

# Inspection of St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

Great Colmore Street, Lee Bank, Birmingham, West Midlands B15 2AY

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Inspection dates:

7 and 8 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils love coming to school, where they know anything is possible, whatever their starting points. As a result of the phenomenal progress they make, they excel in the standards they achieve in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave school. Pupils do well in the wider curriculum, but some misconceptions are not addressed promptly. Year 4 pupils recently celebrated success in the mathematics 'Borscherds Competition' at a local grammar school. The school sets very high expectations for all pupils, and these are fully realised.

Behaviour is of an exceptionally high standard in lessons and throughout the school. Pupils look after each other very well. They act as play leaders and, through the 'singing playgrounds' initiative, lead younger children in games at lunchtimes and breaktimes. Pupils show respect towards others and engage enthusiastically in fundraising. Bullying is exceptionally rare, but the school deals very effectively with any issues that occur. Consequently, pupils feel safe.

Pupils enjoy a very wide range of activities, for example the 'Cinderella' pantomime performed by a visiting national theatre company. During Black History Month, the very diverse pupil community was inspired to learn about role models who broke barriers, including Ruby Bridges. Pupils are encouraged to be scientists through the many clubs and events, including 'space week'.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum which enables pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to succeed highly, especially in English and mathematics. New learning is sequenced very well in other subjects, such as science and history, so that pupils can acquire knowledge based on prior information. Children in the early years are challenged to learn important key terms. This includes understanding what a 'shelter' is when commemorating remembrance week.

Children in the early years get off to a rapid start. They start to learn phonics very quickly after starting school. The school promotes a love of reading by drawing on pupils' different backgrounds and languages spoken at home. This engages them in wider reading of books with their parents. Adults are well trained to teach phonics consistently. Books are linked closely to the letters and sounds that children know. Older pupils who still find reading difficult are exposed to books at an appropriate age-level of content, but still matched to the phase of phonics they are working at. This means that those who are at the early stage of reading, or who have fallen behind, quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to be confident readers.

Pupils do very well in mathematics and science. Teachers identify clearly what they want pupils to learn. They plan work in a coherent and sequenced order to ensure learners succeed.

Teachers are skilled at adapting work for pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils are exposed to similar work. However, adaptations are made, for example, to text content, or to the way in which pupils can record their answers. This ensures that all pupils can engage in the learning.

Teachers check effectively how well pupils are doing during lessons across subjects. At the end of a unit, 'knowledge grids' identify what pupils know and understand, as well as where they have gaps in their learning. In a few subjects, which are not taught as regularly as others, there is a long delay before they are taught explicitly again, and therefore a long delay before previous misconceptions can be addressed. This means that occasionally some pupils struggle to recall what they have learned.

The school promotes pupils' personal development exceptionally well. Younger children in the Nursery are already learning to make choices and to carry out activities such as painting poppies or 'cooking' with play dough individually or in groups without adult support. There are numerous opportunities throughout school for pupils to take responsibilities, for example as Eco warriors. They have a very strong understanding of democracy and individual liberty from the teaching of British values throughout the curriculum. They have a very informed appreciation of the local and international community. For example, Year 2 pupils recently offered prayers for children affected by war. Older pupils understand about homelessness and what they can do to help. There is an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. There is a very high take-up for the choir.

Senior leaders are very mindful of staff workload. This was very much appreciated in the overwhelmingly positive response to the staff survey. Parents responding to their survey were unanimous in recommending the school to another parent. Governors are highly ambitious for the school 'to do even better'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects where gaps in pupils' knowledge and misconceptions are identified at the end of a unit, these are not addressed until they are next explicitly taught. This can be several months later. As a result, some pupils struggle to recall learning after they had not studied the subject for a long time. Leaders should ensure that where they have identified gaps and misconceptions through their assessments, these should be addressed as soon as possible before the subject is taught again.

## 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 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103433
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10256884
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	242
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Monica Todd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Edward McNamara
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stcathrc.bham.sch.uk">www.stcathrc.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 June 2010, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2023. They were previously the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher respectively.
- There have been significant changes to the membership of the governing body since the last inspection, including a new chair and vice-chair.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian ethos. The school's last Section 48 inspection was in October 2021. The next scheduled inspection is due in 2025.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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, deputy headteacher and other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils.
- Inspectors met four members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- An inspector spoke by telephone to a representative from the diocese and the school's improvement adviser.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service, the online questionnaire, as well as the staff and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils' reading. They also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, including in the early years foundation stage.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.

## Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Mike Onyon

Ofsted Inspector

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