

Inspection of a good school: St Laurence Church Infant School

Bunbury Road, Northfield, Birmingham, West Midlands B31 2DJ

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 November 2022

Outcome

St Laurence Church Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders and staff provide pupils with a happy and safe environment in which to learn. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Staff are attentive to their needs. Pupils feel safe at the school because adults look after them well.

The school's curriculum reflects leaders' high expectations for pupils. The programme of learning, from the start of Reception to the end of Year 2, supports pupils' academic and personal development well. By the time they leave the school, pupils are well prepared for key stage 2.

Pupils get on well with each other. They behave well in lessons and during breaktimes. They enjoy getting rewards for good behaviour. Staff make sure that pupils understand the importance of respecting others. This has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes. Bullying is rare and staff deal with it well when it occurs.

Leaders have a strong focus on developing close links between pupils' families and the school. Staff invite parents and carers to attend workshops where they can take part in learning activities with their children. The school's newsletters provide comprehensive information to parents about school life. Parents appreciate how caring and approachable staff at the school are.

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

Leaders are clear about what pupils need to learn to be ready for the next stage of their education. The way leaders plan and organise learning supports pupils' progress well.

In Reception, children develop their understanding of the world around them. They also develop their personal and social skills. What they learn in their first year at the school prepares children well for the start of key stage 1. In Years 1 and 2, pupils follow a programme of study that covers all the national curriculum subjects. This programme allows them to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be ready for Year 3.

Staff plan activities to help pupils enjoy learning and remember what they are taught. For example, in mathematics, pupils start learning about numbers through practical activities before progressing on to applying this knowledge to solve problems. Teachers always make sure that pupils can use what they have learned, before moving on to new topics. In history, teachers make learning relevant to pupils by teaching them about the history of their local area. Visits to local historical buildings help pupils to develop an understanding of changes over time.

Learning routines are well established. Pupils behave well. They are attentive when teachers give instructions. They collaborate well with each other.

In most subjects, teachers check how well pupils learn during lessons. They use this information to help pupils when they need support with their work. In these subjects, teachers also test pupils' knowledge at regular intervals. However, in a few subjects, leaders are still developing systems to check pupils' progress over time. This means that sometimes staff do not know whether pupils have understood important learning.

Making sure that all pupils learn to read well is a top priority for leaders. They have introduced a new phonics scheme. This new scheme is having a positive impact. Pupils gain the skills they need to become fluent readers. Staff have developed their expertise to teach reading through extensive training. This training allows them to help pupils who find reading difficult catch up when they fall behind. Pupils enjoy the way they learn to read.

The curriculum and extra-curricular activities on offer are effective in supporting pupils' personal development. In personal, social and health education, pupils learn about being responsible and respecting others. Staff run popular after-school clubs where pupils can do dance, music or sport. There are also sports activities available at lunchtime. The school achieved a United Nations 'Rights Respecting School' award for the way staff teach pupils about their own rights and those of children around the world.

Leaders and staff strive to support every child in the school effectively. They make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help that they need to be successful and enjoy school. Leaders identify and record pupils' needs with precision. This information allows staff to help pupils with SEND access the whole curriculum and all extra-curricular activities.

Leaders are mindful of staff workload and well-being. Staff appreciate this. Leaders and staff work well together as a team.

Governors are thorough in the way they fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Leaders benefit from the supportive monitoring and challenge governors provide.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All members of staff receive regular safeguarding training. They are vigilant and know how to identify and report potential safeguarding issues. Leaders follow up any concerns raised. They support families and work efficiently with the relevant external agencies to protect children who may be at risk.

Leaders and governors have the relevant expertise to recruit staff safely and to deal with any complaints thoroughly.

Staff raise pupils' awareness of risks. Pupils learn about road safety and other risks they may be exposed to. Staff also teach them how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, assessment systems are not effective in enabling staff to identify and address pupils' misconceptions as early as they could. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could in these subjects. Leaders need to ensure that all subjects include timely assessment opportunities that allow teachers to adjust teaching and ensure that progress is as strong as it can be across the curriculum.

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 June 2017.

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	103459
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10240686
Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Canon Janet Chapman
Headteacher	Catherine Smith
Website	www.stlrci.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	20 and 21 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher has been in post since September 2020.
- The school is a Church of England school, within the Diocese of Birmingham. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in July 2018. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, who is also designated safeguarding lead (DSL), and the assistant headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector spoke with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and two other governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector checked safeguarding arrangements and school records. The inspector discussed safeguarding policies and case studies with the DSL. He talked to teachers and other staff about the safeguarding training they had received and how they put this training into practice.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and talked to parents at the end of the school day.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online inspection questionnaire, including written responses. He also considered responses from staff to the online inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Patrick Amieli, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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