

Inspection of St Nicholas Catholic Primary School

Jockey Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B73 5US

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 March 2023

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| 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 | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Nicholas Catholic Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Nicholas Catholic Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school where they feel safe and well cared for. The school values of faith, achievement and happiness are at the heart of school life. Pupils and adults model them well.

There are positive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils trust staff to help them with any problems they have. Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond well to this. They understand the rules and say that adults help them with any disagreements they have with friends. Bullying does not happen very often and when it does adults deal with it.

Leaders want pupils to achieve as well as they can. They ensure that pupils enjoy learning in a broad range of subjects. Pupils learn to keep themselves mentally and physically healthy. They are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils enjoy the wide opportunities they have. This includes taking part in clubs, musical performances, and sports competitions. They are proud of their responsibilities, for example, as a school councillor, as a play leader or as a 'Mini Vinnie' in the chaplaincy team. Pupils are respectful of religions different from their own. They know that people should be treated equally, regardless of their faith or ethnicity.

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

Leaders have worked hard to review and improve the curriculum. They have thought carefully about what pupils should learn and when, in each subject. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to explain new learning clearly, so that pupils can build on what they already know. Teachers check what pupils have remembered and use this information to clarify any misconceptions before moving on. This helps pupils to achieve well. Pupils talk knowledgeably about what they are learning, for example pupils in Year 3 could use subject-specific vocabulary to explain what causes volcanoes to erupt. In the early years, children could explain what the chicks, they are excitedly waiting for, will need once they hatch.

Some subject leaders are new. They have great subject knowledge and use this well to provide effective training for staff. They have less experience of checking how well the curriculum is being taught across the school. Some subject leaders do not have precise enough knowledge of how well the curriculum is being delivered in all classes.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils to read with confidence. Children in the early years learn phonics from the start and a love of reading is promoted throughout the school. Staff have received the training they need to teach reading well. Pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning, and extra support is provided for

those pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Pupils appreciate the choice of books in their class library and can recommend new titles to be added.

Leaders have introduced a new approach to how pupils will learn to talk and reason about their work in mathematics. This focus on using mathematical vocabulary and practical equipment to explain how problems have been solved begins in the early years. Teachers in a small number of classes are not yet being supported sufficiently to put the new strategies in place consistently well.

There are clear systems in place for identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The new SEND coordinator ensures that staff receive the training they need. Teachers adapt activities, so that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. There is effective support for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties and this has had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and confidence. Pupils with SEND achieve well.

Children settle quickly when they join Reception Class. Children are inquisitive and enjoy learning. They behave well and are happy to share, take turns and tidy up when they are asked to. Staff work closely with parents before children start and during their time in the early years. Many parents praise the work of the school and say that their child is happy, safe and achieving well.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. They ensure that there are meaningful opportunities to learn about British values. Pupils enjoy the trips linked to their learning and the opportunities they have for residential visits. They are proud of their work to support local and national charities, including, for example, raising funds for a local hospice.

Governors are deeply committed to the school. They have high expectations of leaders and hold them to account well. Staff enjoy working at the school and say that leaders do all they can to support their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. They ensure that staff receive regular training and updates. This means that staff are able to quickly identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders work with a variety of agencies to ensure that pupils and their families have the support they need. They ensure that the necessary checks are made when recruiting staff.

Pupils learn about how to be safe in a range of situations. This includes road and water safety as well as learning about the risks strangers can pose. Older pupils understand what a safe relationship should be like.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The new approach to teaching mathematics is not being taught consistently well in a small number of classes. This means that some pupils are not making as much progress as they could. Leaders should ensure that they are checking how well the new strategies are being implemented and providing additional support where it is needed.
- There is some variance in how subject leaders are checking how well the curriculum is being delivered across the school. This means they do not have a clear enough picture about how well the curriculum is meeting the needs of all pupils in their subject. Senior leaders should ensure subject leaders can better check the implementation of the curriculum, so that they are able to lead continuous improvement.

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

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| Unique reference number | 140529 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 10242281 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 210 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of directors |
| Chair of directors | Maria Stirrop |
| Principal | Neil Porter |
| Website | www.stnicholassutton.org.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- St Nicholas Catholic Primary School is part of the St John Paul II Multi Academy Company (MAC). The executive headteacher oversees two schools in the company.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character. The school had its last section 48 inspection in March 2019.
- The school does not use 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. 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 executive headteacher, the head of school and the special educational needs coordinator.
- An inspector met with the catholic senior executive leader, with two MAC directors and three governors.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, computing and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham education service.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders about attendance, behaviour and early years. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils to gather their views about the school.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders, pupils and staff about the arrangements for safeguarding and reviewed safeguarding records and documentation.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, responses to the staff survey and responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted parent View.

Inspection team

Jo Evans, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jane Edgerton

Ofsted Inspector

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