

Inspection of a good school: Bishop Parker Catholic School

Hunter Drive, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK2 3BT

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 September 2023

Outcome

Bishop Parker Catholic School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are inspired at this thoughtful, caring school. The ambitious curriculum connects pupils' learning in creative and effective ways. The school library is well loved and appreciated by all. Pupils enjoy the range of texts, including classic mythology and traditional tales. In subjects such as history, pupils remember key events and know about different eras, such as the Stone Age. Pupils value their educational trips and residential stays. These are memorable experiences. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive highly skilled and effective support. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils feel safe and are happy. One pupil commented: 'I love my school because of all the people here. There are friends all around us.' Older pupils take on responsibilities such as being part of the chaplaincy team, a school councillor, a librarian or a play leader. They act as role models for younger pupils and help playtimes to be calm and respectful. Behaviour inside and outside the classrooms is positive. If pupils do present any challenging behaviour, this is managed sensitively and with care so that learning is not disrupted.

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

Pupils learn to read well. Staff teach phonics effectively from the beginning of early years. Pupils read books that are closely matched to the sounds that they have learned. Staff check how well pupils read and adapt lessons to make sure that reading develops consistently. If pupils fall behind, they get the support that they need to catch up quickly. Pupils' achievement in phonics has improved rapidly since the most recent published outcomes. Staff have strong subject knowledge. This has been helped by changes to the school's adopted phonics scheme. Practice could be even stronger by sharing phonics training more widely to develop expertise across the whole staff team.

The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. From the beginning of early years, the curriculum follows a clear sequence so that lessons build pupils' knowledge effectively. Pupils have the chance to revisit what they have learned, which helps them to know and

remember more. Pupils share their learning with enthusiasm. In mathematics, pupils enjoy solving problems together and applying the strategies that they have learned in lessons effectively. In English, pupils speak excitedly about plays such as 'Romeo and Juliet' and how the story links to their Elizabethan theatre studies. Pupils with SEND get the help that they need quickly. Where necessary, staff rightly work closely with outside agencies such as speech and language specialists. This supports pupils' learning well. Staff check how effectively pupils have learned the curriculum. However, in some subjects staff are still refining this so that they identify the specific gaps in pupils' knowledge more precisely.

The school provides a range of clubs and opportunities for pupils' wider development. Pupils enjoy taking part in sports such as gymnastics, football and netball. Pupils learn about keeping themselves healthy and staying fit. Pupils also like activities such as animation and movie club. Some pupils with SEND make good use of the new nurture building, receiving thoughtful and positive support if they find social times difficult. Pupils value trips such as the residential visit and a train journey to London to visit the Natural History Museum. Pupils understand what democracy is. They debate questions set by their teachers in a balanced way, such as 'Should all pupils in the country receive free school meals?' They are proud to take on roles such as school councillors. Pupils know the school's values well. They have thoughtful opportunities to learn about people of different faiths, beliefs and backgrounds. Pupils learn about protected characteristics and how to respect all people as part of a whole-community approach. A small number of disadvantaged pupils do not attend school as often as their peers. These pupils do not always benefit from the range of activities as well as they could.

Governors understand and carry out their roles highly effectively. They know the strengths and areas to develop for the school. They support and challenge leaders to make strong improvements. Leaders model a reflective and open approach to professional development. They engage parents and carers and the community thoughtfully and in positive ways. Staff feel supported with their workload. There is a very strong team approach that places children at the centre of all that they do.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some areas of the school's curriculum, such as phonics and mathematics, have recently been reviewed and are newly implemented. This is already having a clearly positive impact. However, pupils' outcomes are not yet consistently high. The school must continue to develop precise and consistent pedagogical approaches by ensuring that all staff develop the specific subject expertise that they need.
- A small number of disadvantaged pupils have higher levels of absence than their peers. These pupils do not fully benefit from all aspects of the curriculum and wider

opportunities as well as they could. The school must continue to adopt approaches that ensure that these pupils improve their attendance.

- Assessment information in the wider curriculum is not always precise enough to show what pupils know and understand. This means that some pupils have gaps in their subject-specific knowledge. The school needs to ensure that teachers check what pupils know and can do in consistent, efficient and effective ways.

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 school to be good in March 2014.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	110481
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10287850
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	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Cathy Stormonth
Headteacher	Robert Mundy
Website	www.bishopparker.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Catholic school in the Diocese of Northampton. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, for schools of a religious character, in May 2018.
- The school is part of The Bletchley Catholic Schools' Federation.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher and other members of the leadership team. The inspector met with the chair of governors and four other members of the governing body.

- The inspector also met with a representative from the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 inspector observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. He also spoke to pupils in lessons and during lunchtimes.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan and minutes from governors' meetings.
- The inspector spoke to parents and also took into account their responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Carl McCarthy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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