embedded.
- Creative use is made of a wide range of visits out of school, or inviting specialists and experts into school. Specialism weeks are planned across the school year, such as weeks centred on science, music or poetry. Pupils speak enthusiastically about visits, such as those to the sea front to sketch the scene or mathematics investigations at the racecourse. The school provides a range of after-school clubs that further enhance pupils' access to the wider curriculum. These include clubs for art, history, newspaper production, fine dining and a range of sports clubs.
- Leaders manage pupil premium spending effectively to provide targeted support for all disadvantaged pupils. Leaders and teachers know the needs of their pupils well. Termly progress meetings enable an in-depth analysis of any possible barriers to learning for those pupils who are at risk of falling behind, including for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders' actions are beginning to accelerate the progress made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school. Any differences in their attainment compared to their classmates are diminishing as they reach expected levels in their learning; they are catching up quickly. This is not yet seen in published assessment data at the end of Year 6. Across the school, only a small number of disadvantaged pupils are working at a greater depth in their learning compared to their classmates.
- Effective leadership has resulted in good-quality provision for pupils who have special

educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Their needs are identified early and their good progress, sometimes in small steps, is tracked accurately. The school supports these pupils well. This support is monitored very effectively by the leader of this provision through observation of teaching, regular scrutiny of pupils' individual education plans and the effect of actions on pupils' progress. Consequently, the SEN funding is used effectively by leaders.

- The innovative use of the primary school physical education (PE) and sport premium funding has had a significant effect on pupils' health and well-being, engagement in competitive sport and physical fitness. For example, the school has invited local chefs in to school to demonstrate their skills to pupils, using fresh ingredients and encouraging pupils to cook at home. Additionally, new playground markings and investment in a wide range of equipment enable a range of games to be played to develop pupils' fitness; and local sports clubs deliver taster sessions to encourage pupils to join clubs out of school, such as in football, rugby, dance and judo. The skilled and enthusiastic sports activity leader has been pivotal in improving the skills of staff to enable them to deliver high-quality PE lessons. He has also ensured that pupils are encouraged to access a huge range of sporting opportunities across school.

Governance of the school

- The school benefits from a highly skilled, dedicated and proactive governing body. Governors make it their business to know about the work of the school and have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are rightly proud of the school's efforts to ensure the all-round development of pupils, describing the school as 'an oasis of calm in a distracted world'. Governors participate in monitoring activities alongside senior leaders, such as analysing work in pupils' books and making short visits to classes. Detailed records of visits are drawn up and shared with other governors.
- Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school that enhance their impact on school improvement. All potential governor appointments are based on areas of expertise needed to further enhance the positive effect of governors on the school. Governors regularly question school leaders and hold them to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for pupils' outcomes. This includes the leaders of English and mathematics.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff. They are vigilant in their duty to keep pupils safe. Policies, procedures and records are of extremely high quality. Staff training is thorough and up to date. This includes ensuring that all recruitment procedures are watertight. All adults have a clear understanding of their responsibilities for keeping children safe.
- Staff are quick to identify, report and record any concerns, no matter how small, and all concerns are followed through robustly by the headteacher. A wide range of highly effective work is undertaken by the school's learning mentor, who is skilled at supporting any child who is potentially vulnerable. This includes successfully working with pupils who have had historically poor attendance but who now attend school

regularly.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have been successful in their continual drive to improve the quality of teaching. Improved teaching resulted in pupils reaching above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 in all key stages. It is also reflected in the strong rates of progress current pupils are making in each year group.
- Lessons are usually lively and interesting, capturing pupils' imagination. For example, in the Year 6 classes, pupils were enthralled by a short animation called 'Road's End', which posed many questions about the character and motive of one of the two characters. This enthusiasm was translated into high-quality writing to describe the appearance and personality of the mysterious motorist.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to structure learning effectively. For example, most pupils in a Year 5 class were able to plot the reflection of a shape using the x and y axes and coordinates following clear explanations and instructions from the teacher. In Year 4, the teacher consolidated pupils' understanding of the key features of a formal, persuasive letter, in this case to the Mayor of London to complain about pollution.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and stick closely to the school's behaviour policy. Relationships are good. Pupils' generally positive attitudes in lessons support their learning well. They benefit from informative and exciting displays around the classrooms, including aide memoires displaying key information for current learning in mathematics, reading and writing.
- Work is usually pitched well according to pupils' abilities, and teachers are skilled at adapting and changing plans based on ongoing daily assessments of how well pupils grasp learning. On some occasions, work does not provide sufficient challenge for all, and the pace of learning slows. This can result in a small minority of pupils losing concentration and engagement in the lesson, and slows the rate of their learning.
- In mathematics, basic skills of number and mental calculation are taught and consolidated regularly. For example, pupils in Year 2 were able to successfully compare simple fractions using pictures to support their learning. In Year 1, pupils were adding together a number of coins or finding different ways to make the same amount. Pupils are becoming increasingly adept in their ability to solve word problems. However, the reasoning skills of many pupils are not well developed, as some struggle to explain their methods or thinking, or to justify and prove the accuracy of their answers.
- As a result of the rigorous and systematic teaching of phonics, children get off to a fast start in their reading in the early years. Adults are skilled in teaching well-structured reading lessons throughout the school, pitched well according to pupils' reading skills. Pupils who read to an inspector were confident and fluent, reading with expression and obvious enjoyment of the text.
- Teachers are skilled at delivering a range of lessons that cover the whole-school curriculum. For example, in Year 3, pupils were intrigued when learning about the world's tectonic plates and where they are found. Some teachers have not yet ensured that pupils' presentation of recorded topic work is of the same quality as that found in

