

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

Egerton Road, Bishopston, Bristol, Bristol BS7 8HP

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 June 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have developed an education that is based upon the school's strong vision and values. They are ambitious for all pupils.

Pupils grow to be confident and curious. They express their thoughts and feelings openly and ask questions to find out more about others, celebrating that everyone is unique. They stress the importance of kindness and are proud of the work they do for charity. For example, participating in the school's 'run for H2O', that raised money to provide people in Ethiopia with clean water.

At breaktimes, most pupils play together happily. When pupils have problems, peer mediators help and feed back to staff. Pupils value this as they say it helps adults look at things from a child's perspective. The majority of pupils feel safe and have adults who they would talk to if they were worried.

Relationships across the school are warm and supportive. Parents feel valued and are included in all aspects of their children's education. Leaders have created a sense of community and shared responsibility.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is broad and aspirational for all pupils. They have identified three themes, love thy neighbour, seek the truth and caring for our common home, which underpin pupils' learning. Pupils understand these themes and how they link their learning across subjects.

Leaders have identified the key concepts that pupils will learn. In many subjects, this knowledge has been broken down into smaller chunks. Leaders have organised these to build pupils' knowledge over time. However, in a few areas, learning is not well organised. Pupils do not revisit effectively what they have been taught before. In these areas, pupils

find it difficult to remember key information. This can limit their understanding of new learning.

Where the curriculum has been refined, teachers are more knowledgeable about the subjects they teach. They anticipate mistakes pupils might make, provide resources, and show pupils techniques to support them with their learning. This enables pupils to develop their understanding.

In the early years, adults help children to become competent readers, writers and mathematicians. They have high expectations of the vocabulary that pupils will use. In early mathematics, adults provide activities for children to use and apply their knowledge. As a result, children can explain their thinking. For example, when learning to share objects equally, children are quick to notice when buttons are unequally shared. Teachers identify gaps in pupils' mathematical understanding. They use this to plan next steps in learning. As a result, older pupils apply a range of calculation methods to solve challenging problems. However, assessment processes are less well established in foundation subjects. This means that teachers are less able to pinpoint pupils' strengths and weaknesses.

Staff consider reading to be 'the gateway to learning'. In Reception and Year 1, pupils grasp the phonic knowledge they need to become fluent and confident readers. Effective support for pupils at the early stages of reading helps them to catch up quickly. Pupils enjoy using their growing comprehension to read a range of high-quality books. They like how these often relate to the school's curriculum themes, giving them an appreciation of the wider world.

Leaders remove any barriers to learning or personal development pupils may have, so all can achieve their best. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. Where pupils have complex needs, teachers provide bespoke work to meet their needs.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Most pupils work diligently and focus on their learning, working independently and following instructions well. Leaders provide appropriate support for pupils who struggle with their social, emotional and mental health. This support helps pupils to learn how to manage their emotions.

The curriculum for personal development prepares pupils for adulthood. For example, they know what to expect during puberty and how to manage money. Activities, such as the Year 6 residential, teach pupils how to manage risk. Spirituality underpins the work of the school. Pupils reflect on their own faith and that of others through links with the local church and in-school prayer stations.

Leaders and governors consider the impact of new initiatives and monitoring on teachers' workload. Staff are positive about their work and proud to be part of the St Bonaventure's team.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained to identify any pupil who may be at risk of harm. They use well-established systems to keep clear records and chronologies. Leaders monitor these to build a bigger picture of safeguarding needs. They provide pupils and families with the right help at the right time.

Visits from the police help pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe. They know about online risks and how to safely use social media. They understand how to stay safe in the community.

Leaders and governors take safeguarding seriously. They follow safer recruitment processes and have completed the necessary checks on adults.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not yet organised substantive knowledge well enough across all curriculum areas. In these areas, pupils find it difficult to remember what they have previously learned and this can limit their understanding. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is well sequenced in all areas to enable pupils to consolidate and build upon their prior knowledge.
- Leaders have not yet identified a consistent approach to assessment across the wider curriculum. In these subjects, teachers are less able to accurately identify what pupils know and can do. Leaders need to ensure that assessment in all subjects enables teachers to identify what pupils know and can do, and ensure that teachers modify their teaching in light of this.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	109255
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10226954
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	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Lavington
Headteacher	Sarah Ballantine
Website	www.st-bonaventures.bristol.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Bonaventure's Catholic Primary School is a church school within the Diocese of Clifton. The school received its section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character in October 2018, when this aspect of the school's work was graded outstanding.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provision for three pupils and one unregistered provider for six pupils.

Information about this inspection

- 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, a group of staff, parents, members of the governing body and representatives from Bristol City Council and the Diocese of Clifton.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also met with leaders of other subjects to look at how well the curriculum is designed.
- The inspector listened to pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- The inspector considered documentation around safeguarding, including the safeguarding checks made on staff. Inspectors talked to leaders, trustees, staff and pupils about how the school keeps everyone safe.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff to see how leaders support their workload and well-being.
- The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted online survey, Ofsted Parent View, responses to the staff survey and responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Steph Matthews, lead inspector

Seconded Inspector

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