

# Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Middle School

Holloway Lane, Redditch, Worcestershire B98 7HA

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Inspection dates:

17 and 18 January 2023

## Outcome

St Bede's Catholic Middle School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

St Bede's Catholic Middle School has a strong character. The school's ethos and values are central to every aspect of school life. Pupils are polite and friendly. They learn to respect one another and show kindness to all. Pupils trust and appreciate their teachers and other members of staff.

Pupils at this school value their learning. All pupils benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers and support staff care about pupils and help them to do their best.

Leaders and staff have high expectations for what pupils should achieve and how they behave. Teachers are passionate about their subjects and this, in turn, increases pupils' interest in their studies.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. They are confident that if they have a problem, there will be someone to talk to. They get the help they need. Pupils are clear that bullying hardly ever happens and, if it does, it is dealt with straight away.

Pupils have access to a wide range of enrichment activities after school. They particularly enjoy sporting and performing arts clubs and activities. These are well attended by pupils, including those with SEND.

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

The school's values and ethos drive the quality of education on offer. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are focused on their learning. The curriculum follows the national curriculum. It is ambitious, planned and well sequenced. Teachers adapt their teaching and the resources they use so that all learners can access the curriculum. Leaders engage closely

with pupils' previous schools to ensure that the curriculum offered from Year 5 builds on what pupils already know. There are clear end points to the curriculum at the end of Year 8. Pupils work towards these and achieve well. They are well prepared for the next step in their education.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use it to present subject matter clearly. Leaders have made sure that important subject content is regularly revisited. Teachers' targeted questioning in lessons checks pupils' understanding and what they remember from previous learning. This helps pupils to learn more and to remember more of their learning in lessons. There are other assessment systems in place to check if pupils remember their learning over time. These systems are better understood by some pupils than they are by others. For some pupils, these assessment systems do not help them to remember more of their learning.

Developing pupils into fluent and confident readers is a key strength of the school. There is regular assessment of pupils' reading ages. Individual support and extra reading practice are provided for those who need to improve. The reading leader works closely with colleagues to make sure that reading is a priority in all subjects. Pupils make good use of the school library. Pupils told inspectors that they love reading because it helps them to improve their writing and their understanding. It allows them to 'be somewhere else'.

Leaders work closely with parents and carers to identify and meet the needs of pupils with SEND. These pupils are supported well to follow the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND achieve well at the school.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They greatly value the 'Epraise' system of rewards for effort and participation. Strong pastoral support is available for all pupils. Relationships between pupils and staff are strong. This ensures that lessons are very rarely disrupted by poor behaviour.

There are many wider curriculum opportunities for pupils. There is a strong ethical element to spiritual, moral, social, vocational and cultural education which is linked to the school's vision and values. Every week there are multiple after-school activities provided for pupils. A high proportion of pupils, including pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, attend these sessions. Careers education in the school is strong and goes beyond national guidance. This education extends to all year groups.

The school is well supported by the multi academy company, especially with regard to leadership, training and curriculum development. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that leaders make sure that staff have a manageable workload and an appropriate work-life balance.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

School leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. Staff are confident in identifying any pupil who may be at risk of harm. There is a clear system in place for the recording and referral of any concerns.

Pupils know who to go to if they are worried or concerned. They know that they will be listened to and taken seriously. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. This includes sessions about appropriate internet use and the risks posed by knife crime.

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

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

- Some pupils do not understand how the assessment systems help them to know and remember more of the curriculum over time. This means that these pupils do not remember as much of the curriculum as they could. Leaders should ensure that all pupils understand and use the assessment system, to help them know and remember more of the curriculum.

## **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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

## **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. 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.

## 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	141064
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10240645
Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	9 to 13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	670
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Brennan
Principal	Lloyd Roberts (Executive Principal)
Website	<a href="http://www.st-bedes.worcs.sch.uk">www.st-bedes.worcs.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	14 and 15 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- St Bede's is a member of the Our Lady of the Magnificat Multi Academy Company.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The school's previous Section 48 inspection was carried out in May 2022.

## Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspectors met with the executive principal, the deputy principal, the senior assistant principal, other senior leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read in Years 5, 6, 7 and 8.

- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. A range of documents, including the school's single central record of checks on adults in school, were reviewed.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, the chair of the trust and the trust's chief executive officer.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

David Buckle, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Huw Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

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