

Inspection of a good school: St Bernadette Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Gladstone Road, Hengrove, Bristol BS14 9LP

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 July 2023

Outcome

St Bernadette Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to attend St Bernadette Catholic Primary School. They enjoy learning in the school's warm, caring environment. All year groups play well together and are considerate towards one another. Pupils believe that everyone is treated equally and welcomed. This means pupils flourish in the school's inclusive environment.

Pupils behave well. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They use consistent routines and procedures to support pupils to behave well. Pupils build trusted relationships with staff. They are confident that they can talk to an adult about any worries they have. They feel safe at school. Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They are confident staff will sort problems out quickly if they happen.

Leaders recognise pupil voice as important. The chaplaincy team and school council are a daily part of the life of the school. Pupils' attitudes reflect the school's well-established values of respect, tolerance and care for one another.

Parents and pupils are positive about the school. Many describe its family-like atmosphere. Parents appreciate the support and commitment school leaders provide for their children.

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

Leaders prioritise reading. All staff are well trained. They have the knowledge they need to teach early reading well. Phonics is taught effectively. In pre-school and Reception, children join in with rhymes, songs and stories. This builds their understanding of new vocabulary and texts. Staff are quick to identify any pupils who struggle. They receive appropriate support to catch up. Pupils quickly gain the phonic knowledge they need to become successful readers. Staff teach new vocabulary and help pupils remember it. Teachers' accurate assessment of phonics and early reading means that pupils read books

well matched to their understanding. Pupils enjoy listening to staff reading stories. Older pupils talk excitedly about the range of books they read. This helps pupils grow in confidence and fluency in their reading.

Leaders have ensured there is an ambitious curriculum in place for all pupils in most subjects across the curriculum. Subject leaders consider carefully what pupils need to learn and by when. Teachers focus in detail on pupils' language and vocabulary learning. This starts in the early years. As a result, pupils learn the curriculum well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders continue to improve the curriculum. Subject leaders think carefully about how they deepen pupils' knowledge and skills over time. Curriculum plans are well sequenced and detailed.

In most subjects, teachers use assessment well to check pupils' knowledge. Teaching supports pupils to catch up and keep up. However, in a small number of subjects, teachers do not use assessment well enough to highlight what pupils know and what they need to learn next. This means pupils' understanding in these subjects is less secure than it is in others. Pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they could.

Pupils with SEND are fully included in the school curriculum. Leaders know the needs of these pupils well. Where necessary, leaders seek advice from experts outside school. Staff are clear about pupils' needs and how to support them. Pupils with SEND, and those in The Hub, benefit from effective support. Staff understand the needs of pupils and ensure they meet them. Leaders routinely check the effectiveness of this provision.

The curriculum supports pupils' wider development. Pupils have a strong understanding of right and wrong, respect for others and equality. Clubs, trips and sporting activities enhance pupils learning. They relish the opportunities to be involved in school and the wider community. For example, some pupils act as daily start of school guides, volunteers at the summer fair or leaders of collective worship. These opportunities help pupils to become well-rounded young citizens.

Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are well informed about leaders' actions and the quality of provision. They challenge and support leaders in all aspects of their work to improve the school. Leaders have created a culture based on mutual respect and trust among staff. Staff are proud to work at the school. They know that leaders take their workload and well-being seriously.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are recruited safely. Leaders ensure that all staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil. Staff are vigilant. They identify quickly any signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Their secure knowledge is a result of the regular training they receive. Leaders' records show the measures taken to support vulnerable pupils and their families. They secure timely support from outside agencies.

The curriculum gives pupils the information they need to stay safe. For example, they learn about healthy lifestyles and keeping themselves safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, teachers do not use assessment precisely enough to plan pupils' next steps in learning. As a result, pupils do not develop the depth of knowledge they have in other subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment information with precision, so that pupils know and remember more in these 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 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	109254
Local authority	Bristol City of
Inspection number	10256778
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	249
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mervyn Amesbury
Headteacher	Barbara Lee
Website	www.st-bernadette-pri.bristol.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Bernadette Catholic Primary School is a voluntary-aided school in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Clifton. At its most recent section 48 inspection, in February 2017, the school was graded as outstanding.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.

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 school leaders, including the headteacher and the acting deputy. He also met with representatives of the local governing body, the local authority and the Diocese of Clifton.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.

- The inspector looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects, including art and computing.
- The inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding records, including the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. He also met with parents at the start of the school day. Responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys were considered.

Inspection team

Richard Vaughan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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