

Inspection of a good school: St John and Monica Catholic Primary School

Chantry Road, Moseley, Birmingham, West Midlands B13 8DW

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 November 2023

Outcome

St John and Monica Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's mission statement permeates all aspects of school life. Pupils are kind to each other. They learn to respect difference and to include everyone. Pupils who are new to the school, including those who arrive from other countries, settle quickly. Staff know pupils well. Relationships are positive and nurturing and this brings out the best in pupils.

Pupils develop knowledge in a broad range of subjects. They find lessons interesting and enjoy learning new things. A highlight is the lessons pupils have in the school's impressive forest. This provides a rich environment for pupils to learn different skills. Pupils come alive when talking about how they have worked as a team to make dens and complete craft activities.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. These start in the early years. In most classes, pupils behave extremely well. They pay close attention to teachers, and absorb all that is shared with them. Pupils move sensibly around the school in single file. Pupils socialise happily, although some pupils find lunchtime play a little boisterous.

There are a variety of after-school activities on offer across the year. These develop pupils' interests in areas such as football, music, construction, computing and art.

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

The school's curriculum builds pupils' knowledge in each subject successfully. Pupils develop a secure understanding of important facts and concepts as they move through the school. The school teaches the basics of reading, writing and mathematics well. Pupils' achievement in English and mathematics at the end of key stages 1 and 2 reflects this.

Pupils in Reception and key stage 1 learn phonics every day. All staff have received training to help them teach phonics well. They keep track of the sounds that pupils can read and the ones they need to teach next. The school uses this information to provide

pupils with the support they need to learn to read. Pupils have books that match the sounds they are learning. However, some pupils find it difficult to blend sounds together. This makes them over-reliant on adults when reading aloud. These pupils need more practice to improve their fluency and confidence.

Pupils' knowledge and understanding in mathematics is strong. Children leave Reception with a firm grasp of number and counting. Other year groups continue to prioritise recall of number facts and multiplication tables. This provides a firm bedrock for pupils' learning across the mathematics curriculum.

In all subjects, the school has set out in broad terms what pupils should learn and the order in which they should learn it. Teachers make regular checks to see how pupils are doing. Where the curriculum is most effective, the school is clear about what pupils need to know. Checks focus on how well pupils know and remember this knowledge. Where the curriculum is less effective, the school is less precise about the important knowledge they want pupils to learn. Curriculum content does not always build logically. This means that pupils sometimes do not have the knowledge they need to make sense of new learning.

The school identifies if pupils have any additional needs effectively. They take account of pupils' individual needs when deciding what to teach and how to teach it. All pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) work towards the same end points as their peers. Staff break learning down into smaller steps or adapt resources for pupils who need this. Some pupils receive additional teaching in areas they find particularly difficult. The school keeps a close eye on pupils' progress to make sure that this teaching is making a difference.

Pupils understand the importance of attending school regularly. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. In most classes, pupils can learn without any distractions. In Reception, children are quick to learn the school routines. Elsewhere in the school, pupils pride themselves on doing the right thing.

The school's approach to pupils' wider development is well-considered. Pupils develop their communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills through a dedicated programme. Each year, pupils refine the skills they have already learned as well as learning new ones. Pupils learn how to stay physically and mentally healthy. They say that activities such as yoga help them to relax as well as keeping them fit. Pupils are respectful of different faiths. They have a good understanding of fundamental British values. For example, pupils say everyone can have their own views. They recognise the importance of resisting peer pressure.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils in the early stages of learning to read find it difficult to blend sounds when reading aloud. As a result, their reading lacks fluency and they are unable to read without adult support. The school should provide these pupils with more practice with reading books that match the sounds they are learning. This will improve pupils' fluency and enable them to build up a larger bank of words they can read automatically.
- In some subjects, the school is not specific enough about the essential knowledge it wants pupils to learn. Sometimes knowledge does not build in a logical order. This means that some teaching does not prioritise the most important knowledge and skills. Consequently, pupils do not always have the prior knowledge they need to make sense of new learning. The school should make clear what essential knowledge it wants pupils to learn and ensure that this knowledge builds logically.

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 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	103478
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294487
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Paul Foster
Headteacher	Mrs Melanie Elliott
Website	www.stjonmon.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in November 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due before November 2026.
- 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 leaders and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. The inspector discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.

- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read and talked with pupils about their reading.
- 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.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders. She met with groups of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- The inspector met with eight governors. She also spoke with a representative of the diocese and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. She met with groups of pupils as well as speaking with pupils in lessons and at lunchtime.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including information on the school's website, the school's self-evaluation and a sample of the school's improvement plans.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. She took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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