

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

Catholic Lane, Sedgley, Dudley, West Midlands DY3 3UE

Inspection dates: 11–12 March 2020

Outcome

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

However, inspectors have some concerns that one or more areas may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy in this caring school. They enjoy coming to school and learn to respect others. They make a strong contribution to the care of others through their fundraising. Pupils are confident, articulate learners.

Trustees know that since the last inspection there has been a decline in the quality of education. The appointment of the executive headteacher in January 2020 has brought renewed energy to the school. Staff and parents say that this is already making a big difference. The leadership has rightly focused on improving safeguarding, reading and the curriculum. Leaders are taking the right steps to improve the school. Parents value the new open-door policy.

Pupils say things are changing for the better. For example, pupils appreciate having their achievements celebrated in Friday assemblies. Parents say how much they enjoy attending events in school.

Pupils are considerate of others and feel safe. Behaviour is good overall. Relationships between pupils are positive. Pupils say bullying is rare and our evidence supports this view. If bullying happens, pupils tell a teacher and it is stopped.

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

The executive headteacher has set about rapidly improving reading as a priority. Recent training for staff on how to teach reading and phonics is helping. However, pupils do not read regularly enough. Too many pupils have slipped behind, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is because, until recently, staff did not check carefully what pupils know and can do. Teaching assistants have not had enough training to support pupils in their reading and catch-up programmes.

Pupils have not had access to high-quality reading resources. New books have been purchased this term. Pupils in key stage 2 are enjoying the new class novels. For example, pupils in Year 6 speak confidently about the new books and how this encourages them to read other books by the same author.

Staff in school are inspired and motivated by the new leadership. There is a shared vision for improving the school. Staff say their workload is reasonable and they are proud to be part of the school.

Previously, pupils have not had a consistent experience of being taught the national curriculum subjects. More recently, leaders have taken swift action to improve this. However, this is still at a very early stage of development. Leaders now benefit from a partnership with St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Pupils now learn about more subjects and say that they enjoy this. In addition, workshops for parents are helping to share information about the new curriculum. During the inspection, for example, a Year 4 art workshop was well attended by parents. Pupils and parents shared a sense of awe and wonder when learning about St Basil's Cathedral in Russia.

Pupils like mathematics. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on solving problems. Leaders are addressing weaknesses in basic mental calculations. However, teachers do not have consistent expectations of presentation in mathematics. This limits pupils' ability to check whether their calculations are correct. In some other subjects, pupils' work is also not always well presented, because staff do not have high enough expectations.

Improvements to the geography curriculum have captured pupils' interest. For example, pupils are now learning more about different countries and cultures. Leaders recognise the need to embed recent improvements across this and other subjects. Curriculum leaders are keen to monitor the impact of recent changes on learning in classrooms. This aspect of their work is still being developed.

In Reception, children settle into school life. Staff are kind and caring. However, children do not always learn as effectively as they should. Reading is not prioritised in early years. Indoor and outdoor activities do not develop their knowledge and understanding well enough.

Pupils have access to and take part in after-school clubs, including sports activities. Pupils learn to think of others and they fundraise for those less fortunate than themselves. Older pupils have a sense of responsibility and care for younger pupils.

In lessons, most pupils behave well. Sometimes, when learning is not well matched to their needs, pupils lose focus and can appear distracted. When moving around school pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The executive headteacher has made significant changes to the management of safeguarding. A new safeguarding policy and record-keeping procedures are in place. Recent training for staff is helping them to improve their understanding of the new procedures, and it promotes a positive safeguarding culture.

Pupils can talk about how to keep themselves safe in school and online. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Parents agree. Pupils show maturity when talking about respecting others.

The multi-academy trustees understand their responsibilities to monitor safeguarding and ensure pupils are safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders recognise that the school has not had a sufficiently adequate reading and phonics programme. Teachers have not been assessing pupils' reading skills to find out what pupils can do and what they need to do next. Pupils are not reading regularly enough. The lack of a clear approach to early reading is proving to be a barrier for pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders need to ensure pupils get off to a rapid start with early reading.
- Subject leadership and teacher assessment have been underdeveloped. New curriculum plans are in place. The curriculum is now mapped out to build up pupils' knowledge over time. Leaders need to ensure that these new plans are implemented consistently so that pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum. In addition, more work is needed to ensure teachers' assessments are accurate.
- Children in Reception are not getting off to a rapid start in reading and other areas of learning. This is because staff are not accurately assessing what children can do in order to plan next steps in learning carefully. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have a coherent journey in all areas of learning and are well prepared for Year 1. The indoor and outdoor environments need greater thought in order to support the learning of all pupils in Reception.
- How well pupils present their work is variable across the school. In some classes, staff accept poor letter or number formation and presentation of work. Leaders should ensure a consistent approach to the teaching and expectations of presentation across the school.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be good on in May 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	140144
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10122561
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gaynor Rennicks
Executive Headteacher	Mark Hinton
Website	www.st-chads.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 April 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- An executive headteacher was appointed and took up post from January 2020.
- The school has a vacancy for a head of school.
- A new local governing board was appointed in March 2020.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. The inspector met with leaders, curriculum leaders, considered work in books, conducted lesson visits with leaders and spoke with teachers and pupils.
- The inspector met with two members of the trust board, including the chair of trustees, and with a representative of the diocese, and had a telephone conversation with the school's improvement partner.
- The inspector met with the safeguarding leader and deputy designated senior person. The school's single central record and other safeguarding records were checked.
- The inspector observed pupils reading with staff.

- Parents were spoken to at the end of the school day. The inspector considered responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and to Ofsted’s staff’s and pupils’ surveys.
- The inspector gathered pupils’ views, informally and formally during the school day.
- The inspector considered documents provided by the school, including the school’s action plans, self-evaluation and curriculum documents. The inspector checked attendance and behaviour information and the school’s website.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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