

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

Church Walk, Atherstone, Warwickshire CV9 1PS

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of the St Benedict's community and say that 'everyone belongs here'. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. There are respectful relationships between adults and pupils. Leaders have made sure that pupils know what to do if they have a worry. Staff deal with bullying effectively. This means that pupils feel safe in school.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that all pupils get a broad, balanced education and experience. Pupils are keen to learn and they generally achieve well.

Leaders have high expectations for behaviour, and pupils meet these expectations exceptionally well. Adults apply the behaviour policy consistently. Pupils know what is expected of them. They are respectful towards adults and kind to each other and have a positive attitude towards learning.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the activities that they participate in as part of the 'Holy Spirit Experience'. For example, they enjoy gardening, sports clubs and the choir. Pupils raise money for charity and contribute to the food bank. They have opportunities to become prayer partners or school councillors or to join the pupil safeguarding team. These experiences help pupils to become responsible citizens.

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

Leaders have designed a broad, rich and ambitious curriculum from early years to Year 6. Leaders have thought about the knowledge they want pupils to learn. They have broken the information down into small steps. Teachers are clear about what to teach and in what order. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and remember before moving forward.

Children in early years get off to a great start. Staff in Reception make sure that activities are purposeful and fun. Across the school, teachers structure lessons thoughtfully to make

the most of every opportunity to learn. Pupils know the classroom routines well and they focus on their work in lessons. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to recap and review what they know. Leaders make sure that many lessons relate to life in the wider world. For example, while learning about using money, Year 6 pupils discuss financial scams and the need to keep personal details safe online.

Teachers use assessment effectively to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. They address pupils' mistakes sensitively and quickly. This means that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Staff adapt the work so that all pupils can work at the correct level. For example, in Year 4, some pupils learned about angles by doing an angle 'treasure hunt', while others worked on the same learning on paper. This enabled all pupils to achieve the same outcome. In history lessons, pupils deepen their knowledge through the use of carefully chosen questions. These encourage pupils to think about issues linked to their learning, such as equality and discrimination.

There is an appropriate focus on reading in the school. Teachers use story time as an opportunity to model enthusiastic reading and to explore language. Pupils vote for the book that they want teachers to read. Children say that they love reading. Starting in early years, children learn phonics every day. If pupils fall behind, they receive support to help them catch up. However, there is variability in how well staff check the sounds that pupils know. This means that sometimes mistakes are not addressed quickly and pupils miss opportunities to practise the correct letters and sounds.

Pupils with SEND are identified quickly and receive effective, targeted support. Teachers make adaptations so that these pupils can learn alongside their peers. Pupils with SEND recognise that the support they receive helps them to learn and make progress. Pupils at St Benedict's understand that some pupils may need additional support to manage their behaviour. They are understanding and tolerant of this and say that teachers manage this effectively.

There is an effective, well-planned offer for pupils' wider development. Leaders have ensured that the pupils get access to experiences such as visits to the theatre, the seaside and the church. Leaders plan these experiences to make sure that pupils are open-minded and curious about the wider world. Pupils experience other cultures through the annual multicultural week and Vocations Day. As a result, pupils value difference and are respectful of and tolerant towards others.

Ensuring pupils' regular attendance is an ongoing priority for all staff. Leaders relentlessly apply the school's attendance policies and procedures. They support and challenge families when poor attendance is an issue. However, some pupils still do not attend school regularly enough. These pupils miss out on important learning.

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. They value the welcoming and nurturing ethos and say that staff go 'above and beyond to care for the whole child'. Parents appreciate the opportunities they have to be part of the school community, such as through the recent Coronation picnic.

Staff, including those at the start of their careers, enjoy working at the school. They value the training they receive and the support from leaders in managing their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A robust safeguarding culture exists at St Benedict's. Leaders carry out all necessary checks on adults. Staff receive regular training so they can spot and report any signs of concern. They respond to incidents in a timely way, and leaders follow these up effectively. Leaders work with outside agencies if needed to make sure that pupils and their families receive the support they need. The safeguarding team meets regularly to check on pupils' welfare.

Leaders provide a curriculum that teaches pupils to understand age-appropriate risks, including internet safety and healthy relationships. Pupils know that adults will listen to them if they have any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Despite the work leaders are doing to improve attendance, some pupils continue to be persistently absent. This means that these pupils fall behind their peers and do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders should continue to work with parents to improve attendance.
- Not all staff are as expert in teaching phonics as leaders would like. There is variability in how well the early reading curriculum is delivered. This means that some pupils are not making as much progress as they could with their reading. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive the guidance they need to teach phonics effectively.

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 predecessor school, St Benedict's Catholic Primary School, to be good in November 2012.

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	141812
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10257027
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	183
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Philip Richardson
Principal	Sinead Smith (Senior Executive Principal)
Website	www.stbenedictsonline.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Holy Spirit Catholic Multi-Academy Company.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. A section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was carried out in March 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

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 the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For the deep dives, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with trustees and with members of the educational standards committee. She spoke to a representative from the diocese.

- The inspector held meetings with staff, including the senior executive principal, the head of school, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- The inspector examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and records of governance.
- The inspector took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and those to the pupil survey and staff survey. The inspector spoke informally with parents on their arrival at school.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 reading to a familiar adult. During the inspection, the inspector met with groups of pupils both formally and during less structured parts of the day.

Inspection team

Corinne Biddell, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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