

Inspection of a good school: St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Broad Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B14 5AL

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 June 2024

Outcome

St Alban's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe and attend regularly. They know that staff care deeply about their physical and mental health and well-being. Pupils know they can always seek help from an adult if they ever have a problem. Visits to the rainbow, harmony or peace rooms provide individual pupils with any emotional or behavioural support needed. Jacy, the school mentor dog, is also on hand to help calm pupils who are worried or upset.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), live up to these expectations. Outcomes in English and mathematics are well above those seen nationally.

The school has established clear routines and teaches children how to behave well as soon as they join the school. They have positive attitudes to learning and behave well in lessons and around school. Those who are 'Champions of Christ' patrol the playground every Tuesday to spot exemplary behaviour, worthy of recognition and sharing.

The school provides a rich and extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities for pupils. This includes the 'St Albans 42' where pupils learn life skills such as catching a bus or participate in visits, for example to the beach or theatre.

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

The school is aspirational and always striving to improve. It knows precisely what is working well and where further developments are needed. It works closely with other schools to develop good practice and provide support for all staff. Well-focused training and coaching sessions help staff develop the skills and knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum effectively.

The curriculum is broad and ambitious. The core subjects are particularly strong and

pupils' achievement in English and mathematics is impressive. In other subjects, the school provides structured guidance to assist staff in knowing what to teach and when. For example, in subjects such as art and music, pupils benefit from rich experiences that build confidence and proficiency. In history, pupils develop a good sense of chronology and a keen interest in different historical eras, such as Ancient Egypt and the French Revolution.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They introduce new learning in stages and explain ideas clearly. However, in a small number of subjects, pupils have fewer opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge they need because the curriculum is less well established.

Staff regularly check what pupils know and remember at the start of lessons and the end of units taught. They skilfully question pupils during lessons to check their understanding and provide any further help needed. However, on occasion, assessment checks do not fully capture how well pupils understand and remember the key concepts. Some pupils are unable to retrieve and apply their knowledge to future learning.

Developing pupils' reading skills is central to the school's work. Children in Reception get off to a strong start in learning to read. The phonics curriculum is used consistently and expertly by teachers. Books and resources match the sounds that pupils learn. Staff's support helps pupils who begin to fall behind to catch up quickly and achieve well. Books feature prominently in all classrooms. Regular reading time nurtures a love of reading. Pupils enjoy listening to well-read stories and visiting the school and local library.

Provision for pupils with SEND is strong. The school has developed highly effective methods to identify pupils with SEND early. Teachers make suitable adaptations to tasks and provide additional resources to ensure that these pupils learn alongside their peers. The school also accesses specialist support and provides additional interventions for those with more complex needs. Every opportunity, and every member of staff, is maximised to support pupils with their emotional, physical and academic needs. As a result, pupils with SEND thrive and achieve well.

The school prepares pupils well for life in multicultural Britain. Pupils are kind and compassionate and respect those from different faiths and backgrounds. Many readily take on roles and responsibilities, such as school councillors or house captains, to hone their leadership skills. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs, visits and visitors the school provides to enrich the curriculum.

Staff work well as a team. All are proud to be staff members at the school. Teachers find their workload manageable and leaders supportive. Parents, pupils and staff have nothing but praise for the school and the work and dedication of the headteacher.

Governors share leaders' ambition for pupils. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and development areas. They keep a close eye on the curriculum to make sure pupils are getting the quality of education they deserve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum implementation and assessment in a few foundation subjects are not as well developed as in other subjects. This leads to variation in how well pupils achieve, and understand and remember what they learn across all subjects. The school should continue to strengthen curriculum design and assessment in these subjects so that pupils' knowledge builds as securely as in other subjects.

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 a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some 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 November 2013.

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	103466
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294485
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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Alan Grant
Headteacher	Rebecca McKinney
Website	www.stalbanscatholicprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in February 2023. The school's next Catholic Schools Inspection is due to take place within four years of the last inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgment 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.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body. She also had a telephone discussion with a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with teaching staff to talk about curriculum, staff workload and the behaviour and personal development of pupils. She also met with groups of pupils to talk about their learning and well-being.
- The inspector observed a selection of pupils reading to members of staff. Other pupils were heard reading their own work during lesson visits.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector checked the school's single central record; spoke to senior leaders about safeguarding procedures; took account of the views of 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 considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. Records of attendance and behaviour incidents were checked.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtime and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- The inspector talked to parents after school and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. She gathered the views of pupils and staff on site through discussions with these groups and from their online survey responses.

Inspection team

Heather Simpson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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