

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

Quebec Road, Warrington, Cheshire WA2 7SB

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 November 2022

## **Outcome**

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

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school, where they are happy and safe. Pupils are eager to learn. They readily help staff and like to socialise with their friends in the school's breakfast club. Pupils are respectful towards adults and each other. They follow the rules closely and help to make the school a calm and purposeful place for learning.

Pupils know that leaders and staff will listen to their concerns. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with well. Pupils appreciate British values, including those of democracy and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. They understand the harm that discriminatory behaviour such as racism and sexism can cause. Pupils are adamant that in St Benedict's, everyone is treated equally.

Leaders and staff expect pupils to achieve highly and behave well. Pupils, and children in the early years, respond positively to these expectations. Consequently, they learn well in a range of different subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also learn well.

Pupils look forward to educational trips and visits to museums and other places of interest. Pupils in Years 3 and 6 enjoy outdoor activities during their annual residential learning. School council members perform their responsibilities diligently. Pupils regularly raise funds for various charities.

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

Leaders and governors have developed a carefully designed curriculum, which identifies the knowledge and skills that leaders want pupils, and children in the early years, to acquire. Leaders make sure that teachers implement the curriculum in the intended order. This means that pupils build on and consolidate their learning as they move through the early years and key stages 1 and 2. As a result, at the end of Year 6, pupils are ready for their learning in high school and beyond.

Teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning. They also assess the extent to which pupils and children are developing their independence, resilience, creativity and subject-specific terminology. Most subject leaders have a good understanding of how well teachers are delivering the curriculum. However, a few subject leaders are developing their expertise. The support that they give to teachers is therefore not as effective as it could be. In these subjects, leaders do not have a precise understanding of how well pupils are deepening their understanding.

Leaders prioritise reading. Teachers and teaching assistants are trained well. Pupils, and children in the early years, benefit from a well-organised and structured phonics curriculum. Children in the Reception class learn phonics right from the start. In the Nursery class, children enjoy listening to stories and learning new words. Pupils who find reading difficult are supported well. As a result, they are developing their reading fluency well.

Older pupils enjoy poetry and different styles of writing, including comedy and science fiction. Teachers carefully select the books that pupils read in class. This is expanding pupils' reading horizons. Pupils who were heard to read did so confidently and with good expression.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND early. They work closely with staff to make sure that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders work in close partnership with parents, and a wide range of external specialists, to ensure that pupils with SEND get the support that they need promptly. Due to this careful approach, pupils fully engage in learning and realise their potential.

Pupils listen attentively in class and work well together. For example, in physical education (PE) lessons, they behave safely and sensibly. Children in the early years are focused during story time. As a result of pupils' and children's positive attitudes to learning, lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

Leaders have created a varied and exciting personal development curriculum. They make sure that pupils can develop their talents in sports such as football and boxing. Pupils enjoy playing musical instruments such as the xylophone and recorder. They like to attend after-school clubs, including the cross-country running club. The school choir performs in the local church and in a residential care home. Pupils learn how to maintain their mental health. They are responsible citizens who frequently organise litter-picking events. Older pupils serve bagels and look after their peers in the 'magic' breakfast club.

Parents and carers describe leaders and staff as 'caring' and 'understanding'. Staff share their views. They told the inspector that they enjoy working together and sharing good practice. Staff, including those new to teaching, said that leaders and governors are mindful of their workload and well-being.

Governors know the school well. They know which areas of the curriculum are the strongest, as well as what needs to improve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors, leaders and staff are vigilant when it comes to safeguarding. Safeguarding leaders make sure that staff are regularly briefed on matters pertaining to pupils' safety and welfare. Staff are conversant with the government's latest guidelines on keeping pupils safe in education.

Staff adhere to the school's safeguarding policies and procedures. They are skilled at spotting potential signs of neglect and/or abuse. Staff report concerns about pupils immediately.

When necessary, leaders work with different external agencies to make sure that pupils get the help that they need. Pupils learn about dangers and risks through different aspects of the curriculum.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a few areas of the curriculum, subject leaders are developing their knowledge about how effectively teachers are delivering the curriculum. As a result, in these areas, subject leaders do not have a precise understanding of how well pupils are learning. Senior leaders should ensure that subject leaders have time to develop their expertise. This will help subject leaders to establish how well the curriculum is being delivered. It will also help them to assess whether pupils are learning new knowledge and acquiring skills securely.

## **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 July 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111308
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226160
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Philip Atkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Perry
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stbenedictswarrington.co.uk">www.stbenedictswarrington.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection was carried out on 19 June 2019.

## 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. He also held meetings with other leaders, including those responsible for SEND, pupils' behaviour, welfare and personal development.
- The inspector met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body. He met with the school's improvement partner and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the Liverpool Archdiocese. The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.

- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, science and PE. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with parents and reviewed responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments from parents. He reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector spoke to safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents. He also talked with pupils about their safety and welfare. The inspector examined a range of policies and documents. He also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy.

### **Inspection team**

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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