

Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School

Lanacre Avenue, Colindale, London NW9 5FN

Inspection dates

12–13 June 2019

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders have raised the quality of teaching and assessment to improve pupils' progress. The impact of this work is now evident in all year groups. Leadership of the early years is also highly effective.
- The governing body is experienced, knowledgeable and provides school leaders with significant and effective strategic direction.
- Staff provide pupils with a balance of excellent care and guidance and academic challenge. Working relationships are excellent, helping pupils to become confident learners. This prepares them very well for secondary school.
- Teaching is outstanding and provides exactly the right degree of challenge because of teachers' careful planning of interesting lessons that capture pupils' interests.
- Teaching develops pupils' skills strongly in reading, writing and mathematics, and also in other subjects including art, science and the humanities.
- Pupils in all year groups make outstanding progress. Leaders make effective use of monitoring records to create small-group teaching sessions that quickly address any potential underachievement.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do well because care is taken to plan work that meets their individual needs.
- Pupils show great kindness towards others. They are very well behaved and willing to work hard. Leaders ensure that pupils are very well cared for, and make excellent provision for their personal development.
- In the early years, the outstanding provision in the Nursery and Reception classes supports children's excellent progress so that they are very well prepared for Year 1.
- School leaders have worked effectively with parents to help improve pupils' attendance, which is now above average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the school's approach to teaching and use of assessment across all subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher and other school leaders have been highly effective in improving the quality of education that pupils receive. The leadership team works effectively to help pupils attain to the best of their abilities across all subjects of the national curriculum. As a result, outcomes have improved considerably.
- Leaders hold a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their plans for improvement focus on the areas in need of most attention. The impact of leaders' work is shown by the clear improvements in the quality of teaching made in recent years. This is evident in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and a range of other important subject areas including, science, the humanities and art.
- Middle leaders contribute enthusiastically to the school's work to raise standards. They work closely with senior leaders and teachers, focusing on the quality of work produced by pupils in their areas of responsibility. Their work has led to improvements in how well pupils are being taught because of their subject knowledge.
- Leaders use assessment information skilfully to hold teachers to account for their pupils' progress. Leaders monitor standards and progress judiciously to give them accurate information to identify and support pupils at risk of underachievement. Teachers use feedback from senior leaders to improve their planning and teaching.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding well to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Specific help for those pupils who need to catch up forms the basis of this work. Consequently, disadvantaged pupils' progress compares favourably with that of other pupils nationally.
- The leadership of SEND is new but is already proving to be effective. Leaders understand the needs of pupils and use assessment information effectively to monitor the progress of these pupils and ensure that they receive the help they need to make good progress.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium enables the school to provide specialist teaching which the pupils enjoy, both in lessons and at lunchtimes. Pupils also benefit from a good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, such as archery, tennis and multi-sport competitive events. These opportunities are effective in promoting pupils' fitness and enjoyment of physical activity.
- The school makes excellent provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is helping pupils to acquire a thorough understanding of life in modern Britain and is linked to the school's Catholic faith identity. They show great tolerance and respect for one another, both when working and playing.
- The curriculum at Blessed Dominic is very thoughtfully planned. At the time of the inspection, the whole school was immersed in a local study topic. This was timed to coincide with the planned move from this site after 48 years of occupancy. Through this work, pupils were able to reflect on how the move of school will affect the local area and themselves.

Governance of the school

- Governors are drawn from a wide variety of professional backgrounds, many having a long association with the school. They understand that the school is very much at a point of transition as it moves to the new site. Nevertheless, they have been diligent in ensuring that the school remains focused on ensuring that the pupils receive an exciting curriculum that helps them excel.
- Their vision for the school matches that of senior leaders. While being great advocates for the school, they also offer significant challenge to the school's leadership team as part of their continuous pursuit of excellence.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all members of staff are well trained in child protection and have the necessary skills and knowledge to promote pupils' welfare. The school's policies and practice are thorough. A strong culture of safeguarding exists in the school. Leaders and staff work closely with parents and carers, as well as external professionals, to ensure that all pupils are supported and are as safe as possible. Key staff have ensured that safer recruitment training and practices are up to date.
- Pupils are very confident that the school is a safe place; parents and staff at the school who responded to Ofsted's surveys or spoke with an inspector agree with this view.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching is of a consistently high standard. Staff in all year groups show that they have extremely high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They use their time and resources extremely well. Staff have very positive relationships with the pupils. Their expectations are very high, and pupils react positively to this.
- Teachers plan learning with care so that they pitch and deliver lessons that meet the needs of pupils across the range of attainment. This is particularly true in the teaching of pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Support for pupils with SEND is also very effective, with additional adults motivating them to try hard. Pupils know that the staff want them to do well. In turn, this has developed pupils' extremely positive attitudes towards learning.
- The school has been increasingly effective in its approach to the teaching of early reading skills. This has helped to ensure that precise teaching supports pupils in acquiring a secure knowledge of phonics. This helps pupils to use phonics to decode words increasingly accurately and fluently, which in turn enables them to make a very sure start in learning to read with clarity and expression.
- The teaching of writing is effective in making tasks challenging and interesting for all pupils. The teaching emphasises the development of pupils' use of grammar and punctuation to make their writing more interesting to read. The presentation of work is excellent and shows the great pride that pupils take in their achievement.
- Staff have improved their teaching by making good use of the regular training they

