

Inspection of St Bridget's Catholic Primary School

Capesthorpe Road, Poulton-with-Fearnhead, Warrington, Cheshire WA2 0ER

Inspection dates: 15–16 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils told us that most of the time they enjoy school and feel safe. There is little bullying. If it happens, it is quickly sorted out. Pupils said that all the staff are happy to listen to them and help them if they need it. As one pupil said, 'There is always someone to talk to.'

Pupils are well mannered and respectful of each other. They know that their teachers want them to be successful. Each class has a quiet start to the day with 'bagels and a book'. They read and chat informally. This means the day gets off to a calm and pleasant start. Most pupils agree that behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Everyone can learn and concentrate.

Pupils love the many extra activities offered, such as residential trips, adventure holidays, museum and farm visits. They enjoy special sporting events. Some children run a daily mile during the school day and take part in many competitions. These activities help children to develop socially, morally and culturally. The Catholic ethos supports children's spiritual development. There is a very welcoming and pleasant atmosphere in school.

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

Leaders are building a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. Learning is presented in a way which develops and deepens pupils' understanding in most subjects. All teachers manage behaviour well. It is very rare for lessons to be disrupted.

The school has been particularly successful in teaching children to read by the end of key stage 2. Parents sign a 'pledge' promising to hear their children read at home at least three times each week. Those who do so receive a ticket and the winners may choose any book from the book vending machine. They enjoy this with a hot chocolate. The youngest children make a strong start in learning letters and sounds. By the time they leave the school, pupils achieve well in reading compared to other pupils nationally. However, there is more to do to improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Pupils' work in science is well planned. Pupils are clearly excited by science. They are so interested that they sometimes do more research at home. The subject leader shares her expertise so that all staff plan careful chunks of learning. These build on each other and develop pupils' science skills and knowledge well.

In history, the curriculum builds on pupils' previous learning so they can remember more. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to compare the Islamic empire with Europe in 1000AD confidently. This is because they remembered their learning in Year 5 on Vikings and the emergence of Britain.

The weaker area of the school's work has been in mathematics. The subject leader

knows what needs to improve. He and all the staff are working to improve pupils' quick recall of numbers and calculations. For example, staff make sure that pupils have a better grasp of the basics, such as knowing their times tables. There is a clearer sequence of learning on which pupils can build. However, the impact is not evident in all classes yet.

Pupils do not achieve well in key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because there have been weaknesses in the way that learning was planned. There have also been several changes of class teachers in Year 2. Pupils have therefore struggled to build on their knowledge step by step.

Teachers want the best for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils have individual learning plans and challenging targets. Most parents are pleased with the effective support their children receive.

The school promotes pupils' personal development very well. Children discuss issues of disability, race, sex, and gender in a mature and sensible way. The school supports pupils' mental health well.

Children make a good start in the early years because they settle quickly and enjoy their learning. Most children start school with weaker skills in numeracy and language. Adults therefore plan activities which build up children's understanding in number work and in their communication skills. Children love outdoor learning in the wooded area in the school grounds. They become resilient and confident. Parents are very happy with the care that their children receive.

The school now has a stable staff and strong leadership. Everyone is working to achieve the same aim. Leaders have helped staff to improve their skills and extend their subject knowledge. Leaders, including governors, have shown strong capacity to improve in the way they have identified weaknesses in the teaching of reading and successfully addressed them, in key stage 2. They are already seeing improvement in key stage 1, where there is now stable staffing. Leaders have reviewed the curriculum in mathematics so that pupils are improving their understanding.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors make sure that children feel safe, and are safe, in school. All staff are well trained, including mid-day supervisors. This keeps them vigilant and knowledgeable about a range of safeguarding issues. Leaders use pupil questionnaires to explore how children feel in a variety of situations. They use this information to identify what extra topics should be included in the personal, social and health curriculum. There is also a worry box for children to share concerns. The school works very well in partnership with other professionals to support children and families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has gone through a period of turbulence in staffing over recent years. This has resulted in a decline in standards, particularly in key stage 1. Leaders should ensure that in all subjects, the curriculum is planned so that pupils deepen their knowledge and understanding and so are better prepared for key stage 2.
- Since the previous inspection, standards have declined in mathematics across the school. Leaders have welcomed effective support, including from the local authority, in developing an improved curriculum for mathematics. However, the sequencing of work is not yet consistent in all classes. Teachers should ensure that pupils' knowledge about key mathematical ideas, for example their times tables, is developed in a way which allows them to use this information automatically.
- Leaders have successfully improved outcomes for pupils at the end of key stage 2 in reading and writing. However, pupils did not achieve well in the national spelling, grammar and punctuation test in 2019. Senior leaders need to ensure that all staff put the same determination and effort into improving pupils' spelling as they have already done in reading.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	111377
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10110950
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	192
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Magdelene Cawley
Headteacher	Ceri Dobson
Website	www.stbridgetscatholicprimaryschool.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	17–18 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school provides a breakfast club run by the governing body.
- The school is designated as having a religious character and received its section 48 inspection in December 2017 when this aspect of the school's work was graded as outstanding.
- There has been a high turnover of staff since the previous inspection and a reorganisation of senior leadership roles.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the head of early years and the special educational needs coordinator. We talked to subject and middle leaders, teachers and pupils.
- We met five governors, including the chair of governors, school improvement partners from the diocese, an external support partner and representatives of the local authority.
- We looked closely at the teaching of reading, mathematics, science and history.

For each of these subjects, inspectors discussed the provision and quality of teaching with senior leaders and subject leaders; visited lessons; discussed learning with groups of pupils and looked at work in their books. We also considered pupils' work in art and design, physical education and geography.

- We observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- The school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority were reviewed. We spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. We also asked the pupils about how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- We considered the views of the 22 parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey and the 16 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Judith Straw, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Garry White

Her Majesty's Inspector

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