

Inspection of a good school: St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Walsall

Blue Lane East, Walsall, West Midlands WS2 8HN

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 November 2021

Outcome

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Walsall continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this well-led school. Staff are kind and expect pupils to work hard. In lessons, pupils are well behaved and listen to their teachers. Outside, they get on with their peers. If anyone is worried about anything, adults always help. In addition, pupils can go to a special nurture room, if they wish. Here, there is calm music and time to relax and talk about anything that is bothering them.

Reading is taught very well. In all classes, adults regularly read aloud to pupils. They also make sure pupils have plenty of good books to read by themselves. In most other subjects, pupils also learn a lot, although music could be strengthened. In history, staff try to cover too much, and pupils miss out on learning important things properly.

The school's values shine out through all its work. Bullying is not accepted. Pupils of all ages learn to respect others and to be responsible. They are polite, helpful and ask thoughtful questions.

All adults work together to keep everyone safe. Pupils who need extra help with their learning get the right support. Staff manage this well so that pupils do not miss out on other things.

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

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School is a safe place for pupils to work, learn and play. It has informed, strong leadership and supportive team spirit. All in the school community are valued and know that they are valued.

In the Nursery, staff help children to settle in quickly. They also help them to get better at speaking and listening and to enjoy music, songs and rhymes. This paves the way for learning to read when they start in Reception. In this class, and in Years 1 and 2, the school's well-resourced and organised approach to phonics and early reading works well. Staff know what they are doing and keep a close eye on how everyone is getting on.

Once in key stage 2, pupils who still need help with reading get extra input using the same resources and approach.

Across the school, staff regularly read aloud to the class. They introduce pupils to new authors and allow them to enjoy listening to a good story without interruption. This builds their concentration and fuels their imaginations. Indeed, this attention to listening and enjoying stories is a distinctive strength of everyday practice.

Attention to handwriting is not so strong. Remote learning during the COVID-19 lockdowns has played a part in this. Even so, the school could do more to develop good posture and the correct approach to letter formation when pupils first start learning to write.

In mathematics, pupils do well. This is because there is whole-school approach, which is supported by training and advice from leaders. Occasionally, resources are not as well matched to pupils' needs as they could be. For the most part, staff check what pupils know and new work builds sensibly on what has gone before.

In other subjects, leaders are making some changes. In art, for example, they have improved planning so that lessons build more carefully on what has been taught before. In history, however, they are not so far ahead. In this subject, staff try to cover too much, which means that pupils do not learn what they need to know in enough depth.

The school's values guide a lot of what happens. Through their work on stewardship and human dignity, for example, pupils learn about their role in taking care of people and places. Pupils have a well-developed sense of right and wrong.

Teachers expect calm, respectful behaviour. Because of this, lessons run smoothly. Pupils say that any instances of poor behaviour are managed well by staff. Inspection evidence supports this view.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are included fully in lessons and school life. If necessary, they also benefit from extra sessions run by specially trained staff. These sessions are focused and purposeful, and help pupils to feel good about themselves and their achievements.

The school provides a range of after-school sports clubs, which have just started up again. School trips, including a residential visit to an activity centre, are due to start again next year.

The school's capable governors and senior leaders steer the school with a firm, supportive vision for ongoing improvement. Staff agree that expectations are high, but workload is realistic, and leaders help them to do their jobs well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know what to do if they have any worries about anyone. The school has well-established systems for noticing, recording and following up any concerns. Staff receive regular training, which keeps them alert to the sort of problems that can occur. If a pupil does not turn up in the morning, staff find out why. If they notice a change in someone's behaviour, they act quickly to find out if anything is wrong. When needs be, the school shares information with the right people.

The school carries out all the required checks on employees and visitors. These are recorded correctly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In music and history, pupils do not learn all that they should. Leaders now need to make sure the new resources and planning for music are put into action as soon as possible. In history, the subject leader has begun to make changes for the better, but now needs to make sure curriculum plans focus on the right things. This will help pupils to learn and remember all they need to know
- The school does not have a consistent approach to teaching pupils about good posture and correct pencil grip when writing. Leaders should improve practice across the school, but particularly in early years and key stage 1. This will help to ensure that pupils are taught to form letters correctly and develop good writing habits.

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 outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	104233
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10200259
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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael Quinn
Headteacher	Jean Richmond
Website	www.st-patricks.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 and 19 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An executive headteacher leads two schools: St Patrick's and St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School.
- The school's most recent section 48 diocesan inspection took place in March 2015.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- During the inspection, the inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. In these subjects, the inspector visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, examined teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way the subjects were planned and taught. He also looked at art and some other subjects in less detail to check how they were organised and taught.

- The inspector noted external performance data about the school and looked at school documents. These included information about behaviour, the school curriculum and improvement planning. He also checked the school's website.
- The inspector asked pupils, staff, leaders and governors about safeguarding arrangements. He examined the record of employment checks on school staff and looked at other school records. He also found out about safety procedures and routines at the school.
- The inspector watched pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, on the playground and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders, governors, teachers and pupils. He also had a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, he took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's, pupils' and parents' views.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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