

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

Wake Green Road, Moseley, Birmingham, West Midlands B13 9QE

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils at St Bernard's Catholic Primary School. The school motto, 'one family, following Christ, learning together, making a difference', is central to the school's work. Pupils are happy and safe. They enjoy coming to school.

Reading is well taught. Pupils love reading and they have access to a wide range of books. Parents are positive about the quality of education their children receive. However, support for some pupils with specific needs is not always as sharply focused as it could be.

Leaders make sure that pupils go on trips and visits to broaden their interests. For example, pupils visit Tamworth Castle to deepen their knowledge of Anglo-Saxon life. Pupils enjoy attending the range of clubs on offer including debate club, choir, coding and Gaelic football. Year 6 pupils enjoyed their recent residential to Alton Castle. Year 5 pupils are going to a residential at Whitemoor Lakes.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils are caring and respectful of each other. They engage fully in their learning. At social times pupils play well together. Incidents of poor behaviour or bullying are rare. Pupils trust that staff will swiftly address any concerns that they have.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum for pupils. Learning is carefully sequenced so that pupils build up knowledge over time. Teachers present new learning well. Subject leaders make sure that teachers regularly recap on pupils' prior learning. This helps pupils to remember things they have learned before. Teachers have high expectations of pupils. They receive frequent support and training from leaders to strengthen their subject knowledge.

Teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning during lessons and over time. This helps them to identify and correct any misconceptions. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Children in the early years settle well into school life. This is because staff have high expectations and establish clear routines. Leaders have ensured that the environment is well organised and resourced to cater for the youngest children. Staff use the environment well. For example, they enable children to recreate patterns in a range of ways indoors and outdoors. Staff carefully plan learning based on what children know and can do. Children learn a lot about early language and number. However, they do not have enough opportunities to practise these skills when working independently.

Leaders prioritise reading. The reading curriculum is carefully planned, and staff are well trained to help pupils learn to read well. Leaders have ensured that staff are highly skilled at teaching phonics. Pupils read regularly to adults in school. Books carefully match the sounds children are learning. Staff ensure that children regularly practise using sounds they know when reading. Leaders have ensured that teachers have the resources they need to teach reading well. Class novels such as 'Goodnight Mr Tom' and 'Stig of the Dump' allow pupils to deepen their understanding of texts.

Leaders ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in all school does. However, the curriculum is not always adapted well enough or as carefully tailored as it could be to meet the needs of pupils with additional needs. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as they could.

Activities beyond the academic curriculum support pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy fundraising for charities, such as Father Hudson's Homes, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Fireside. Opportunities such as becoming digital leaders, eco leaders and spiritual leaders allow pupils to take on responsibilities. In doing so, they develop teamwork and communication skills.

Pupils develop an understanding of democracy through the school council and debate club. The school 'virtues' help pupils to care for, respect and treat each other well. Pupils recognise and respect others' differences by learning about different faiths and cultures. They visit different places of worship including the local synagogue, mosque and Hindu temple. Pupils learn about festivals including Eid, Diwali and Chinese New Year. This all helps to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. They have established an effective curriculum and begun to evaluate how well it is going. Some subject leaders are new and getting to grips with the role. They are establishing routines for checking how well things are going. Leaders have clear plans in place to support the school's continued improvement. Staff value the support from leaders to manage their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise pupils' welfare. They make sure that staff are well trained. This means that staff understand how to keep pupils safe. Staff record and report their safeguarding concerns swiftly. Leaders work effectively with external agencies so that pupils in need of help get the support they need.

Pupils learn about online safety and healthy relationships. They know how to raise concerns with trusted adults in school.

Leaders make sure that appropriate checks on staff are undertaken before they start working at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for some pupils with SEND is not always as sharply focused as it could be. This means that at times these pupils do not make as much progress as they should. Leaders should do more to support teachers so they have the knowledge and resources to support all pupils with SEND effectively.
- Some subject leaders are new to these roles and have not yet developed effective ways to check how well the curriculum is being taught. This means that they do not know how well pupils are learning the curriculum. Leaders should support new subject leaders to develop the necessary expertise to carry out their roles in a more effective way.
- In the early years, children learn a lot about early number and language, but staff do not make the most of all of the opportunities to practise these early skills. As a result, children do not have as much chance as they might to extend their learning. Leaders should look for ways to increase opportunities for children to practise what they have learned in focused teaching activities when working throughout the continuous provision.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2012.

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.

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	103462
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10211134
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Sutton
Headteacher	Peter Foley
Website	http://www.st-bernards.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school's last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 for schools of a religious character took place in July 2017.
- Leaders do not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in art, mathematics and reading. These included visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, examining curriculum guidance and talking with pupils and staff. The inspector also looked at work from a sample of other subjects. The inspector also discussed the curriculum with subject leaders.
- The inspector listened to pupils read and reviewed reading resources.

- The inspector looked at a range of documentation on the school's website.
- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. This included examining the record of employment checks on school staff, scrutinising policy documents and meeting with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, the designated safeguarding lead, representatives of the governing body, a diocesan representative and a local authority representative.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, the pupils' survey and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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