

Inspection of St Clare's Catholic Primary School

Robert Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B20 3RT

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 June 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 Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Clare's Catholic Primary School welcomes everyone. Pupils feel happy and safe. They enjoy lessons and are proud of their school. Bullying is very rare. Pupils know that there is always an adult to talk to. Teachers sort out any disputes straight away.

Pupils dress smartly and behave well in the classroom. A wide range of equipment helps them to play happily during social times.

From the outset, children learn how to care for one another. Pupils understand the need for tolerance. They show respect to other children and adults. Pupils have opportunities to take responsibility, for example as school councillors. Teachers help pupils to understand the world around them and their place in it. Older pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, are confident and express themselves. They are well prepared for secondary school.

Leaders have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. They have planned an ambitious curriculum for all, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils study all the subjects in the national curriculum.

The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the school's work in the community. Visits to places of interest and a small number of after-school clubs have now restarted.

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. It is rooted in the school's religious and social values. For example, teachers understand how learning about the environment in science fits with the theme of stewardship for the Earth. In each subject, leaders have set out how teaching should build up learning over time. There is a focus on key vocabulary that pupils should learn for each topic. Leaders know how activities in the early years prepare children for key stage 1.

Leaders have provided effective training for staff. As a result, teachers have the expertise to teach the curriculum well. Teaching follows the planned curriculum and pupils learn well in many different subjects. Starting in the early years, teachers check on what pupils have learned and build further on this. They are taking effective steps to address any gaps in pupils' learning that have resulted from pandemic-related disruptions. Teachers build in time to go over previous learning. However, they do not do enough to check that all pupils remember the most important information.

Leaders place a very high priority on reading. Beginning at the start of the Reception Year, a structured programme ensures that children learn about letters and sounds in a sensible sequence. Staff have established strong routines and use quality resources in a consistent way. They check carefully on pupils' progress. Staff help any pupils who find reading difficult to keep up. Books for younger pupils are well

matched to their knowledge of phonics. Pupils learn to read fluently. They know the importance of reading, and most read with enthusiasm.

In mathematics, leaders have changed the curriculum to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to apply their mathematical knowledge. Teachers' questioning encourages pupils to think mathematically. However, the current approach is relatively new, and leaders know that there is work to do to ensure that teaching and assessment in the subject are more consistent.

Leaders ensure that staff know about the additional needs of pupils with SEND, and how best to help them. As a result, these pupils learn well. Leaders identify the next steps for each pupil. Sometimes though, teachers do not check carefully enough on how well each pupil is achieving them.

Pupils understand the school's routines and rules for behaviour. They think that these are fair and respect them. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, the corridors and dining halls are orderly. Pupils play well together in the playground.

Across the school, pupils learn about different religions and cultures, for example through the study of Islamic art. They learn about the importance of democracy. Pupils in Year 6 know the importance of free speech and treating other people's opinions with respect. Staff value pupils' views. Leaders have made suitable links with local universities. Teachers encourage pupils to think about their future ambitions.

Senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas that still need some development. They want to improve the school further. Most staff, including teachers new to the profession, say that leaders are considerate of their workload. Leaders work with charities to support local causes and are keen to restore those links that lapsed during the pandemic. Recently appointed governors have brought helpful expertise and a new perspective to the governing body. They provide effective oversight of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding. They provide helpful updates to ensure that staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Staff are alert to the risks that pupils may face. Teachers make sure that pupils learn about these risks, including those when using the internet.

Leaders take appropriate steps to help children and support families. They involve other agencies when the need arises. The school keeps careful records. Pupils are confident to talk to adults if they are worried. This helps them to feel safe.

Leaders make the right checks on staff who join the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is some inconsistency in the way in which teachers implement the curriculum in mathematics. In particular, teachers sometimes fail to ensure that pupils work accurately and recognise their misconceptions. Leaders should monitor the implementation of the mathematics curriculum to identify where staff would benefit from additional guidance.
- Teachers sometimes do not use the next steps provided to support pupils with SEND sharply enough in the assessment of these pupils' work. As a result, future work is not as carefully tailored to their needs as it might be. Leaders should ensure that teachers know how best to use the targets that pupils have been set. They should do this to strengthen the ways in which they check on pupils' progress and adapt teaching in response.
- Pupils, particularly in the younger years, sometimes struggle to remember key information from a topic. Often, this is because subject leaders identify a wide range of information and vocabulary for pupils to learn. Within this range of knowledge, leaders and teachers should identify the core knowledge that pupils should remember and be able to recall, in order to make it easier for teachers and pupils to focus on the most important information.

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	103476
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10227524
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	300
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Price
Headteacher	Victoria Rivett
Website	www.stclare.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 and 4 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Clare's Catholic Primary School is a Roman Catholic faith school within the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The religious character of the school was last inspected by the diocese in October 2017.
- A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Many of these pupils are still in the early stages of acquiring English when they arrive at school.
- A high number of pupils join the school at times other than at normal points of transfer.
- The school runs a breakfast club. An after-school club is run on the school site by another provider.

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 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The chair and two foundation governors met with the lead inspector, one remotely. The lead inspector met with a representative of the local authority. He spoke by telephone with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils at social times and with groups of pupils more formally.
- When inspecting safeguarding, the lead inspector looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff's suitability to work with children. He also considered the effectiveness of staff's training and the procedures to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' plans to improve the school and records of governing body meetings. They also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- An inspector met with parents outside the school at the start of the second day of the inspection. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and design and science. For each deep dive, an inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leader, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- An inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey O'Keeffe-Pullan	Ofsted Inspector
Karen O'Keefe	Ofsted Inspector

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