receive and the feedback from mentoring. This means that they understand the best way to teach across the full range of national curriculum subjects. They appreciate this investment in their professional development and, in turn, use their knowledge and skills to help the pupils in their class to make even stronger progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils work and play together harmoniously. This is because they are taught to show kindness towards each other and to demonstrate respect and understanding.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a strong awareness of different faiths, ethnic backgrounds and cultures. Pupils demonstrate considerate attitudes and show respect for each other, even if they hold different beliefs or points of view. This is most striking in the work of the school's debating groups, where pupils also develop the skills of argument and deduction.
- Pupils say that bullying does not take place at the school but that, were it to occur, they know how to respond and the systems that exist to support them. Teachers ensure that pupils are knowledgeable about how to keep safe, for example while using the internet.
- Through different subjects including science, pupils are made aware of key aspects of keeping healthy, such as the importance of a good diet and regular exercise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils conduct themselves impeccably, both in classrooms and around the school site.
- Leaders have continued to work effectively to maintain a great sense of community in the school. This is evident in how the pupils care for one another. While working and playing in the lunchtime break, a calm, friendly and inquisitive atmosphere pervades the school.
- The school communicates well with parents and carers, who are overwhelmingly positive about the school's work. One parent's comment, typical of others, was that 'The school is exceptional at nurturing the children and does a great job promoting diversity and inclusivity within the Catholic faith. The headteacher is kind and caring...the school's staff are kind and helpful, and have always helped me.'
- Last year, attendance was above average when compared with similar schools. The school has maintained a focus on raising attendance through developing partnerships with parents.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Standards at key stage 2 have risen since the last inspection. In 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. This represented very strong progress. An above-average

proportion of the most able pupils attained the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

- In 2018, the proportion of Year 1 pupils meeting the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above the national average. This is because of the school's clear commitment to getting children reading as soon as they start at the school.
- Current pupils are making very good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is shown by the school's carefully moderated assessments of their progress over time, work in their books and their learning in classrooms. This is the result of excellent teaching over time.
- Throughout the school, great emphasis is placed on providing opportunities for pupils to write across other subject areas. This has resulted in written work of an excellent standard. This is particularly true of history, geography and religious education, all of which show very high standards.
- Pupils clearly enjoy reading, and leaders have ensured that a wide variety of good quality reading materials is available to them. Book areas are very well resourced, and this promotion of reading is helping pupils to broaden their reading as well as improving their vocabulary and comprehension skills. Older pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their love of the work of both classic and contemporary authors.
- Careful use of the pupil premium funding is helping to support the good progress that disadvantaged pupils make in all curriculum areas. Their progress in writing is now improving because of the school's careful analysis and the resulting actions.
- As a result of effective support, pupils with SEND are fully included in all aspects of learning, and they learn well.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The leadership of early years is outstanding. Leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the children's developmental needs. As a result, children learn well and make very strong progress from their often low starting points.
- The proportion of children attaining a good level of development by the end of the Reception year has risen since the previous inspection and is now above that of other schools nationally. Children develop very positive attitudes to school life in the early years and are very well prepared for moving into Year 1.
- The school has worked successfully to raise disadvantaged children's achievement. They are now doing better than their peers nationally.
- Children in the Reception class are showing tremendous progress with their skills in writing, with many children able to write clearly, at some length and use basic punctuation including full stops and capital letters.
- Learning in all areas is well integrated. Activities are well planned to include working with number. For example, more-able children were adding two numbers and then finding the double of the answer.
- Staff create a very welcoming, kind and inclusive learning environment, where children thrive in activities that they find enjoyable. Very skilful teaching ensures that children

gain basic skills, working independently or with their peers. Work is planned very carefully so that it can be adapted to meet individual their needs. Careful records of learning are kept that support children's excellent progress.

- Children are excited by the interesting topics that staff plan for them. They settle swiftly to work and are very well behaved and respectful towards one another.
- Classrooms are well resourced and staffed so that children can learn inside and outside, as they choose. Teaching assistants, nursery nurses and other adults work very well to support children in their learning. This is particularly helpful when working with the high numbers of children who start school at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language, helping them to gain confidence with their oracy skills.
- Children are very well cared for and their well-being is of paramount importance. The school has developed effective partnership working with parents, who are clearly valued. Parents contribute to the assessments made of children's progress, beginning with home visits to children joining the Nursery class before they start school.

School details

Unique reference number	101339
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10104267

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Frayne
Headteacher	Geraldine Pears
Telephone number	020 8205 3790
Website	www.blesseddominic.barnet.sch.uk
Email address	office@blesseddominic.barnetmail.net
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2018

Information about this school

- The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The majority of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. The largest group of children is from White-Any other White background, making up about a third of the school, with pupils from Black or Black British – African backgrounds being almost equally represented.
- At the time of the inspection, the school was preparing to move out of its current building to a new school building undergoing construction. All of the school's current Year 6 pupils were on a residential visit.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms in all year groups present; several visits were carried out jointly with members of the school's leadership team.
- The inspection team heard pupils read in Years 1 and 2. They talked to pupils in classrooms and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's improvement plan and records of pupils' behaviour, safeguarding and attendance. They also scrutinised assessment information and records of meetings of the governing body.
- A meeting was held with the chair of the governing body and one additional governor. A phone call was also held with a representative from the local authority. Several meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The views of parents were obtained through informal discussions, the 83 responses to the online Parent View survey and 20 responses for the online text facility.
- The views of staff were examined through the 27 responses of the staff survey.

Inspection team

Tim McLoughlin, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Maher	Ofsted Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	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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