

Inspection of Our Lady and St Benedict Catholic Academy

Abbey Lane, Abbey Hulton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST2 8AU

Inspection dates: 3–4 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They are friendly and kind towards each other. They behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. However, leaders do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can learn in other curriculum areas. The subjects that pupils learn are not well planned. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge and are often not prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils know that staff care about their welfare and well-being. Pupils told us that the school is a safe place and that bullying doesn't happen. Pupils told us that they love the many educational visits that the school organises. This includes an annual residential trip for Year 6 pupils. They enjoy sports and are particularly proud that the school football team recently won the local league.

Older pupils appreciate the extra responsibilities that they have. For example, Year 6 pupils act as play leaders and technology monitors. Some pupils train as peer mediators and help to sort out minor problems at playtimes. Pupils carry out their responsibilities daily and play an important role in the smooth running of the school.

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

Leaders have a clear structure in place for teachers to plan and teach mathematics and English. Staff are clear about what they need to cover in each year group and pupils achieve well in these subjects.

In subjects outside English and mathematics, pupils' learning is not as effective. Recent plans to improve the wider curriculum have not been implemented well. Leaders have not identified the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to be taught in each year group. They have also failed to keep a close enough check on how well the new curriculum plans are being implemented. We found little evidence of effective learning in science and history. Many of the pupils we spoke with struggled to remember what they had learned in these subjects. Many pupils have no written record of their learning in these subjects. This makes it difficult for teachers to assess their progress.

Reading is taught well. Leaders ensure that staff focus on teaching reading from the moment children start at the school. Teachers are skilled at teaching phonics. They are clear about which sounds and words children should be able to read by the end of each term. Children who struggle or lack confidence receive effective help, so that they are not left behind. All pupils read regularly in school from class novels and their own individual reading books. They develop positive attitudes to reading, and many older pupils read widely and often.

The mathematics curriculum is well planned and well structured. Teachers ensure that pupils' learning builds effectively on what they already know. This helps to ensure that pupils learn more and remember more. There are good systems in place

to provide support to pupils who struggle to grasp concepts. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their mathematical understanding and develop their ability to reason.

The school works effectively to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils share their ideas and feelings with confidence. Voting for their classmates to represent them on the school council gives pupils an insight into how democracy works. Year 6 pupils also visit the Houses of Parliament each year. Pupils understand the importance of tolerance and are taught to respect differences and diversity. Leaders use a range of activities, including trips to places of worship. These help pupils to learn more about the different religions and cultures that exist within and beyond their own locality.

Children in early years have high-quality indoor and outdoor areas to learn in. Staff plan activities well. Children build up the knowledge and skills that they need to be ready for future learning. Phonics and early reading have a high priority. Children also have regular opportunities to develop their mathematical knowledge and understanding. The start children get ensures that they develop into confident, independent learners.

Teachers understand how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in reading, writing and mathematics. However, these pupils struggle in other subjects due to the weaknesses in how learning is structured.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school's safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive and clear. Safeguarding records are detailed and well maintained. Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are made on all adults who work with pupils. Staff receive regular training on safeguarding matters. They know what to do if they have any concerns over a pupil's safety or well-being. The school's pastoral team provides excellent support for vulnerable pupils and their families. Pupils said that if they have a problem, adults are easy to approach and talk to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not carefully planned or sequenced learning in many curriculum areas. As a result, pupils are not learning more and remembering more in subjects such as science and history. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans for all subjects clearly identify what pupils need to know and remember at specific points in their school life. They also need to check that all teachers follow agreed policies for checking on pupils' learning.

- Teachers do not have a good enough understanding of how well pupils are learning in subjects other than English and mathematics. As a result, the work that teachers set is not sequenced well enough to build on what pupils know. Leaders need to ensure that teachers make regular checks on pupils' progress and how well they are learning. Leaders also need to ensure that teachers use this information to sequence lessons so that pupils learn more and remember more.

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 are the school and you are 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	140141
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10088590
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Diane Jones
Headteacher	Debbie Sims
Website	www.ourladyandstbenedict.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	9–10 June 2015 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2016.
- Several members of staff have been appointed to their posts since the previous inspection, including the assistant principal and the SEND leader.

Information about this inspection

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

- During this inspection, the following subjects were considered in depth: reading, mathematics, science and history. Inspection activities included: evaluation of curriculum planning; scrutiny of the school's improvement plans; visits to lessons with leaders; scrutiny of pupils' work; listening to pupils read; discussions with subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants; and discussions with pupils about their learning.
- We held discussions with the principal and other members of the senior leadership team. The inspection team also met with members of the local governing body and representatives from the Newman Catholic Collegiate Trust.

- We met with subject leaders and the teacher who coordinates support for pupils with SEND. An inspector also met with the early years leader to discuss the curriculum and children's progress.
- The lead inspector looked at the school's safeguarding records and the checks that leaders make on staff prior to them starting at the school. We reviewed pupils' attendance. We also discussed safeguarding and behaviour when meeting with pupils and teachers.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed during lessons and at dinnertime. We spoke to pupils about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying.
- We took account of the 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. The team also considered the 27 responses to the staff survey and the 17 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jayne Thorpe

Ofsted Inspector

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