

Saint Barnabas Church of England Primary School

Spring Lane, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B24 9BY

Inspection dates

21–22 May 2019

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	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- After a period of decline, the school is rapidly improving under the leadership of the head of school. Leaders and staff work in strong partnership to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Improvement plans focus on the right priorities.
- Teaching is good because of very effective leadership. Leaders make thorough checks on the quality of teaching. They improve teachers' skills through carefully planned training and development.
- Teachers feel well supported by leaders. They are positive about how leaders help them to develop their practice.
- Senior leaders make frequent checks on pupils' attainment. They work closely with staff to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to 'keep up, not catch-up'. However, systems for monitoring pupils' progress across each key stage are not sharp enough.
- The school is a happy and welcoming community. Relationships are positive, and staff look after pupils well. Pupils are friendly and polite. They feel safe at school.
- Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. Their behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and are keen to learn.
- Teachers use assessment information well to plan lessons that match pupils' needs closely. As a result, pupils make strong progress in English and mathematics.
- Increasingly effective support means that disadvantaged pupils are currently making good progress. However, they still have a way to go to catch up with their peers.
- Children in the early years develop into confident and independent learners who are ready for the challenges of Year 1. Sometimes, adults could extend children's learning further.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' writing. As a result, some high- and low-attaining pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable.
- Subjects such as history and geography are not taught in enough depth. Many subject leaders are at an early stage of their development.
- Governors know the school well. However, until recently, they have not held senior leaders to account robustly enough for school improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen leadership and management by:
 - using assessment information more effectively to monitor pupils’ progress across each key stage
 - continuing to develop the skills of middle leaders so that they can lead improvements to the wider curriculum
 - providing governors with training to improve their skills in holding leaders to account for school improvement.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and thereby strengthen pupils’ outcomes, by:
 - having consistently high expectations of pupils’ writing, and providing low- and high-attaining pupils with the guidance they need to improve their work
 - planning sequences of learning that build and deepen pupils’ knowledge and understanding in subjects such as history and geography
 - supporting disadvantaged pupils further to address gaps in their knowledge and skills from earlier in their education.
- Further improve provision in the early years by ensuring that adults consistently support and extend children’s learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school has changed considerably since the previous inspection; almost all leaders and teachers are new to the school. Over the past three years, the part-time executive headteacher has stabilised staffing and raised expectations. This has provided a firm foundation for the head of school to drive improvements to teaching and learning.
- In the past 12 months, under the strong leadership of the head of school, leaders and staff have worked together to halt a decline in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. Teaching is now good, and pupils are making strong progress in English and mathematics.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. This is because they make thorough checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment. Leaders' action plans focus on the right priorities. They set out clearly how leaders intend to consolidate good practice and improve the school further.
- Teachers receive highly effective support to improve their teaching skills. For example, weekly coaching meetings help teachers to recognise what they are doing well and where their practice can be refined. These discussions focus on pupils' learning and have been pivotal in improving teaching. High-quality training has also brought about improvements, for example in the teaching of mathematics. Teachers value the many opportunities leaders provide for their professional development.
- Thorough systems are in place to check on pupils' attainment. Leaders make good use of information from tests to identify gaps in pupils' learning in reading and mathematics. They guide teachers about what to focus on in their planning. Leaders meet regularly with teachers to identify pupils who would benefit from extra support so that they keep up with their peers.
- There have been significant improvements in the use of pupil premium funding following a recent external review. Leaders now use this funding well to provide disadvantaged pupils with support that is tailored to their individual needs. Leaders check to ensure that this additional support is making a positive difference to disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. However, gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills remain, due to weaker teaching in previous years.
- Good use is made of the primary physical education (PE) and sports funding to provide a wide range of sports activities before and after school. Consequently, pupils' participation in physical activity has increased, particularly that of girls. Pupils enjoy taking part in inter-school sports competitions. Sports coaches skilfully model teaching and help staff to improve their skills in teaching PE.
- Senior leaders have begun to develop the skills of middle leaders. As a result, some leaders make a strong contribution to improving teaching and pupils' progress in their areas of responsibility. However, the knowledge and skills of many subject leaders are at an early stage of development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through trips, visitors and the curriculum. Pupils learn about different religions and show respect for the views and beliefs of others. They have a strong understanding of British values,

including democracy and individual liberty. Pupils experience democracy for themselves through the annual election of a school parliament, including a school prime minister.

