

Inspection of a good school: Abbey Catholic Primary School

Sutton Road, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 6QL

Inspection dates:

30 and 31 January 2024

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 be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Joseph McTernan. This school is part of John Paul II Multi Academy Company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Matthew Emery, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Maria Gabriella Stirrop.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this happy school. Frequently referred to as the 'Abbey family' by parents, carers and staff, strong relationships reflect the highly positive and respectful culture. Pupils are nurtured and cherished. Many pupils hardly miss a day of school and show genuine pride in attending. They are safe and well cared for.

Pupils benefit from a high-quality learning environment including the school's well-loved 'book bus' and new cooking area. The curriculum is ambitious and thoughtfully planned. Pupils develop a secure foundation of knowledge and skills and reflect deeply on social justice, sustainability and equality. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), flourish academically and socially.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful. In lessons, pupils listen well and focus on the work given to them. They enjoy the excellent range of activities on offer to keep them active during lunchtimes and they play well together.

Pupils develop their talents and interests through participating in a wide range of clubs and activities. They are eager to take on positions of responsibility such as play leaders, mental health ambassadors and school councillors. They also enjoy caring for the school's animals.

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

The curriculum is well designed and consistently implemented by staff. From the early years to Year 6, the curriculum is designed to build on pupils' prior learning. There is a sharp focus on developing teachers' subject knowledge. This results in staff being experts in the subjects they teach. This ensures that the curriculum is highly successful in teaching pupils what they need to know.

Staff regularly revisit previous knowledge to help pupils know and remember more. They use 'big questions' to challenge pupils to reflect more deeply on their learning and to work like a historian or to problem-solve like a mathematician. Teachers are highly skilled at identifying and addressing gaps in pupils' learning. This proficient use of assessment ensures that any pupils that may fall behind are quickly given the help they need to catch up.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND swiftly and accurately. Staff adapt lesson activities effectively to meet pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND achieve well. They successfully learn the same curriculum alongside their peers.

Pupils benefit from high-quality phonics lessons taught by expert staff. They get lots of opportunities to practise the sounds that they have learned. This includes through the books that they read, which are closely matched to the sounds that they already know. This helps pupils to develop confidence and fluency. Staff regularly check on pupils' knowledge to identify those who need extra support. This support is highly effective in helping pupils to catch up. As a result, pupils achieve exceedingly well in phonics lessons. A genuine love of reading and books is evident across the school. Pupils talk with joy about a wide range of different texts that they have read. Equally, they enjoy adults reading to them daily.

The early years provision has undergone significant change to meet the needs of all children. While the teaching of phonics and early mathematics is strong, some children struggle to manage their feelings and emotions. This has an impact on some of the activities on offer for children. This limits their opportunities to be independent and curious learners. The school is taking swift and effective action to improve this so that children have the necessary experiences to be ready for their next stages of learning.

The school monitors pupils' attendance carefully. It has robust systems in place to make sure it responds quickly to any absences. As a result, pupils' attendance at school is high.

The school has designed an effective programme of learning and enrichment activities to support pupils' wider development. Visits to a variety of places of worship help pupils to understand about different beliefs and cultures. Pupils are respectful towards one another. They refer to themselves as 'peacemakers' and know that adults will always help them to sort out any problems. Pupils learn how to care for their physical and mental health. The school provides strong emotional and well-being support for staff, pupils and families.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate the training and the school's commitment to their well-being. Governors and trustees provide highly effective support and challenge to the school.

The school engages well with parents, who are extremely positive about the education, nurture and wider support pupils receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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, Abbey Catholic Primary 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	147669
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294689
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	419
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Maria Gabriella Stirrop
Principal	Joseph McTernan
Website	www.abbeyrc.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school joined the John Paul II Multi Academy Company in April 2021.
- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Its most recent section 48 inspection under the Education Act 2005 for schools with a religious character was carried out in October 2023. The next inspection will be within five years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The inspector met with representatives from the local governing committee, the senior Catholic executive leader and representatives from the trust.
- The inspector talked to a representative from the Diocese.
- 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 a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector also talked to pupils and examined their work in history and design technology.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Minutes of governing body meetings were also scrutinised.
- The inspector looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- 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 talked to parents at the start of the school day and considered the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text comments. The inspector also reviewed the responses to the pupil and staff surveys and gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussion.

Inspection team

Cathy Young, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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