

Inspection of St Mary and St Benedict Catholic Primary School

Leigh Street, Hillfields, Coventry, West Midlands CV1 5HG

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 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?

Leaders and staff care strongly about pupils and know them as individuals. This helps build positive relationships and means that pupils are confident in talking to staff. For example, if bullying occurs or pupils have a concern, pupils are confident to tell staff, who resolve issues quickly. Pupils feel safe in school.

Pupils are happy and polite and greet others with a smile. They behave well in class and nearly always move calmly around school. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They quickly correct any pupil who loses focus.

Pupils enjoy the many extracurricular activities on offer. Leaders encourage pupils to develop their interests through opportunities such as hockey, multisports and learning the recorder or ukulele. Pupils have watched 'The Nutcracker' in London and enjoyed a residential visit to Wales. Pupils are also rightly proud of their Mini-Vinnies group, which raises funds for charity.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders quickly identify when pupils fall behind and help them to catch up. Parents and carers praise the way staff take care of their children. One parent summed up the comments of many by saying, 'All the staff here go the extra mile to support my child.'

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

Leaders have made reading and phonics a top priority. They provide staff with effective training so that they teach phonics well. Leaders ensure that pupils are assessed and supported with early reading within the first days of starting school. Pupils read books that are well matched to their phonic knowledge. Older pupils talk with pleasure about stories that they have read and readily discuss their favourite authors.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and model subject-specific language accurately. Teachers successfully use 'spot-checks' to remind pupils of key knowledge and words they have learned before. For example, in geography, pupils were able to recall prior learning about the seven continents. Leaders ensure that there is a sustained focus on developing pupils' language and vocabulary from Nursery to Year 6. For example, younger children are regularly encouraged to repeat new words aloud.

Leaders have successfully developed the school's curriculum to ensure that it is well planned and sequenced. It sets out clearly what pupils should learn in a broad range of subjects. Leaders have identified effectively the key vocabulary that pupils need to know so that they can learn about topics with more understanding. Leaders also bring the curriculum to life through activities that deepen pupils' learning. For example, there are trips to historical places such as Selly Manor, and opportunities

to watch performances of 'Twelfth Night', dress up as Romans with 'Roman' visitors and enjoy events such as Egyptians Day.

Pupils achieve well, although they achieve less well in writing than in reading and mathematics. Leaders have introduced new approaches to strengthen the planning and teaching of writing. Pupils' writing across the curriculum is improving as teachers develop and extend pupils' vocabulary.

Leaders use assessment in a highly effective way to identify pupils quickly if they fall behind in different subjects. Leaders coordinate support well to enable pupils to catch up. Leaders take care that assessments do not cause unnecessary workload. Staff say that leaders consider their workload and that leaders provide helpful training that strengthens their support for pupils with SEND.

Staff support pupils with SEND very well. Teachers provide additional resources and appropriate support to help these pupils with their learning. Leaders involve parents at regular intervals and work successfully with a range of external specialists.

Most pupils focus well in lessons, and their attitudes to learning are positive. However, staff do not do enough to support all pupils to take pride in their achievements. As a result, some pupils' work is often poorly presented and untidy.

Leaders provide well for pupils' personal development. Staff work skilfully with the youngest children so that they begin to learn about being resilient and sharing with others. For example, children stood outside in the pouring rain, happily and eagerly taking turns to smell vinegar. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves healthy and can explain the importance of a healthy and balanced diet. Pupils learn about life in other countries and cultures. The curriculum reflects the multicultural nature of the local community. For example, leaders have introduced an Eritrea after-school club. Pupils demonstrate strong knowledge of different religions.

Governors visit the school regularly and understand the school's context. However, they do not know enough about what is working well and what needs to improve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have effective systems in place so that any safeguarding concerns are identified quickly and followed up in a timely fashion. Leaders ensure that staff receive regular and relevant training on how to keep pupils safe. Staff know how to respond to different concerns.

The correct checks are carried out on staff before they start work at the school. However, some checks had not been recorded accurately. These administrative errors were corrected during the inspection. This has not put children at risk.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Following the pandemic, leaders have not yet fully addressed weaknesses in pupils' writing. This means that pupils' writing is not as good as it could be. Leaders should continue to focus on improving pupils' knowledge of written English and how to use it effectively.
- Untidy and poorly presented work is not routinely picked up by staff because they do not have high enough expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Leaders should clarify their expectations and ensure that these are modelled by staff. They should do this to encourage pupils to take more pride in their work and achievements.
- Governors do not ask leaders rigorous and searching questions about the performance of the school. This means that governors have a limited view of the school's performance and do not hold leaders fully to account. Governors should review the way they work so that they can support and challenge leaders in a more informed and effective way.

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	133556
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10242132
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	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elizabeth Hancock
Headteacher	Pauline MacDonald
Website	www.stmary-stben.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There have been no significant changes since the previous inspection.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteachers, subject leaders, the SEND coordinator and two governors. The lead inspector spoke on the telephone to a representative from the diocese and met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics, physical education 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.

- To gather evidence about pupils' wider development, one inspector met with the subject leader for personal, social and health education and groups of pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to review records. He scrutinised the single central record of recruitment checks. Inspectors also spoke to governors, staff and pupils to evaluate safeguarding.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of other school documentation and policies, including the school development plan and minutes of governors' meetings.
- The lead inspector spoke to parents and considered responses, including free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire. The lead inspector also reviewed the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Mark Cadwallader, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Maneer Samad	Ofsted Inspector
Bev Petch	Ofsted Inspector

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