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St Brendan's Catholic Primary School

Beanfield Avenue, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 0AZ

Inspection dates	20–21 June 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

- The headteacher's drive and ambition has brought about considerable improvement, raising standards across the school.

- The St Luke Academies Trust has supported the school's leadership team, providing targeted support to help leaders bring about sustained change.

- Leaders monitor the attainment of all pupils carefully. They set ambitious targets for pupils and hold teachers to account for the progress pupils make, including disadvantaged pupils.

- In the early years, teachers identify what children need to do to make progress. Activities planned meet pupils' needs well.

- Teachers use their knowledge of what pupils can do well to set tasks that match pupils' ability and needs. Staff have high expectations for pupils.

- Teachers support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities well. Tasks set match pupils needs. They make good progress from their starting points.

- Teachers develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional education well. Teachers provide a safe environment for pupils to respond. They are respectful of the feelings and opinions of others.

- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are polite and respectful and support each other. They accept and celebrate each other's differences.

- Leaders have supported staff to take an individual approach to behaviour management. Teachers review the few incidents of poor behaviour and work with pupils to consider the reasons for their actions.

- Pupils' outcomes are improving. Leaders have identified areas for development and pupils are making better progress than they have done in previous years.

- Occasionally, teachers do not allow pupils to develop their learning independently. They provide pupils with the answers before they have had time to investigate fully.

- The school's rate of persistent absence is above the national average. Leaders have a comprehensive plan to reduce absence, but this has not yet had time to impact on overall absence.

- Subject leaders have overseen significant improvements in their subjects. However, sometimes leaders do not have a well-developed view of how well pupils are doing across the school and between key stages.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.
- Further develop subject leaders so that they have a secure understanding of the impact of their actions on whole-school improvement.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing pupils with more opportunities to develop and explore their learning independently.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school. Her drive has successfully brought the school through a period of significant change. Her high expectations for herself, the school, staff and pupils have been significant factors in transforming the school.

- Leaders are rigorous in their approach to school improvement. School development plans are comprehensive and accurately identify the school's strengths and areas for development. Targets set are firmly rooted in raising standards.

- Leaders monitor and evaluate new approaches to teaching well. They scrutinise pupil assessment information termly to identify emerging areas for concern. Leaders put in place strategies to rectify potential weaknesses before they become a significant concern.

- The headteacher sets high expectations for pupil progress. Leaders use assessment information carefully to hold teachers to account. Leaders challenge teachers to justify the progress and attainment of pupils in their classes at regular pupil progress meetings. There is a robust accountability structure in place linked to performance management.

- Leaders identified that pupils were not making enough progress in mathematics. The leader for mathematics has developed an approach that is bespoke to the school. Teaching targets the needs of pupils. Staff training and coaching has secured consistency across the school. Pupils are making better progress than in previous years.

- The subject leader for English has tailored the school's approach to writing and reading to meet pupils' needs. Monitoring of teaching has ensured that there is consistency across the school. Subject leaders feel well supported by the headteacher and the trust. They have been encouraged to take risks to bring about improvements. They feel that leaders are holding them to account.

- The leader for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has a good understanding of the needs of pupils. She measures the impact of support carefully. Support provided is rooted in effective analysis of pupils' needs. The leader seeks external support quickly when required.

- Leaders carefully monitor the progress of disadvantaged pupils and put support in place when required. The school's own analysis of the impact of support shows that these pupils are making good progress towards their targets. Due to very small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in some year groups, it is difficult to make meaningful comparisons with pupils in the whole school.

- Leaders have developed the curriculum to provide pupils with many opportunities to learn across subjects. Pupils' learning is enhanced through enrichment activities that bring learning to life. For example, pupils learning about the rainforest visited The Living Rainforest to experience the unique environment.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, cultural and emotional development is a priority for leaders. A range of rich learning opportunities are available for pupils. The high-quality

teaching of religious education allows pupils to explore their spiritual self and consider how their actions and feeling may affect others. For example, pupils were discussing how it can sometimes be difficult to say sorry. Pupils responded thoughtfully and respectfully to the opinions of others.

- Leaders have used the sport premium well to support pupils' physical development. They have introduced pupils to unfamiliar sports such as goal ball and have increased participation in external competitions. Leaders have put in place support for pupils who are less confident with physical education. Staff have shown pupils how to play collaboratively and to organise their own games.

- The trust has provided effective support for the school's leaders. The school improvement director has delivered appropriate and targeted support. This has contributed to significant improvements at the school. The trust is committed to continuing to develop strong leadership, identifying some middle leaders to provide school-to-school support across the trust.