their mathematics and English books.

- Teaching assistants are an invaluable part of the school's teaching team. They are skilled at supporting pupils' learning, benefiting from good-quality professional development opportunities. They display good questioning skills, have high expectations of pupils, take initiatives and are very aware of the needs of different groups and individuals during the course of a lesson.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent and most are very keen to succeed and to produce their very best work. Pupils grow in confidence during their time in school, acquiring an assured and resilient approach to learning. Pupils say they love school and wear their smart school uniform with pride. They thrive in the well-ordered and positive school environment. Displays are of good quality; they are bright and attractive and support learning well. The school works effectively to ensure that pupils' physical and emotional well-being are valued and developed.
- Pupils said that they feel extremely safe in school, a view echoed by virtually all parents and carers through the school questionnaire and Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire. Pupils talked confidently about work they had completed on e-safety, road safety and the dangers of fireworks. Pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other, valuing their classmates' opinions and working cooperatively in lessons.
- Pupils are encouraged to support the local community by, for example, completing a sponsored silence for the local church, recycling pens, competing in the Race for Life for cancer research and hosting a cake sale. They enthusiastically attend extra-curricular activities which, as one pupil reported, help them 'to achieve our dreams'. Pupils are reflective and discuss how their faith can be put into practice. Pupils in Year 5 considered the meaning of a Psalm, and how they could reflect the prayer during the class assembly in their daily lives.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development are excellent. The promotion of cultural and religious diversity and tolerance is clearly seen through displays in shared areas. Pupils enjoyed their week learning about Islam, and talked freely to a member of staff who shared her knowledge of Sikhism. They know about foods from around the world following visits from a chef, and speak knowledgeably about what it means to be British.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as can be seen in their improving attendance. Attendance is now broadly average, with very few pupils persistently absent. Pupils and parents understand the effect of missing time in school to learn.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and mostly work conscientiously. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning and the few incidents of misbehaviour are

swiftly and deftly addressed. Pupils were crystal clear that behaviour is good in school, and that there is no bullying at all. Only a small number of parents disagreed with this view in their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the school's own recent questionnaire.

- The good relationships that are nurtured ensure that pupils usually conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Occasionally, when the pace of learning slows, a small minority of pupils lose concentration and become disengaged from learning. Most pupils are polite and have good manners, holding doors open for adults and visitors. Playtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily together on the well-equipped and extensive playgrounds. No one is left out.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In all key stages, pupils are making consistently strong progress in English and mathematics. Most pupils in every year group are on track to reach standards expected or above for their age by the end of the year.
- After a flying start to learning in the early years, pupils continue to make strong progress in Years 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Current standards of attainment in Year 2 are on track to be higher than those reported in 2017, which in turn were well above average.
- Pupils make a good start in their early reading skills. In recent years, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been consistently above average.
- Standards of attainment by the end of Year 6 in 2016 were well above those found nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This was also the case in 2017 in reading and writing, although they were in line in mathematics. In both 2016 and 2017, pupils made strong progress from their starting points in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils in school make good progress in their learning as teachers usually provide appropriately challenging work. In 2017, the proportion who were working at a greater depth in their learning was just above that found nationally.
- Over time, disadvantaged pupils have not achieved as well as other pupils in the school or other pupils nationally. This was the case in 2017 for disadvantaged Year 6 pupils in reading and mathematics. A much smaller proportion of disadvantaged pupils reached a greater depth in their learning in 2017 in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6 compared to their classmates and other pupils nationally. This was also the case in reading and writing for disadvantaged pupils at the end of year 2.
- However, as a result of the effective and strategic use of the pupil premium funding, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has improved. Current disadvantaged pupils in each year group are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics which matches or exceeds that of their classmates. As their attainment improves, previous differences in their achievement are diminishing but are yet to be fully closed. A greater proportion are on track this year to reach greater depth in their learning in most year groups.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Effective leadership and high-quality provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities

