

Inspection of a good school: Bishop Walsh Catholic School

Wylde Green Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B76 1QT

Inspection dates: 3–4 March 2020

Outcome

Bishop Walsh Catholic School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bishop Walsh Catholic School has a strong, caring ethos. Pupils enjoy school and are proud and happy to be part of the school community. Leaders promote a strong moral purpose and a set of shared values, such as humility, compassion, tolerance and service. Pupils live up to the high expectations set for them. They show respect for themselves, each other and adults.

Pupils feel safe in school. They are keen to do well and are respectful of their teachers. In lessons, pupils focus on their learning, behave well and work hard. Around school, pupils behave sensibly. Bullying is rare and dealt with well when it does happen.

Pupils value the wide range of opportunities they have outside of the classroom, particularly in sport, drama and music. There have been over 40 visits and trips put on for pupils in the last year. Older pupils can to work towards the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

This is a supportive school community and parents and carers value the work of the school. They speak positively about staff, describing them as 'caring, compassionate and understanding'.

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

School leaders have worked hard to provide a high-quality education for all pupils. As a result, across most subjects and key stages, an ambitious, sequenced and inclusive curriculum is being taught. Subject leaders have thought carefully about what pupils should learn and when. Assessment is effective and helps teachers plan. Pupils can confidently explain how their previous learning supports their current work.

Although many aspects of the curriculum are strong, there are some aspects that need attention. In Years 7 and 8, pupils do not learn the full range of design and technology subjects. In addition, leaders have not promoted GCSEs in modern foreign languages (MFL) well enough. This means that too few pupils have been able to study all the subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc).

Pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do less well than other pupils. The school has reviewed its pupil premium plan and SEND provision. Staff have worked together to introduce strategies that will raise achievement for these pupils. These are positive moves, but at the time of the inspection, these new initiatives had not been in place long enough for a measurable impact to be seen.

Pupils' high standards of behaviour and attitudes mean that opportunities for learning are maximised in the classroom. Behaviour in corridors between lessons and around school at lunch and breaktime is, in nearly all cases, orderly and calm. Staff model good behaviour and have high expectations of pupils. The school has a strong anti-bullying programme with a philosophy, 'caring to learn – learning to care', that is supported by all.

Students in the sixth form have excellent attitudes to learning and they achieve well. The relationships between staff and students are very positive. Key stage 5 pupils are confident learners who make use of all opportunities to extend their knowledge and their learning. Staff provide students with helpful information and guidance about their next steps after the sixth form.

A high proportion of pupils join or leave the school during the school year. This has been the pattern for some time. Families relocate, sometimes abroad, and their children change school. The school is meticulous in following up pupils who leave during the school year and makes every effort to support them.

Spiritual, moral, social, vocational and cultural development is a high priority for the school. There is a very wide enrichment programme of extra activities for pupils. This includes trips and visits, such as a history trip to Normandy, an art trip to Rome and a week skiing in Andorra. In addition, clubs and revision sessions support pupils' learning well. There are drama events and a production every year, the most recent being 'School of Rock'. These activities, together with the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, enhance pupils' personal development successfully.

The school is very well led. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about leaders' concern for their workload and well-being. Reviews in marking, assessment and out-of-hours communication have contributed to a more positive work-life balance for all staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders have thorough systems in place to check that staff are safe to work with pupils. Staff receive regular training about safeguarding. They understand the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a pupil.

Staff and parents say that pupils are safe in school and the pupils confirm that they feel safe. Pupils know what to do if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders are aware that pupils' knowledge and skills in some areas are limited in key stage 3. Leaders should ensure that pupils have sufficient time for the full range of subjects to be studied, particularly in design and technology.
- The school has recognised that outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are not as good as those of other pupils. Leaders need to continue to develop strategies and create opportunities for disadvantaged and SEND pupils so that outcomes for these pupils improve.
- Leaders have not promoted modern foreign languages at key stage 4 sufficiently, despite pupils' high achievements. Leaders need to ensure that all pupils are given encouragement and opportunities to study modern foreign languages and qualify for the English Baccalaureate.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 19–20 April 2016.

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	140524
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10122545
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1015
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	198
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Peter McCann
Executive Principal	Teresa Cotter
Website	www.bishopwalsh.net
Date of previous inspection	19–20 April 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham. The most recent Section 48 inspection took place in October 2016.
- The executive principal took up post in September 2019.
- The school makes use of five alternative providers. These are East Birmingham Network Academy, East Birmingham Network Academy 2, Riverside Academy, Imedia School and James Brindley School.

Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the executive principal and vice and assistant principals.
- We met with the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), subject leaders

and a range of other staff.

- We met with governors and trust representatives and spoke on the telephone to a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.
- We focused on English, science, modern foreign languages and art and design and technology. We met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects, as well as speaking with teachers and pupils.
- We evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding and checked the school's single central record and scrutinised policies relating to safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- We considered the 157 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the 36 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and the 19 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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