- Subject leaders have driven improvements in their subjects. They have a secure understanding of assessment information for each year group. Sometimes they are not confident in how their actions have impacted on whole-school pupils' progress. Their understanding of pupils' progress can be too focused on specific year groups, and they do not have an overview of progress across key stages and the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are proud of the school and the improvements that have been made. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.

- Governors identified that there were gaps in the balance of skills of the governing body. They actively sought members who could provide additional skills to provide challenge and support for leaders.

- Governors are supportive of the leadership team. They are unafraid to challenge leaders so that members of the governing body can fully understand the impact of leaders' actions on pupils' progress. Assessment information is regularly scrutinised, and governors have a comprehensive understanding of the attainment and progress of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- Leaders have a secure understanding of the needs of pupils from vulnerable families. The designated safeguarding leads review cases regularly, and information is shared between professionals in and outside the school. Teachers and support staff contribute information to cases to ensure that there is a comprehensive overview of concerns.

- The school readily provides support for families who do not meet the local authority thresholds for involvement. Leaders involve other agencies, such as the school nurse, when necessary to provide support for families. The learning mentor works closely with families and pupils. For example, providing bereavement counselling and helping to develop pupils' self-esteem.

- Staff regularly receive refresher training to keep them focused on recognising different signs of abuse. The headteacher is committed to providing staff with the most up-to-date information. External agencies carry out staff training, for example the local police held training in online safety.

- The school is committed to developing pupils' well-being. Pupils identify their safe places and the people they would talk with were they to have a concern.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good

- Leaders have worked hard to establish consistency of teaching across the school.

- Teachers use their knowledge of what pupils can already do to set tasks at the right level. They have high expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve. Teachers use questioning effectively to probe pupils' understanding and develop their thinking.

- In mathematics, teachers use a consistent approach to develop pupils' skills. Before beginning a new area of learning, teachers assess what pupils can already do. They use this information well to ensure that pupils complete tasks that meet their needs. Teachers move the most able pupils on with their learning quickly. Teachers and teaching assistants identify pupils who do not understand concepts quickly and then provide effective support.

- Teachers develop pupils' reading skills by encouraging them to talk about books. Pupils use visual prompts to help them comment on the author's intent, inference and comprehension. Teachers have ensured that pupils read widely and choose books that challenge them. Teachers develop pupils' skills by encouraging pupils to follow their interests, for example reading autobiographies of sporting heroes or stories from different genres.

- There is a consistent approach to developing pupils' writing skills and grammar. Teachers use their subject knowledge well to develop creativity in pupils' writing. For example, when learning about personification, teachers encouraged pupils to think about how personification and simile could be used together to make their writing more interesting.

- Teachers and support staff provide a safe environment for pupils to express their opinions. Pupils respond thoughtfully and show reverence for the views of others. Pupils are insightful and unafraid to explore sensitive themes.

- Teachers support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities well. Teachers' careful planning ensures that activities meet the needs of pupils. Pupils who need additional resources or timetable adjustments learn effectively and make good progress towards their targets.

- Teachers target the needs of disadvantaged pupils well in order to close gaps in learning. Teachers use their knowledge of what pupils can do to identify areas for development. They carefully plan for pupils' next steps. Pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils are making good progress towards their targets and that some are making rapid progress.

- Occasionally, teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to develop and extend their learning independently. When pupils are thinking through problems or

developing their own ideas, teachers can be too quick to stop pupils and provide answers. Pupils are unable to explore concepts and ideas through to their conclusion or to learn from their mistakes.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good

Personal development and welfare

■ The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

■ Pupils are keen and are confident to discuss their learning. They take pride in their work and participate in lessons well. Pupils say that adults in the school support them and help them learn. They understand how they can make their work better.

■ Pupils demonstrate empathy and compassion. They support each other well and accept and celebrate each other's differences.

■ Pupils know different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say that there have been no incidents of bullying. If there were, they believe staff would deal with problems quickly.

■ Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, appropriate to their age. Younger pupils explained what to do when the fire bell sounds, how to cross the road safely, and about stranger danger. Older pupils talked comprehensively about the need to protect themselves when using social media and when playing games online.

■ All adults are committed to supporting pupils' emotional resilience. The learning mentor works well with pupils who need further support. For example, helping pupils cope with a bereavement, developing self-esteem or the separation of parents.

Behaviour

■ The behaviour of pupils is good.

■ Pupils' behaviour around the school is orderly. Pupils are polite to each other, staff and visitors.