ensures that most of these pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Activities are carefully matched to their individual needs and abilities and skilfully delivered, including by teaching assistants.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enjoy the high-quality learning opportunities provided to them and they learn and play happily together. They are eager to explore and investigate, are happy to share and take turns, and they display good behaviour. Children are fully engaged in all activities and wait patiently when lining up, such as for lunch. Leaders are skilled in developing areas of provision, based on accurate assessment of children's stages of development, and usually maximise learning opportunities for all.
- A significant proportion of children start in the early years with skills and knowledge which are broadly typical for their age, although starting points are lower for some. As a result of careful observations, choice of activities, good teaching and probing questioning, most children make good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1. In 2017, the proportion who reached a good level of development was just above that found nationally and the proportion has gradually risen year-on-year since 2014. Occasionally, children's rates of progress are variable, especially in the Reception class. This is because the progress of children whose starting points are below those typically found is not as strong as that of their classmates.
- Adults observe children carefully and skilfully build upon their interests. They support children's learning through prompts and skilful questioning. They work alongside children during imaginative and creative play sessions. In Nursery, a group of children re-enacted parts of the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and were enthralled by creating a butterfly by folding paper symmetrically. They show persistence in learning, sticking at a task, and they are skilled at directing their own learning.
- Children display high levels of cooperation. They are inquisitive and curious, and enjoy playing and exploring together. While one group of children created a map in Reception by drawing the features, another group made their map from coloured building blocks. Another group were measuring the length of model dinosaurs using cubes.
- Basic skills in reading, writing and number are taught very effectively. In the sessions observed, children in Nursery were able to recognise and pronounce individual letter sounds. Reception children were able to accurately write simple three-letter words, using good phonics skills to write labels for their map. Children in Nursery loved singing the 'little fingers' song, counting accurately to 10 on their fingers. Another child was able to count the spots on a ladybird and say which had the most spots and why.
- Children's writing skills are usually developed well. Time is set aside to share examples of children's writing and drawing completed independently, both at home and at school. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to extend children's writing skills, especially when outdoors.
- The early years leader leads an effective and skilled team of adults who share the same passion and drive to see young children thrive. She has a clear understanding of the strengths in the early years and has identified key areas for improvement, based

on robust analysis of the school's detailed and informative assessment system.

- Strong links are made with parents, many of whom are heavily involved in their children's learning. There are regular 'stay and play' sessions, and information meetings to suggest ways parents can support children with their learning. Many parents contribute regularly to the online journal of their child's learning and appreciate the school's effective communication. Comments about the school made by parents of children in the early years to inspectors included 'couldn't be happier with the school', 'everything gets sorted straight away' and 'there's a great community spirit'.
- Safeguarding practices are highly effective. Children are taught how to manage risks from an early age and the very effective safeguarding culture that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. There are no material breaches of legal welfare requirements; children are safe and well supported.

School details

Unique reference number	142272
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10048406

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	447
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Very Reverend Canon Derek Turnham
Headteacher	Kendra Sill
Telephone number	01642 495770
Website	www.st-benedicts.co.uk/
Email address	schooladmin@st-benedicts.rac.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school is part of the Nicholas Postgate Academy Trust.
- St Benedict's Primary Catholic Voluntary Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2015. When its predecessor school, Saint Benedict's Roman Catholic VA Primary, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The headteacher has been in post for just over one year.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium is average. The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school's part-time provision for Nursery children operates in the morning and

afternoon. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, including lessons observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, an inspector listened to some pupils from Years 1, 2, and 5 read. Inspectors reviewed a sample of pupils' work alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the learning mentor. They also met with other school leaders, including subject leaders and members of the teaching staff. Inspectors met the school business manager and held a meeting with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information relating to pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current progress of pupils, and the school's view on how well it is doing. Inspectors also reviewed the school improvement plan, documents relating to performance management and safeguarding, and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 32 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Parent View, and the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and pupil questionnaire. In addition, the 67 responses to the school's own questionnaire from March 2018 were also analysed. The school's website was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Cathy Lee	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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