

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Junior School

Appleton Village, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 6EL

Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in September 2007 under the relevant inspection framework at that time.

The new judgement of 'good' reflects the current framework as well as any changes at the school since the last inspection.

The school has not been inspected for over 12 years, which is longer than the five-year maximum interval between inspections. Changes in school effectiveness may have happened at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made outstanding schools exempt from routine inspections.

What is it like to attend this school?

As one governor rightly said to us, the school provides 'layers of opportunity' for pupils. Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils are keen to learn. Most pupils give full attention to their activities. They make every effort to attend school when they should and to arrive punctually each day. Pupils take part in many worthwhile activities. For example, pupils watch expert performances of Shakespearean plays and write letters to pupils in a school in India. They compete in table tennis competitions with other schools. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in many subjects. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. Many pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, attend extra clubs at school and develop their wider skills, confidence and talents.

Pupils that we spoke with are happy at the school. As one pupil said of the school: 'The whole environment, it's a lovely place to be.' Pupils spoke positively of staff. For instance, one pupil said: 'When you're really struggling, staff will explain and help.' Pupils said that they feel safe at the school. If another pupil is mean to them then staff resolve issues quickly. Pupils conduct themselves very well. Their behaviour is very sensible and thoughtful.

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

Classrooms are calm. Leaders and staff make sure that pupils develop strong knowledge in many subjects, including computing, mathematics and science. They fully include pupils with SEND in the life of the school. Education at St Bede's prepares pupils properly for secondary school. Pupils learn of potential future careers, for instance as video game designers, internet vloggers, doctors and engineers. Through their education, they understand some of the key issues facing the world. For instance, pupils in Year 6 told us about the benefits of globalisation. They explained to us the challenges posed by climate change and deforestation. While many pupils throughout the school remember well what they have been taught, some do not. This is because curriculum planning in some learning units is less well developed than others.

Leaders and staff successfully develop pupils' love of reading. They provide well-arranged reading activities, events and reading clubs. Staff display a wide range of fiction and information books attractively in many parts of the school. Teachers select books carefully and read these aloud regularly to their classes. Older pupils spoke to us with confidence and understanding about their favourite books. Pupils' attainment in reading in Year 6 is above average. Even so, some less-able younger pupils struggle to make words from letter sounds. As with some other subjects, curriculum planning in phonics could be better.

Leaders and staff make first-rate provision for pupils' personal development. They help pupils to become confident, respectful citizens. Pupils respect other people,

such as disabled people or those who are elderly or seeking asylum. Most pupils attend extra-curricular clubs at the school. This helps them to develop a wide range of valuable skills. Pupils told us that they are grateful to staff for providing these clubs. Leaders organise many other important experiences for pupils, including for disadvantaged pupils. These activities include annual residential trips and educational visits to theatres, the zoo and the law courts.

Pupils represented themselves and their school extremely well when they met with us. This matches their exemplary conduct at other times. Pupils show much self-control when they gather for lessons in classrooms or move along corridors. Staff arrange many voluntary roles for pupils. These roles help pupils to contribute greatly to the work of the school and the local community. They learn to be responsible and thoughtful. They are proud to be a pupil at St Bede's.

Leaders help staff to understand the school's vision and priorities for improving pupils' education. Leaders ensure that staff's workload is reasonable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The pastoral team give a strong lead to the school's work to safeguard pupils. Leaders and staff give pupils proper support for their safety and feelings. Leaders keep clear records of safeguarding issues. They link with other agencies to protect pupils whenever necessary. Governors, leaders and staff have a clear understanding of the risks to pupils' safety. For instance, they understand the dangers to pupils when they use the internet. Staff give pupils, parents and carers lots of information about safe online behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- After studying some units of work, pupils do not fully remember their learning. They do not know as much as they should. Leaders should make certain that staff plan all units of work as well as others. This will mean that teaching helps pupils to remember their learning in the long term and to integrate new knowledge into broader ideas.

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	111371
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10122161
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Owen
Headteacher	Faith Tiernan
Website	www.stbedesjuniorschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 September 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The most recent section 48 inspection of religious education took place in October 2019.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors are new to their roles since the previous school inspection in 2007.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We spoke with parents on the school playground. We considered responses from 43 parents to Ofsted's Parent View survey.
- We did deep dives in reading, mathematics, art and design, and geography. We spoke with leaders, pupils and teachers about these subjects. We reviewed some examples of pupils' work and looked at the school's curriculum documents. We listened to some pupils read to a member of staff.
- We made further checks on the curriculum for science, computing and history.

- We spoke with leaders about safeguarding, SEND, behaviour, disadvantaged pupils and provision for pupils' personal development.
- We spoke with pupils and staff about their experiences of the school, including about safeguarding.
- The lead inspector spoke by telephone with a representative of the archdiocese, a representative of the local authority and with an external adviser to the school. He met with six governors, including the chair.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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