- Leaders have planned a broad curriculum that covers the full range of national curriculum subjects. However, in subjects such as history and geography, not enough thought has been given to the order and depth in which knowledge is taught.
- While leaders make regular checks on pupils' attainment, monitoring systems do not give leaders a clear enough view of pupils' progress year on year and across each key stage. As a result, support for individual pupils is not as targeted as it could be.

Governance of the school

- In the past, the governing body has not been as effective as it should have been in holding leaders to account for school improvement. For example, although governors responded to weaknesses in leadership by appointing a part-time executive headteacher, processes to manage this leader's performance have only recently been put in place.
- The recently appointed chair of governors has been proactive in commissioning a full review of governance. A tightly focused action plan is in place, which is helping to improve governors' practice.
- The governing body understands the school's priorities. Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school because they have good links with middle leaders. This gives them a clear view of the actions that leaders are taking to improve the school. However, governors do not have a secure enough understanding of the impact that these actions are having on improving pupils' progress.
- Governors have an accurate understanding of pupils' attainment in each year group. However, they do not currently receive the information they need to check if pupils are making the progress they should across each key stage.
- The governing body knows how leaders use additional funding. The link governor for pupil premium monitors the impact of this funding on improving disadvantaged pupils' outcomes. Similarly, governors check that the primary PE and sports funding is making a difference to pupils' participation in physical activity.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders maintain a clear overview of local and national safeguarding issues by attending regular network meetings led by the local authority. They have created a culture of openness when considering pupils' safety and welfare. This, along with the school's caring ethos, ensures that pupils are kept safe.
- Staff receive regular training on a range of safeguarding topics. This keeps them up to date with the latest guidance. As a result, staff have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.
- Staff are vigilant and know the signs to look for that might indicate that a pupil is at risk of harm. They understand the process to follow if they are worried about a pupil and diligently report all concerns, no matter how small. This helps to build a

comprehensive picture of the needs and vulnerabilities of individual pupils.

- Leaders keep thorough safeguarding records and respond promptly to concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. They work well with a range of external agencies to provide effective support for vulnerable pupils and their families. This includes the provision of counselling, support for pupils' emotional well-being and weekly parent drop-in sessions.
- All adults who work in the school are subject to the appropriate recruitment checks. The school is a safe and secure learning environment.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Senior leaders' high expectations coupled with carefully planned training and support mean that teaching in almost all classes is good and improving.
- Good use is made of assessment information to plan work that matches most pupils' needs closely. Teachers use standardised tests to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding and plan lessons to address these. This approach has been instrumental in improving pupils' progress, particularly for middle-attaining pupils.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They explain concepts clearly and provide accurate demonstrations of what they want pupils to do. Teachers encourage pupils to share their ideas and learn from each other. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of what they are learning and what they need to do in their work to be successful.
- Adults ask effective questions to check pupils' understanding and extend their learning. They place high priority on developing pupils' spoken vocabulary. For example, adults routinely encourage pupils to answer questions in full sentences and to use accurate grammar.
- Phonics is taught well. Adults model sounds accurately and provide frequent opportunities for pupils to apply their phonics skills to read and write. They check pupils' understanding within lessons and move learning on when pupils are ready.
- Pupils enjoy reading and were keen to read to inspectors. Younger pupils make good use of their skills in phonics to decode words and gain meaning from texts. However, occasionally, low-attaining pupils find it difficult to read fluently because books do not match their phonic knowledge closely enough.
- Teachers provide purposeful opportunities for pupils to write at length. High-quality texts are used to capture pupils' interests and motivate them to write. Teachers promote pupils' use of descriptive and subject-specific vocabulary in their writing well. For example, vocabulary walls provide pupils with adventurous vocabulary to use in their writing. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils made good use of this to improve their initial choice of words to describe how a character was feeling. However, in some classes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' writing. As a result, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- In mathematics, teachers check what pupils know and can do before they teach each lesson. They group pupils accordingly, which ensures that all pupils, including the most able, receive work that makes them think deeply, while not being too difficult for them to complete. Pupils learn to calculate using a variety of methods. They use practical

resources confidently to support their learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils used coins to make different totals, practising their addition skills and developing their understanding of the value of each coin. Teachers challenge pupils to deepen their understanding through problem-solving and reasoning activities.

