

Inspection of a good school: Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School

Victoria Road, Acocks Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B27 7XY

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 October 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Ciaran Clinton. This school is part of St Teresa of Calcutta Multi-Academy Company (MAC), which means other people in the MAC also have responsibility for running the school. The MAC is run by the chief executive officer, Professor Paul Ryan, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Frances McGarry.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those in the sixth form, are happy and well cared for. Staff have positive relationships with pupils and take time to get to know them. Pupils say that they are taught how to keep themselves safe. They know that there is always someone to help if they have a problem. Pupils speak very positively about respect for others. They understand the importance of diversity and inclusion.

The school holds high expectations for all pupils. As a result, classrooms are calm and orderly places where learning can flourish. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), have positive attitudes to their lessons and are keen to learn. However, some pupils are often late to lessons.

Sixth-form students are encouraged to contribute to the life of school and wider community. This includes taking part in the senior student leadership team, fundraising for charitable causes and supporting younger pupils. Pupils talk highly of the careers support they receive. A significant number of pupils also undertake the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. These experiences contribute towards pupils' personal development well.

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

The school has developed a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum considers the needs of all pupils. This includes indicating clearly defined end points. It

also reflects pupils' starting points from key stage 2. The school is clear about the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and practise. There are also opportunities to enrich subjects. For example, pupils meet employers through design and technology projects and use Birmingham as a focus in their humanities studies.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They have high expectations and help pupils, including those pupils with SEND, to do their best. However, the school has not ensured that teachers always check that pupils have understood what they need to know before moving on. As a result, some pupils do not know what they should have learned. This also can leave them with misconceptions or gaps in their understanding.

The school has not identified all those pupils at the early stages of reading. Pupils with SEND who need support with their reading are receiving it. However, other pupils are not. This means that some pupils are not able to engage fully with the curriculum. The school plans to address this and further embed a culture of reading.

The school is determined that pupils should be considerate and behave well. Pupils are typically well behaved in lessons and around the school site. They are courteous and respectful to one another. When pupils are not, the school works to help them with this. Some pupils' punctuality is not good enough. They can be slow to get to lessons despite being given movement time between lessons. As a result, they are missing valuable time in which to learn the planned curriculum. The school knows that this is an issue and have recently put changes in place to help this improve.

The personal development curriculum is built on the 'SPIRIT' values. The school ensures a consistent values message for each half term. Pupils experience this through their lessons, form time and assemblies. They learn age-appropriate content in terms of relationships and how to keep themselves safe. Pupils talk positively about their 'character' lessons.

Careers education is a strength. Pupils appreciate the support they receive when they come to transition points. This starts early in Year 9 when considering GCSE options. The school runs an annual careers fair and regularly invites local college and apprenticeship providers to talk to pupils about the options that are available to them so they can make informed choices. Sixth-form students experience a valuable layered programme to support their development towards their next steps. For example, they all undertake structured work experience, subject-specific enrichment and other wider opportunities, such as trips abroad.

Directors and the local governing body work together effectively. They hold the school to account for the academic, personal and social development of pupils. Trust leaders understand where the school's strengths and weaknesses are. Staff value the school's work to support them with their workload and well-being. Teachers feel listened to when they raise concerns or have ideas about how to change practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not routinely identify quickly enough all pupils who require additional support with their reading. As a result, these pupils are not able to engage with the curriculum fully. The school must ensure that pupils with gaps in their reading ability are identified quickly and supported effectively so they are prepared for future learning.
- Pupils' understanding is not always checked well enough before moving on to the next part of the curriculum. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge, or misconceptions persist. The school should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding consistently well to enable pupils to build knowledge more effectively over time.
- The school has not ensured that the punctuality of some pupils to lessons is good enough. This means that these pupils miss valuable time in which to learn the planned curriculum. The school needs to ensure that routines and processes for punctuality are implemented effectively and that these pupils are helped to overcome any barriers to learning so they can engage fully in school life.

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 predecessor school, Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School, to be good in June 2018.

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	146124
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10290651
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,178
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	137
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Frances McGarry
CEO of the trust	Professor Paul Ryan
Headteacher	Ciaran Clinton
Website	http://www.ilsley.bham.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School converted to become an academy in May 2019. When its predecessor school, Archbishop Ilsley Catholic School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the of St Teresa of Calcutta Multi-Academy Company.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in December 2019.
- The school uses six alternative providers. Five are registered alternative providers and one is an unregistered provider.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 11 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, directors of the trust and governors, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and pupils. They also talked informally to pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, science, design and technology and history. 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 evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum plan, spoke with leaders and visited assembly and form times. An inspector also reviewed the support provided for pupils in regard to reading.
- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to behaviour, bullying and punctuality.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school and their self-evaluation of the school's work.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the pupil and staff surveys, as well as Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Richard Wakefield, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alexander Laney	His Majesty's Inspector
Natasha Rancins	Ofsted Inspector

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