

Inspection of Blessed Mother Teresa's Catholic Primary School

Somerset Road, Highfields, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 9UZ

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2022

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 Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are cheerful, confident and keen to welcome visitors to the school. Pupils feel safe because they know that the staff will look after them. There is a strong sense of pastoral care across the school, which reflects the school's values. Staff know the pupils well.

Leaders and staff, many of whom have worked at the school for several years, are committed to the school and the pupils. They work well together as a team to improve the school and drive improvements. Leaders and staff value the support of the multi-academy company, particularly in relation to the development of the curriculum.

In most lessons, pupils enjoy learning, listen to their teachers and focus on their work. Teachers can teach and pupils can learn. On the playground, pupils mix and play cooperatively. In the dining room, they enjoy chatting and spending time with their friends.

Pupils speak confidently about the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. Bullying is rare, but when it happens, staff deal with incidents promptly. Pupils and parents and carers appreciate this.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They value the level of care that staff show towards their children.

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

Subject leaders, supported by the multi-academy company, have carefully considered the structure and content of the curriculum. In a wide range of subjects, the curriculum maps out the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn within and across different year groups. Teachers value the information contained within curriculum plans. They say that it guides them to know what to teach and when to teach it. What pupils learn today builds on what they have learned before.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain concepts in a clear, logical and well-informed manner. Teachers weave subject-specific vocabulary into their teaching effectively. Pupils use similar vocabulary when answering questions or explaining their understanding of a concept.

In most subjects, teachers make sure that work is matched to pupils' needs. Consequently, learning is embedded, pupils are not held back, and they work with an appropriate level of independence. However, in mathematics, there are occasions when the most able pupils are given tasks that are not challenging. As a result, pupils finish tasks quickly and then have to wait too long for other pupils to catch up or for the teacher to provide them with another activity. This limits their progress through the mathematics curriculum.

Reading is a school priority. Teachers and teaching assistants have been well trained to teach phonics. From an early age, children and pupils develop their reading skills well. Most pupils enjoy reading, but a small number of pupils who find reading more challenging are not displaying a love of reading. Leaders are aware of this and are continuing to work on new ways to foster a love of reading across the school.

The school's handwriting policy is not being consistently implemented in all year groups. There are some instances where the work in pupils' books is poorly presented and untidy. This is not being picked up and addressed by some staff. Therefore, some pupils continue to produce the same quality of work week after week.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in lessons and all aspects of school life. Teachers think carefully about the needs of pupils with SEND. If required, teachers adapt activities and provide additional support. Where necessary, one-to-one or small-group work provides focused support for pupils with SEND.

Leaders and staff provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate leadership skills. For example, pupils have organised team challenge activities to raise money for charity. Pupils speak confidently about how the school's values encourage them to be kind to each other. Pupils have a developing understanding of fundamental British values and how these are evident in, and part of, everyday school life. Pupils are really pleased that trips have restarted this year. Days out, such as the visit to Stafford Castle, are memorable and support pupils' learning.

School leaders, supported by the local governing board, are continuing to develop the school. All staff are fully on board and support leaders in their efforts. Staff say that leaders have an open-door policy and can always be approached if help is needed. Staff appreciate this. Teachers value the actions taken by leaders to make workload more manageable, such as through the revised marking policy.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a shared responsibility for safeguarding. Safeguarding is everyone's business. Those responsible for the leadership of safeguarding organise safeguarding training and regular updates for all staff. Consequently, staff know what to do if they are concerned about a pupil's welfare. Where necessary, leaders work with external agencies so that the right support is put in place for pupils and their families.

Staff teach pupils how to keep themselves safe, both in and out of school. Pupils have a solid understanding of online safety and the associated dangers of the internet. Pupils say that they feel safe because the staff care for them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In mathematics, there are occasions when the most able pupils are given tasks that are not challenging. As a result, they finish tasks quickly and spend too long waiting for other pupils to catch up, or for teachers to provide them with another activity. This limits their progress through the mathematics curriculum. Leaders need to make sure that in mathematics, teachers plan work that is well matched to the needs of the most able pupils, so that their learning can be deepened.
- Teachers are not consistently applying the school's handwriting policy, and some teachers do not have high enough expectations of how well pupils present their work. As a result, some pupils are continuing to produce work that is untidy and poorly presented. Leaders need to ensure that staff apply the school's handwriting policy and have consistently high expectations of the quality of work that pupils produce.

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	142192
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10211994
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	137
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair of trust	Ken Wilson
Headteacher	Catherine Horton
Website	www.blessedmotherteresas.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Painsley Catholic Academy multi-academy company.
- A section 48 inspection to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of Blessed Mother Teresa's Catholic Primary School as a Catholic school took place on 3 and 4 March 2016.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club operating on the site. This provision is managed by the school.
- The school has a nursery that admits three-year-olds.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The lead inspector met with the headteacher and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy company. The lead inspector met with three members of the local governing board, including the chair.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of directors. He also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.
- Inspectors held meetings with the safeguarding team, the early years leader, the special educational needs coordinator and other leaders.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at a selection of English books from a range of year groups.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. Two separate groups of pupils accompanied the lead inspector on a learning walk around the school.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- An inspector talked to parents at the end of the day. Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text comments received during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, published information about pupils' performance and minutes of local governing board meetings.
- Inspectors also looked at information published on the school's website.

Inspection team

Wayne Simner, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Travis Latham

Ofsted Inspector

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