

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

Beanfield Avenue, Corby, Northamptonshire NN18 0AZ

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 October 2023

Outcome

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

The executive lead of this school is Mrs Leanne Brydon. This school is part of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tony Bishop, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christopher Donnellan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Brendan's Primary are polite and friendly. They conduct themselves very well around school. Staff have high expectations for all pupils. As a result, pupils try their best. Pupils behave and learn well. The school is determined that all pupils should achieve, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Lessons are popular. Typically, one pupil said, 'Every day is a time to learn.'

Central to the school is the mission statement: 'Always treat others as you would like them to treat you.' Pupils understand this guidance and aspire to follow it.

The school provides a highly nurturing environment. Pupils feel happy and safe.

The school council is proud of the 'calm playground' they planned and organised. Pupils see this as a haven. They value the activities on offer, such as board games, colouring and gardening. Those who hold positions of responsibility, such as 'reading ambassadors' or 'faith friends', explained how they enjoy helping other pupils.

Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. A comment by one parent, typical of many parents and carers, was: 'The school focuses on the whole child. The opportunities, trips and clubs the children get to experience are fantastic. My child will leave this school with wonderful memories.'

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

The school has produced a well-considered curriculum. There is a clear sequence of learning that runs from the early years to Year 6 in all subjects. This enables pupils' learning to build on what they already know. The school has ensured that pupils can develop their vocabulary and oracy in each subject. In 2022, however, pupils' progress and attainment at the end of key stage 2 did not yet reflect the impact of the improvements that the school has made to the curriculum.

Teachers have a secure understanding of the subjects they teach. Most teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding frequently in class. This information helps teachers to identify when pupils have gaps in their knowledge. They use it to inform their planning. However, assessment procedures are not fully developed across all subjects and classes. Sometimes, teachers do not identify misconceptions and gaps in pupils' knowledge or enable pupils to deepen their knowledge.

Teachers usually use activities and resources that help all pupils to learn. However, sometimes the activities selected do not help pupils to learn the key knowledge and intended curriculum as effectively as possible.

The school is welcoming and inclusive. There are clear systems in place for the identification of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Expectations of what pupils with SEND will know and be able to do are high. Teachers make sure that these pupils get the right help so that they can access the same curriculum as their peers.

Across the school, leaders prioritise reading. Strategies are in place to promote a love of reading. There are book corners in classrooms and a 'book shed' in the playground. One of the school's reading ambassadors talked about wanting to 'help other pupils to find their reading self'. Teachers ensure that pupils read and share texts that explore diversity and different groups in society. This helps pupils to broaden their understanding of the wider world. Children in the early years begin to learn to read as soon as they start school. Staff regularly check children's knowledge of sounds and their ability to read accurately. They provide extra support when necessary to ensure that all pupils become fluent readers.

The early years classroom is an inviting place, and the learning activities have purpose and are well considered. Children interact with these activities in a focused way. They get on well with other children in the class. Adults have high expectations and are great role models for the children. They skilfully develop children's speech and language. They establish clear routines. Children settle well into the early years.

The school's work to support pupils' wider development is strong. The curriculum extends well beyond the academic. Pupils learn about emotions, diversity and being healthy. The school ensures that pupils learn about the wider world. There is a focus on enabling all pupils to be aspirational. The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and experiences. Older pupils support younger pupils in the playground and through being 'reading buddies'.

The school is well led. Staff morale is high. Staff are proud to work at this school. They know that leaders consider their well-being and workload. The school and the trust have a shared ambition for the school and its pupils. Those responsible for governance provide effective support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of assessment need further development to ensure that it consistently identifies gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge and allows for pupils to deepen their understanding. The school must ensure that assessment processes in all subjects are of equally high quality so that pupils learn as well as they should.
- On occasions, some teachers' choice of activities limits how well pupils progress through the curriculum. When this is the case, pupils do not always get structured activities that focus on the key learning aim. The school should ensure that all teachers select appropriate activities to help all pupils progress through the curriculum well.

Background

When we have judged 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 June 2018.

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	142064
Local authority	North Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10313295
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Donnellan
CEO of trust	Tony Bishop
Headteacher	Leanne Brydon
Website	www.stbrendansprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is part of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust.

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 the headteacher, other school leaders and members of the governing body and trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to groups of pupils about their learning and looked at

samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 read to a member of staff.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: 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 culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during playtime.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils and staff and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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