- Teachers ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, have full access to the curriculum. These pupils are included in lessons with effective support from teachers and teaching assistants.
- In lessons, adults are quick to address pupils' errors and misconceptions. However, sometimes teachers do not pinpoint the skills that will improve pupils' progress, particularly for the least and most able pupils. This occurs most often in writing activities. The most able pupils are not guided to use the skills needed to write at greater depth. Weaknesses in the spelling and handwriting of low-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND are not routinely addressed.
- In subjects such as history and geography, teachers do not sequence activities in a way that enables pupils to develop a secure and deep understanding of the topics they study.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have created a safe and nurturing environment in which pupils learn to respect each other and get along. Pupils have a good understanding of the school's 'footsteps' values of determination, honesty, kindness, collaboration and friendship. They show these in their positive relationships with one another. As one pupil explained, 'We are all friends here.'
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In lessons, pupils listen carefully and apply themselves productively to tasks. They are confident to share their ideas. As pupils move through the school, staff help them to develop the skills they need to be successful learners. For example, in key stage 1, pupils share resources and collaborate in pairs and small groups. In key stage 2, pupils support one another's learning by offering ideas and encouragement to their friends.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to school life, for example by sitting on the school parliament, acting as anti-bullying ambassadors and being members of the school's eco-council and ethos committee. Pupils undertake these roles maturely and with pride.
- Pupils feel safe at school and say that there is an adult they can talk to if they have a concern. They are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and say that it is not an issue at Saint Barnabas. Pupils know what to do should bullying occur and are confident that adults resolve any problems quickly.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online. They know how to cross the road safely and learn the rules for riding a bike on the road. Pupils recognise the

importance of eating a healthy diet and taking regular exercise to stay healthy.

- Adults care for pupils well. For example, they provide all pupils with toast on their arrival at school each morning. This helps to ensure that everyone is ready for the day ahead.
- Pupils who attend the before-school club benefit from a positive start to the school day. They enjoy the wide range of activities on offer, many of which promote physical activity. Staff provide pupils with a healthy breakfast and look after them well.
- Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, say that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and friendly. They are welcoming to visitors and show respect for adults and for one another.
- Leaders and staff share high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They have established clear routines to promote good behaviour. Pupils understand the school's 'traffic light' behaviour system and say that this supports pupils to behave well.
- Pupils move around the school calmly and sensibly. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils of all ages engage in energetic play, making good use of the range of equipment on offer. They interact positively and enjoy the opportunity to let off steam after working hard in lessons.
- In lessons, pupils want to do well. They respond quickly to adults' instructions so that no learning time is wasted. Staff build pupils' confidence by providing opportunities for them to share their learning with others. Pupils enjoy doing this and are visibly proud of their achievements.
- Staff provide strong support for pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour. They work well with these pupils to help them to learn how to make appropriate choices.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. As a result, rates of absence and persistent absence are below national averages for the past two years.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Due to weaknesses in teaching in the past, some pupils have not made as much progress as they should. However, now that pupils are receiving good teaching, they are making strong progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been at least in line with national averages for the past two years. In 2018, the proportion of pupils working at greater depth in reading and writing rose to be in line with national averages.
- The school's assessment information and work in books show that a high proportion of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are working at the standard expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics

screening check is consistently above national averages. This is because phonics is taught well in the early years and key stage 1.

