

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

Wilnecote Lane, Belgrave, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 2LF

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 March 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

St Gabriel's school mission statement is at the heart of everything it does. This is a 'welcoming school where everyone prays together, cares for each other and learns together'. Leaders have created a supportive and nurturing environment in which pupils are well cared for and safe. This, together with teachers' consistently high expectations, helps pupils to achieve well.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They listen to one another and show respect. They apply the gospel virtues they learn. Pupils have a clear understanding of what bullying is. They say that it happens rarely in school because staff help them sort out any problems at an early stage.

Staff plan exciting and interesting activities. They expect pupils to work hard and do their best. Pupils say they are happy to be in school. They enjoy their lessons. Many say they especially enjoy mathematics. They value the KFC (key fact check) sessions which help them to remember what they learn.

Parents and carers speak in glowing terms about the 'family feel' of the school. They say staff are helpful, friendly and approachable. They value the care and concern that adults show for pupils and their families.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. Leaders and teachers ensure pupils build on their existing knowledge so that they remember more. For example, 'flashback four' questions at the beginning of mathematics lessons help pupils to remember their learning.

Teachers plan activities so that they link to the topics pupils study. For example, Reception children made collages of owls, linked to the book 'Owl Babies'. However, in a very small number of other subjects, staff do not plan tasks that develop pupils' subject knowledge and skills effectively.

Teachers check what pupils know frequently. This helps them plan what pupils need to learn next. Interesting and engaging activities help pupils remember their learning. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson, pupils danced enthusiastically as they counted aloud in twos. Consequently, pupils make good progress and achieve well.

Reading has a high priority. Children begin learning phonics as soon as they join the school. Staff follow a consistent approach to teaching phonics every day. They match pupils' reading books well to the sounds that pupils learn. This builds pupils' confidence. Teachers make sure that pupils who fall behind receive the help and support that they need to catch up quickly. For example, the pre-school club for older pupils helps to build confidence and fluency in reading.

Across the school, pupils have access to a wide range of books. They enjoy reading. Older pupils enjoy choosing books to read by themselves. As they move through the school, pupils read with increasing confidence, fluency and expression. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and the different types of books that they enjoy.

Behaviour around school and in lessons is good. Pupils know right from wrong and understand why rules are important. They know what to do to move up their class behaviour ladder. Pupils say adults apply rules fairly and consistently. Staff deal with any inattention in lessons by a look or a word so that the lessons are not interrupted.

Leaders and staff teach pupils about gospel virtues. Pupils link these to their personal development. They know the importance of being truthful, compassionate and generous. Pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted through assemblies and prayers.

Pupils elect school councillors and support charities. They know that not all families are the same as theirs. They help one another and share resources. Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and know the importance of relaxing to promote mental health. They know how to keep themselves safe. For example, children in Reception carefully put on helmets before riding their bikes.

Teachers successfully adapt the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their different starting points. Leaders provide good support for pupils with social and emotional needs.

Governors keep a close eye on many aspects of the school, such as the safeguarding of pupils. They use their knowledge and experience to check that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. Although they have a broad overview of the school's budget, they do not have a clear enough view of whether they secure value for money.

All staff are proud to work at the school. They value the support that leaders provide. Staff appreciate the steps that leaders have taken to make their workload manageable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there are robust procedures in place to keep pupils safe. All staff receive regular training and are alert to potential signs of harm. They report any concerns promptly. Leaders ensure that children and families receive the help they need. Leaders are persistent when seeking support from outside agencies. Parents value the care that staff provide.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They understand the need for personal space. They know how to report their worries if someone behaves in a way that makes them feel uncomfortable.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a very small number of foundation subjects, leaders have not made clear the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. Teachers sometimes place too much emphasis on making activities engaging rather than focusing on the key knowledge and skills to be learned. Subject leaders should ensure that curriculum planning focuses on what pupils need to know and remember.
- Governors do not have a clear enough understanding of how to measure the impact of their expenditure on new curriculum plans. This means that they cannot be sure whether they are achieving value for their money. Governors should develop their systems to check how well funding is used to implement changes to the school's curriculum, and check the impact of this on pupils' achievement.

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 fourth section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2002.

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	124373
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10211136
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	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chair of governing body	Theresa Miller/Rob Vernon
Headteacher	John Hayes
Website	www.st-gabriels.staffs.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Catholic school is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in March 2017. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. She spoke with five members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and held a telephone discussion with a representative of the archdiocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils read.

- The inspector also looked at the curriculum for history, geography and design and technology.
- The inspector checked the work that the school does to keep pupils safe. She examined safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff. She spoke about safeguarding with leaders, including the attendance and welfare officer, and governors. She checked staff's knowledge and understanding of safeguarding policies and procedures.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their views of the school, behaviour and safeguarding. She observed their behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- The inspector considered a range of information about the school, including documentation shared by school leaders or made available on the website.
- The inspector considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire. She also spoke with parents as they brought their children to school and took account of an email sent to the school for her attention.
- The inspector also took account of the responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Helen Morrison, lead inspector

Ofsted 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 2022