

Inspection of a good school: St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School

Stonyford Road, Wombwell, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S73 8AF

Inspection date:

20 February 2024

Outcome

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly and inclusive school. One pupil accurately portrayed the views of many when describing the school as “one big family where we build each other up”. Parents agree. They value the communication they have with staff about their child. Pupils are looked after by kind staff who know them well.

Pupils increasingly benefit from the work that the school is doing to strengthen the quality of education. Where leaders have focused their attention over time, such as improving the teaching of early reading, pupils make strong progress. Pupils live by the school motto to ‘love, achieve, believe and succeed’. It shapes their good behaviour and their kindness towards others. Pupils are not worried about bullying. They know that it rarely happens and that staff will quickly address any concerns that they have.

Pupils have different opportunities to broaden their horizons and link their learning to the wider world. Trips to the Yorkshire wildlife park and local museums have proven to be memorable, as was the whole-school visit to the Christmas pantomime. Some pupils have leadership roles in school and speak proudly of the work they have done to help both leaders and their friends. Librarians are keen to talk about their areas of responsibility while play leaders enjoy helping others at social times.

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

The school is taking the right steps to strengthen the curriculum. In many subjects there has been careful thought to the small steps of knowledge that pupils must gain over time. Where this is clearly highlighted by teachers, and where pupils have the opportunity to regularly return to this knowledge, pupils can remember what they have been taught before and their learning builds over time. However, some of this work is new and, over time, pupils have not consistently benefitted from the stronger approach that is increasingly in place. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This includes their knowledge of the personal, social, health and economic curriculum. These gaps in learning slow pupils’ learning and the progress that they make in some subjects.

Teaching staff have expert subject knowledge and use this to bring learning to life for pupils. Teaching staff know pupils and their families well. Some pupils need extra support, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teaching staff have the knowledge, support and information they need to ensure that pupils who are disadvantaged, including those with SEND, receive the help that they need. Careful adaptations are made so that they can succeed alongside their peers.

Reading is a priority across the school. Children at the early stages of learning to read are immersed in language from the moment that they start at school. They quickly learn their letters and the sounds these letters make. Older pupils who need support to read fluently and with confidence, receive personalised interventions. As a result of the consistently effective approach delivered by skilled staff, pupils quickly learn to read proficiently.

In subjects such as phonics and mathematics, the school uses assessment well. This enables gaps in pupils' knowledge to be swiftly identified, interventions put in place, and the curriculum strengthened for future pupils. However, assessment in the wider curriculum is not as well developed. Leaders, including governors, do not know how well pupils have secured earlier learning. As a result, there are missed opportunities to strengthen the taught curriculum and some gaps in pupils' knowledge go unchecked.

Pupils behave well and listen carefully to their teachers in lessons. Pupils enjoy spending time with their friends at social times. Pupils know the importance of being respectful towards others, including those who are different from themselves. They know that there are different families and that people may have different beliefs, but that everyone should be loved for themselves. Children joining the school in the early years quickly settle into the new routines. They enjoy making friends, learning about the world around them and are well supported to get off to a flying start.

Staff consider leaders to be approachable and to have their best interests at heart. The school takes steps to ensure that staff have a good work-life balance and offers support as needed. Leaders and governors oversee the day-to-day running of the school well. However, there is not consistently strong strategic oversight of the school's work. Leaders are not fully clear about aspects of the school performance, including how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, important knowledge is not sufficiently highlighted to pupils. There are not enough opportunities to revisit this information so that pupils can recall it over time. As a result, pupils have some gaps in their knowledge, which slows the progress that they make. The school should ensure that ongoing curriculum developments

enable pupils to learn well in all subjects so that they are even better prepared for their next steps.

- Processes to check how well pupils have learned important knowledge are not fully developed. Assessment is not being used as well as it could be to understand how well some subjects are being taught, or to inform curriculum improvements. The school should ensure that assessment is used effectively in all subjects so that any changes needed can be implemented, and outcomes for pupils improve further.
- At times, leaders at all levels, including governors, are not looking at their area of responsibility or subject strategically enough. There are not the rigorous checks to provide assurance of the school's work, including the impact of the curriculum beyond key performance measures. The school should ensure that all leaders are supported to develop a more strategic approach to their work, so that sensible steps can be taken to accelerate the pace of school improvement.

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 school to be good in 15 and 16 January 2019.

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	106641
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	10313203
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	143
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sheila Marren
Executive Headteacher	Jo Wray
Head of School	Jane Holcroft
Website	www.federationcc.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Corpus Christi Federation of three schools. The federation shares an executive headteacher, middle leadership team and a governing body.
- Since the last inspection, a new assistant headteacher has taken up post.
- The school is a voluntary aided school with a religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was in June 2022. Due to the pandemic section 48 inspections were suspended and the timescales for reinspection have been extended by up to eight years.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior and middle leaders and members of the governing body including the chair of governors. Inspectors met with a representative of the local authority who is the external school improvement adviser. A meeting was also held with a representative of the Diocese of Hallam.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors listened to some pupils read and discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the view of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took into account the view of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View and through conversations held with some parents and carers as they collected pupils from school.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils through both formal and formal discussions. The views of staff were considered from meetings held with staff and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Simon Swift

Ofsted Inspector

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