

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

Popley Way, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG24 9DX

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 September 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in this nurturing, inclusive school. They describe St Bede's as 'caring, loving and encouraging'. Pupils enjoy celebrating cultural diversity through events such as 'International Day'. Pupils consider very firmly that everyone is equal and should be treated with respect and kindness. The school is a harmonious community where older pupils take good care of the very youngest. The school's strong values shine through in daily life.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported to achieve well. Right from the start of early years, skilful staff help children to develop strong learning habits. This sets them in good stead for later years. Pupils find lessons interesting, focus well and enjoy their learning. A wide range of trips and visits helps to bring subjects to life.

Pupils enjoy the many activities on offer at playtime. They love making dens in the woodland area and using the climbing equipment. Staff make sure that there is always something fun to do. Extra-curricular clubs such as art, football and orchestra help to develop pupils' interests and talents well. Many pupils are keen musicians and choir members, regularly performing in local venues.

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

Leaders are currently refining the broad and ambitious curriculum. In most subjects, the curriculum sets out precisely the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and the order in which it should be taught. For example, in mathematics, pupils build on previous learning in a highly structured, carefully considered way. However, in a few subjects, where the curriculum requires further strengthening, the knowledge that pupils need is not yet identified and sequenced precisely enough. This means that pupils do not build up

their knowledge and skills as systematically as they do in the strongest subjects. While pupils achieve well across all their subjects, in a few, they could do even better. The school provides staff with regular training that supports them in improving their teaching further. Staff have strong subject knowledge. Teachers check pupils' understanding and address any misconceptions before they move on to more complex learning. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified accurately. Staff adapt activities to ensure they are well matched to pupils' needs. Pupils with SEND complete similar work as their peers and achieve well.

Reading sits at the heart of the curriculum. This starts in early years, where children have many opportunities to listen to and join in with stories and rhymes. This supports the development of their vocabulary well. Children are taught phonics right from the very beginning of Reception. Staff listen carefully and check that pupils are becoming increasingly fluent and confident readers. Teachers quickly spot any gaps that pupils may have in their phonic knowledge and give them extra support. While the teaching of phonics is effective, leaders know that some staff would benefit from additional training to ensure a fully consistent approach.

Pupils' personal development is a notable strength. The school gives pupils many meaningful opportunities to act as responsible citizens. For instance, pupils plan and run their own activities to raise funds for their chosen charities. The pupil eco-council helps to improve the environment by organising litter-picking and 're-wilding' areas of the field. The school provides high-quality pastoral support to pupils. Through the curriculum, pupils are taught to manage risk and keep safe. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships and of growing up. The school makes sure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They make a very positive contribution to the calm, respectful school environment. In early years, children settle into the daily routine quickly and develop strong social skills. Staff act swiftly on the very rare occasion that a pupil behaves unkindly. No forms of discrimination are tolerated. Pupils are very proud of their well-organised school, and there is rarely any disruption to learning. If a pupil with SEND needs gentle encouragement from adults to refocus, this is carried out with sensitivity and skill.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working at the school, and morale is high. They appreciate the many professional development opportunities they receive that help them to continually improve in their roles. They value the strong support they get from leaders. Governors know the school well and fulfil their role effectively. Parents thoroughly endorse the work of the school. One parent, typical of many, commented, 'St Bede's is a fantastic school, which treats all children equally and with respect.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A few subjects are not organised as precisely as the strongest. The precise knowledge and the order in which it should be taught is not clearly identified. In these subjects, pupils do not build on previous learning as effectively. Leaders should continue to refine the curriculum in these subjects so that pupils' knowledge builds cumulatively over time.

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 October 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	116380
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10287900
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	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mary Kucharska
Headteacher	Jamie Carroll
Website	www.stbedesprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Bede's is a Catholic primary school within the Diocese of Portsmouth.
- The school's last section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools with a religious character took place in March 2019.
- The school runs its own before-school and after-school wraparound clubs.
- Currently, the school does not have any pupils attending 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 the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher, inclusion leader and other subject leaders.

- The inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector spoke to a representative from the local authority and the Diocese of Portsmouth.
- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She also looked more widely at a range of pupils' work in different subjects.
- 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 safeguarding culture that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils' behaviour and the school's wider curriculum.
- The inspector visited the before-school club.
- The inspector talked to pupils and staff throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. This included the views of staff submitted via Ofsted's confidential surveys.
- The inspector considered the views of parents submitted via email and via Ofsted's parent survey.

Inspection team

Maria Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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