

Inspection of St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Narrow Lane, Brownhills, Walsall, West Midlands WS8 6HX

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 June 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Inadequate

What is it like to attend this school?

St. Bernadette's has improved significantly since the last inspection. Leaders, governors and staff have worked hard to improve the quality of education across the school. They care deeply about the pupils and want them to do well.

Leaders are improving the curriculum so that pupils can make even better progress. Reading is a high priority in the school. Pupils quickly learn to read confidently and like the new books on offer. They enjoy learning in other subjects, such as science, history and geography. Pupils have positive attitudes to school. Staff know pupils very well as individuals and work together to meet all their needs.

The school is a calm place to be. Pupils develop into responsible, respectful citizens and behave well. Occasionally, one or two pupils talk or fidget when others are listening, but teachers are quick to deal with this. Pupils are happy at school and say that bullying hardly ever happens. They told inspectors that, 'All the teachers make sure that we are safe and if something is wrong, they fix it.'

Parents are very positive about the school. They appreciated the online learning during lockdown and say that the school has gone from strength to strength.

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

Senior leaders and governors have improved the school since the last inspection by doing the right things at the right time. They have a shared vision and a detailed plan for the continued improvement of the school. Working together, they have raised expectations and set in place a broad curriculum.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of reading. It is now taught well and is a strength of the school. In the Reception class, pupils quickly learn their sounds and use them to read the new phonically decodable books. Regular opportunities to read with an adult are provided for all pupils across the school. Support for those who need extra help is swiftly provided. Parents like the new reading routines and comment on the strong progress their children make. Pupils are confident, enthusiastic readers, keen to talk about their books.

Similarly, leaders have focused on improving mathematics across the school. They put in place a carefully sequenced curriculum with an emphasis on basic skills. This starts in Reception where pupils use practical resources to talk about their number bonds. 'Times-table Tuesday' provides a regular chance for all pupils to learn and practise multiplication and division facts. Teachers ensure that pupils use what they know and support them to see, try, apply and reason in mathematics.

Leaders have made improvements to the curriculum. They ensure that there is a greater focus on helping pupils know more about the different subjects they study.

Many subjects, such as science, geography and history, are carefully planned and sequenced. The foundations for these subjects are clearly laid in the early years. Reception pupils draw maps and talk about bacteria and mould when exploring science in the world. The pandemic has delayed some of the improvements leaders planned to make in a few subjects. For example, there is still work to do to identify the essential knowledge in subjects such as art and design technology.

Most pupils make good progress now and enjoy talking about what they know. For example, pupils in Year 1 shared their knowledge confidently about the tin man and mining in the local area. Sometimes pupils do not have enough chances to practise or recall what they are learning. When this happens, pupils find it hard to remember what they have been taught.

Leaders enrich the curriculum with opportunities for pupils to visit places like the Garrick Theatre and local universities. Pupils in the early years look forward to 'Welly Wednesday', when they go outside to learn in the forest area. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils know about other faiths, such as Islam and Buddhism, as well as considering what being a member of the Catholic faith means. Pupils are considerate of the feelings of others around them. They listen respectfully when others express a different point of view. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that staff know how best to support pupils and meet their needs. Staff work together to help pupils become more independent in their learning.

Staff value the training and professional development that they receive. They are keen to develop their skills and knowledge and often look for further learning opportunities. Leaders manage their workload well and make staff feel valued members of the team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders build positive relationships with parents and work with the whole family to keep pupils safe. Staff are well trained and vigilant. They have a clear process for reporting concerns. Any issues are followed up quickly and referred to appropriate agencies. Leaders make sure that vulnerable pupils get the right help as soon as possible. Staff help pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, especially when working online. The headteacher acts quickly if any pupil attempts to misuse the internet. Leaders regularly use the school newsletter to highlight areas of concern and how parents can help their child stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have put in place a carefully sequenced curriculum in most subjects that helps pupils build on prior knowledge. Some subjects are less well developed and implemented because of the disruption caused by COVID-19 (coronavirus). Leaders should continue to identify the essential knowledge that they want all pupils to learn in subjects such as art and design and technology, so that learning builds on what pupils know and can already do.
- Not all teachers teach new content in a way that helps pupils remember well. Leaders should support teachers in developing an appropriate subject-specific pedagogy that enables pupils to know more and remember more over time.
- Leaders have raised expectations across the school – they expect the best from all pupils. Leaders should make sure that all staff share the same high expectations, so that every pupil can achieve all that they are capable of.

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 [here](#).

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	104242
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10184708
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Quinn
Headteacher	Siobhan Moran
Website	http://www.stbernadette.walsall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	23 and 24 January 2018 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced some staffing changes. The current headteacher was the acting headteacher from June 2020 until she was appointed to the substantive post in May 2021.
- During the inspection, two teachers were on maternity leave and their classes were covered by temporary staff.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in June 2019, when it received an overall 'good' judgement.

Information about this inspection

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

In accordance with section 13(5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

- During this inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher and acting deputy headteacher. They talked with subject leaders, the SENCo and the teacher for the early years. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body, via a video link. Telephone calls were held with a representative from the diocese and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed teaching in all year groups. The following subjects were considered in depth: reading, mathematics and geography. Inspectors examined leaders' plans, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects are taught. They also looked at other subjects to check how they are planned and taught.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and spoke with pupils about their understanding of bullying. A formal meeting also took place with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents relating to safeguarding, and spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding arrangements. They checked to make sure that all the required pre-employment checks are made on staff before they start work at the school.
- Inspectors considered the 44 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 43 free-text comments. They reviewed the 14 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Gater

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021