- Published information in 2018 shows that pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 was below that of other pupils nationally. Pupils' attainment at both the expected and higher standards also fell to below national averages. However, inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently making good progress because of leaders' concerted efforts to improve the quality of teaching.
- Although the proportion of pupils working at the higher standard in mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 was below national averages in 2018, work in books shows that high-attaining pupils are now making strong progress in this subject.
- In 2018, disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2 was poor. Only a third of these pupils were well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders have taken decisive action to address this. As a result, disadvantaged pupils are currently making progress that is at least in line with, and sometimes better than, their peers. However, gaps between the attainment of these pupils and others remain because in the past they did not have the support they needed to keep up with their peers.
- Similarly, in 2018 the progress of pupils with SEND at the end of key stage 2 was weak. Improvements to provision mean that these pupils are now making good progress from their different starting points.
- Pupils' progress and attainment in writing at the end of key stages 1 and 2 improved in 2018. Work in books shows that these improvements are being sustained. Pupils in most classes are making good progress in the development of their writing skills. However, some of the most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable because teachers do not provide them with the guidance they need to write at greater depth. Basic skills in handwriting and spelling are not securely embedded for low-attaining pupils and pupils with SEND.
- Pupils' outcomes in subjects such as history and geography are not as strong as they are in English, mathematics and science.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are broadly typical for their age. From their starting points, children make good progress. As a result, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year has been above national averages for the past three years. This means that children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- Adults make careful assessments of children's learning. They work in close partnership with parents, informing them of their children's progress and providing workshops and newsletters to help them support their children's learning. Parents share their children's achievements at home through 'wow' cards sent into school.
- Teaching across the early years is good. Adults plan activities that capture children's interest and imagination. They act as strong role models, supporting and guiding children's learning effectively. For example, in Nursery, an adult skilfully facilitated children role-playing working in an Opticians. Children conducted 'eye tests' and helped

their 'customers' to select glasses, encouraging them to consider colour, style and price. The adult subtly prompted children to ask the right questions and developed their use of the correct vocabulary.

- Adult-led activities provide children with opportunities to practise their reading, writing and number skills. As a result, children make strong progress in these areas of learning. For example, during the inspection children in Reception practised sharing objects between two people and recording this as a division calculation.
- Adults develop children's early reading and writing skills well through the effective teaching of phonics. Children apply their phonics skills to spell. Children in the Reception Year understand the need to use a capital letter and full stop when writing a sentence.
- A well-resourced and vibrant indoor and outdoor learning environment supports children to become independent and inquisitive learners. From an early age, children select their own resources and use these carefully. Children play well together and learn to share equipment and cooperate with one another. For example, in Reception, two children worked together to decide on the paint colours they should mix together to create brown and purple.
- In child-led activities, children concentrate for sustained periods of time and persevere with their chosen tasks. However, sometimes adults do not explain the purpose of activities and show pupils what to do clearly. When children have a good grasp of a concept, adults do not always move them on to something more challenging quickly enough. This limits children's progress.
- Relationships between adults and children are caring and nurturing. Adults provide effective support and encouragement while children play and learn. As a result, children are happy, confident and enjoy learning.
- Clear routines support children to behave well. They move sensibly and safely around the setting and respond quickly to adults' instructions. Children listen attentively and are keen to answer adults' questions.

School details

Unique reference number	103412
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10088610

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Garrington
Headteacher	Emma Grice
Telephone number	0121 4645813
Website	www.stbarnabas-erdington.com
Email address	enquiry@stbarnabas.eu
Date of previous inspection	5–6 October 2011

Information about this school

- Saint Barnabas Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Over the past three years, a part-time executive headteacher has led aspects of the school's work. A new head of school was appointed in March 2018.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average. The number of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- There are two classes in the Reception Year, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 6. There is one full-time Nursery class and one class in Year 5.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in parts of 26 lessons. Four of these observations were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke formally with two groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- Inspectors listened to two groups of pupils read and talked to them about their reading.
- Inspectors and school leaders jointly examined the quality of work in pupils' English and mathematics books. An inspector scrutinised work in pupils' exploration and science books. An inspector also looked at children's learning journals.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the deputy headteacher, the inclusion leader, the mathematics leader and the acting leaders for English and the early years. An inspector met with nine teachers to gather their views on safeguarding, school improvement, professional development and pupils' learning.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and one governor. She also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans; information about pupils' achievement; records relating to safeguarding; minutes of governing body meetings and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors took into consideration the 72 responses to Parent View. An inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

Inspection team

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Collette Higgins	Ofsted Inspector
Charalambos Loizou	Her Majesty's 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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