■ At playtimes, pupils play well together. Adults support pupils to develop social skills when playing games. The 'energy crew' runs games for pupils to participate in. During afternoon playtimes, adults encourage siblings who are in different key stages to play together.

■ Leaders are developing their approach to behaviour management. Leaders are supporting staff to take a reasoned and bespoke approach to poor behaviour. Adults discuss incidents with pupils, and together decide what the consequence of actions should be.

■ The school's behaviour records show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour. Leaders follow up incidents with pupils, and support is put in place if necessary. Staff encourage pupils to think about the reasons for their actions, and what they would do differently in the future.

■ The percentage of pupils with persistent absence is above the national average. The school's attendance information shows that the attendance of most pupils with

persistent absence has improved during this year. However, rates of attendance are still below the schools' expectations. Leaders have a comprehensive plan in place to tackle low attendance, but this has not yet had time to impact on rates of attendance.

Outcomes for pupils   Good

- In 2017, in key stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and writing was in line with the national average. Pupils made progress consistent with pupils nationally. The school's own assessment information indicates that this will again be the case in 2018.

- Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress from their starting points at the end of the early years. In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils leaving key stage 1 at the expected standard was above the national average. The school's own assessment information shows that the attainment of Year 2 pupils in 2018 will be in line with the national average.

- Pupils' work books show that they are making good progress consistent with their ability and the school's year group expectations. Tasks match pupil's abilities well.

- Disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their different starting points. The school's own assessment information shows that pupils make good progress to meet the aspirational targets set.

- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics screening check has been in line with the national average for the past two years. The school's own assessment information shows that this is set to be so again this year.

- In mathematics at key stage 2 in 2016 and 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was below the national average. Pupils did not make as much progress as pupils nationally. Pupils' workbooks show that steps to develop pupils' skills in mathematics have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils should be able to achieve. The school's own assessment information indicates that this year, leaders expect more pupils to achieve at the expected standard.

Early years provision   Good

- Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the needs and interests of children. They use information about what children can do to target next steps in learning. Many children start at a level below that typical for their age. They make good progress from their different starting points. In 2016 and 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was in line with the national average. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

- Teachers use their observations to identify what children need to do to make progress. They plan carefully to meet children's needs. For example, teachers use the woodwork area to encourage children to write. Children write, draw and label plans of what they will make before they can access the area.

- Children who have English as an additional language make rapid progress from their starting points. Teachers work closely with parents to help children acquire second or

third languages effectively. The school uses special events such as the European day of languages to encourage parents to share their language skills with the wider community.

- Parents contribute to their children's learning by sharing achievements made at home. The school holds regular 'parent partnership' meetings. These allow parents to see their child's work and understand their child's next steps in learning.

- Children are safe because routines are effective in keeping the early years area secure. Staff provide a friendly welcome on arrival. The beginning of the day is calm and purposeful. There are strong and caring relationships between children and staff.

- Children work and play cooperatively. They respect the environment and care for living things around them. Staff respond well to children's interests. For example, when children found a moth in the outdoor area, adults used this as an opportunity to discuss how to care for living things and what they need to grow.

- Leaders work well with external agencies to support children who have SEN and/or disabilities. Staff plan well to meet children's needs and they make good progress from their starting points.

- Leaders are supporting pre-school providers to develop a more consistent approach to learning and assessment before children join the school.

School details

Unique reference number	142064
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10048109

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	331
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rob Hill
Headteacher	Leanne Brydon
Telephone number	01536 202 491
Website	www.stbrendansprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	head@stbrendans-pri.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

■ The school is part of the St Luke Academies Trust. The powers of governance lie with the trustees of the Collaborative Academies Trust. The trustee has appointed a committee known as the local governing body. The trustees delegate some of their powers to the local governing body, which is supported and developed by the St Luke Academies Trust.

■ The proportion of pupils with a first language not believed to be English is below the national average.

■ The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.

■ The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum requirement for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

■ The inspectors observed learning in a number of lessons, some of which were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher. They observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils read. The inspectors also talked with pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work in all year groups to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.

■ Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, and representatives of the governing body. The inspectors also spoke with the trust school improvement director.

■ The inspectors spoke with parents informally and considered the 27 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the 25 responses to the staff survey.

■ The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement; the most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to the health, safety and safeguarding of pupils; and the most recent data relating to the attendance of pupils.

■ The inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Helen Williams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Barnes	Ofsted Inspector
Martin Fitzwilliam	Ofsted Inspector
Hazel Henson	Her Majesty's Inspector

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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