

Inspection of St Benedict's Primary School

St Benedict's Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B10 9DP

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2023

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 thrive at St Benedict's Primary School. They are safe and happy, knowing that there is always an adult they can talk to. Staff resolve any disputes promptly. Pupils are respectful of each other and of adults. The school environment is calm and purposeful.

Leaders are ambitious for what pupils should learn. Teachers put these intentions into practice. They are skilled at adapting the work for pupils, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language (EAL). All pupils study a broad range of subjects and learn well.

Children get off to a very good start. Staff in early years have high expectations for children's learning and behaviour. Across the school, pupils behave consistently well in the classroom, and play happily at social times. Disruption to learning is very rare. Pupils grow in confidence and resilience. They are motivated to learn.

Pupils have a good range of opportunities to take on leadership responsibilities, for example as school counsellors or peer mediators. Trips to places like the zoo help pupils to put their learning in context. Leaders ensure that all pupils have the chance to join a club after school.

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

Leaders have planned an ambitious curriculum. They have high expectations of all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are new to speaking English. Pupils study a broad and balanced range of subjects. Learning in the early years prepares pupils well for key stage 1. Teachers plan day-to-day activities for pupils so that they meet leaders' long-term learning aims. Pupils' learning builds on what they already know. Teachers check on what pupils know and remember, and take steps to fill any gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils, including those with SEND, make strong gains in their knowledge across the curriculum. However, leaders have not identified gaps in teachers' subject knowledge in a very few subjects at key stage 2. These gaps mean that pupils do not learn what they should.

Reading is a priority. From the start of the Reception year, children follow a structured phonics programme. They learn about letters and sounds in a logical order. Staff use reading resources in a consistent way. Books for younger pupils are well matched to their knowledge of letters and sounds. Staff swiftly help pupils who find reading more difficult. Teachers understand how to focus on vocabulary to support pupils with EAL. Older pupils have access to a good range of high-quality texts. Teachers pay due attention to different reading skills, and how to read aloud with expression. As a result, most pupils learn to read fluently and with comprehension. Pupils enjoy reading and do so widely.

Leaders have used the United Nations Convention on the rights of a child to underpin the values and policies of the school. The school has attained the Rights Respecting Schools Award at gold level. This approach contributes strongly to pupils' personal development and behaviour. Pupils understand their own rights, and respect those of others. They are alert to discrimination, and have a strong sense of right and wrong.

Staff quickly establish effective routines for pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils behave consistently well. They show consideration for each other, and courtesy to adults. Pupils enjoy learning and concentrate well in lessons. At social times, pupils play happily together. Pupils who enter the school with social and emotional difficulties are supported by staff effectively. Consequently, these pupils quickly get better at managing their own behaviour.

Pupils follow a planned programme of personal development that teaches them about healthy relationships, for example. They have opportunities to share differing opinions. Pupils can take responsibility and serve others, for example on the eco team or as elected school counsellors. Across the school, pupils develop a sense of their own voice, and their duty to listen to others. They become confident, independent and increasingly articulate. Staff make sure that all pupils can take part in extra-curricular activities. Leaders are seeking to increase the range of clubs on offer. This is because they are currently focused on sporting activities.

Leaders understand the school community well. They seek to involve parents and carers in pupils' learning, but this work slipped back during the pandemic. As a result, some parents say that they do not know enough about how to help their children's learning.

Staff say that leaders are always ready to listen to their views. They believe that leaders are considerate of their welfare and workload. Leaders and governors have maintained a resolute focus on pupils through a period of significant structural change. In general, leaders make effective checks on how well pupils are learning. In a very few subjects, however, weaker leadership has failed to address staff's need for better subject knowledge at key stage 2.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are well trained in safeguarding. Procedures for reporting concerns are understood by all. Leaders take the right actions to help children. They take appropriate steps to involve other agencies that work with children.

Teachers make sure that pupils learn about the risks that they may face, including when using the internet.

The school keeps the necessary records of safeguarding checks. Leaders make the required checks on the staff who join the school. Governors provide effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements.

Pupils have confidence in talking to adults if they are worried. Their knowledge of their rights helps to keep them safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not recognised that gaps in specialist knowledge prevent teachers from implementing the full curriculum at key stage 2 in a small number of subjects. As a result, older pupils are not learning as much in these subjects as they should. Leaders should ensure that all teachers are fully knowledgeable and confident, so that they are able to implement fully the curriculum which leaders have planned.
- The school's extra-curricular programme is currently limited in scope, and largely confined to sport. Pupils do not have additional opportunities to develop some of their talents and interests, for example in the arts. Leaders should consider how the school's range of clubs enable pupils to take part in a rich variety of different activities.
- Leaders' work with parents in supporting their children's learning slipped back during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, some parents do not know as much as they might do about how to help their children learn. Leaders should ensure that parents understand how best to support their children, particularly in early reading.

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	103261
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10256820
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eve Cooper
Headteacher	Armine Williams
Website	www.stbendic.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 June 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Benedict's Primary School now admits pupils between the ages of four and 11. At the time of its last inspection, it admitted pupils between the ages of three and seven.
- A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Most of these pupils are still in the early stages of acquiring English when they arrive at school.
- A significant number of pupils join the school other than at normal points of transfer.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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, the vice chair and one other governor met with the lead inspector. The lead inspector spoke over the telephone with a school improvement adviser.
- The inspectors spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- The lead inspector looked at the school's procedures for recruiting and checking on staff suitability to work with children when inspecting safeguarding. He also considered the effectiveness of staff 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.
- The inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's questionnaire for parents. Inspectors 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 pupils and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. 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. An inspector also spoke to leaders and pupils, and scrutinised pupils' work 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
Kerri James	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Snooks	Ofsted Inspector

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