

Inspection of a good school: St Benedict's Catholic Primary School

Charlton Lane, Midsomer Norton, Radstock, Somerset BA3 4BD

Inspection dates:

10–11 March 2020

Outcome

St Benedict's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite, friendly and confident. They enjoy coming to school and love the many opportunities the school provides for them to experience. For example, pupils enjoy taking part in different sporting activities at lunchtime, which are run and organised by Year 6 pupils. They also enjoy the many visits they get to go on to support their learning, such as to the SS Great Britain.

Some parents spoken to at the school gate and who responded to Parent View expressed concerns about bullying and pupils' behaviour. Pupils know what bullying is. They say there is little bullying and are confident that adults deal with any issues should they occur. Pupils behave well throughout the day.

Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They feel leaders listen to their concerns and appreciate the improvements they make, for example by raising the height of the school fence. They understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

Pupils enjoy positive and supportive relationships both with staff and each other. They know they can talk to an adult if they have a worry or concern. Support for pupils who feel worried or need extra support at breaktime is highly effective.

While leaders and teachers set high expectations for their pupils in a range of subjects, the quality of this work is not consistent to ensure that pupils make the progress they should in some subject areas. For example, in reading, leaders do not have a clear plan of what pupils should learn in each year group, which limits the achievement of some pupils. Similarly, in mathematics, too many pupils lack the mathematical fluency to solve increasingly complex problems and/or when they encounter new or unfamiliar work.

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

Leaders have made a promising start to revising their curriculum. For example, in geography, subject plans set out what pupils must learn in each class. This helps pupils build upon what they already know. Teachers ensure that geography lessons build upon previous learning towards more complex tasks. As a result, pupils know and can remember key knowledge that has been taught.

The systematic teaching of phonics and early reading is not secure to support pupils' reading. The phonics programme is not implemented well enough. Leaders' expectations of where pupils need to be term by term are not clear. As a result, they are not sure if pupils are achieving well or not. The words in pupils' reading books do not match the sounds they know. This means some pupils are not developing their reading skills quickly enough.

Leaders are keen for pupils to read widely and to nurture a love of reading. Pupils enjoy being read to. However, leaders do not give sufficient priority for teachers to read aloud books and longer novels to pupils. The reading curriculum, especially in key stage 2, is not planned in enough detail to grow a love of reading among pupils. Consequently, too many pupils do not read as often as leaders and teachers would like.

The mathematics curriculum clearly sets out what pupils need to know in each year group. Teachers plan lessons that build upon pupils' mathematical knowledge for most pupils. Teachers use a range of resources to help pupils understand important mathematical ideas. Leaders are determined to improve mathematics further and are aware that pupils' mathematical fluency and ability to solve more complex problems are not yet good enough. Recent improvements in mathematics have not had enough time to fully embed.

Leaders provide pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with effective support. Teachers adapt learning and provide additional support so pupils with SEND can access the curriculum. However, in mathematics, some pupils with SEND are not supported to enable them to learn as well as they should.

Behaviour in and around the school is good. Staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct. They manage the behaviour of pupils well.

Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to be active, confident and healthy members of society. Pupils learn about British values by taking on roles and responsibilities within the school, such as the school council and the newly formed eco-council.

Governors support leaders to improve the school. Leaders work closely with the staff. Teachers value the leadership and support the headteacher provides. They appreciate that leaders are mindful of their workload.

In discussion with the headteacher, we agreed that further fostering a love of reading with pupils and developing an ambitious, sequenced reading curriculum may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff care about the pupils. They are well trained in safeguarding and receive regular updates. They understand what to do if they have a concern and follow the school's policies for managing safeguarding referrals.

Safeguarding leaders maintain thorough records. They act swiftly if a concern about a pupil's safety is brought to their attention.

Leaders make sure that the required pre-employment checks are carried out on adults who work with pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The early reading programme is not effective for all pupils. Leaders' expectations of what pupils should learn are not clear enough. Books do not consistently match the sounds they are learning. Pupils who lack reading fluency are not getting the help they need to read accurately. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are clear about what pupils need to know term by term. Reading books need to better match the sounds pupils are learning in school.
- Leaders have correctly identified that pupils do not have sufficient fluency and problem-solving skills in mathematics. This means some pupils are not able to tackle more complex mathematical tasks. Pupils with SEND are not always supported well enough in mathematics to achieve as well as they can. Leaders need to continue to embed the actions already taken so that all pupils acquire the mathematical knowledge they need to achieve well.

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 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 10 December 2015.

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	123840
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10058410
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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jon Stratford
Headteacher	Cindy Stocking
Website	www.somerset.org.uk/sites/stbenedicts
Date of previous inspection	10 December 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Benedict's Catholic Primary School is a Roman Catholic school. It is part of the Diocese of Clifton.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club which are managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior teacher, the leader responsible for SEND, subject leaders, teachers and governors.
- I spoke to representatives from Somerset County Council and the Diocese of Clifton.
- I met with groups of pupils from across the school, both formally and informally.
- I reviewed documentation which included the school's register of checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.
- I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and in lessons, and discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, teachers and senior leaders.
- I spoke to parents at the start of the school day and took account of 48 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and 48 free-text comments. I received two letters from

parents. I also considered 23 responses to the staff survey and 47 responses on the pupils' survey.

- I considered reading, mathematics and geography as part of this inspection. For these subjects, I spoke with the headteacher, met with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, undertook an analysis of pupils' work and visited lessons. I heard pupils read from key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Inspection team

Richard Lucas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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