

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

Messenger Road, Smethwick, West Midlands B66 3DU

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 May 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The principal of this school is Carmel Hinton. This school is part of Emmaus Catholic Multi Academy Company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the Catholic senior executive leader, Suzanne Horan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joanna Griffin.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Philip's Catholic Primary is a school where the wider development of pupils is really important. Staff work effectively to provide new and exciting opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their talents and interests. Pupils appreciate the care they receive and know that, when required, staff will be there to support them.

Pupils enjoy being given the chance to express their opinions, and show a willingness to share what they enjoy and would like to improve at their school. Being provided the opportunity to be school councillors, eco-warriors and representatives at the pupils' annual SHAPE conference are a few of the ways they make their voice heard.

Many pupils value their education and display positive attitudes to learning. They know that doing well at school will support them to be successful in the future. Most now attend school regularly, particularly more vulnerable pupils.

The school and trust are dedicated to doing their best for the pupils and families they serve. Leaders show integrity and a willingness to make changes to how they do things to address identified areas for improvement. However, the school has faced some challenges in recent times, including significant staffing changes. This has had an impact on the capacity of staff to deliver and monitor the impact of the mathematics curriculum.

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

Despite some significant changes to the curriculum, the school is not yet seeing consistent improvements in what all pupils know and can do in mathematics. The school has put in place additional training to support staff to deliver the curriculum as intended. However, there remain a lack of subject knowledge and inconsistencies in how and when misconceptions are addressed, which adversely affects pupils' mathematical learning.

Leaders have designed a reading curriculum that teaches pupils how to read while also developing a love of reading. There is a wide range of books, and pupils look forward to the possibility of earning a 'Blue Peter badge' as a reward for reading more widely and often. The school's approach to the teaching of phonics is systematic, with the books pupils read well matched to the sounds that they know. Staff responsible for supporting pupils who fall behind in their reading are well trained, and this ensures that many are able to read by the end of Year 2.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported to learn the same curriculum as their peers. The school's approach to identifying needs and developing support plans is enabling most pupils with SEND to make progress from their starting points. A small number of pupils with complex learning needs require personalised approaches to support them. In doing so, the school works effectively with specialist services to identify ways to help these pupils develop their communication skills.

Many pupils understand the importance of behaving well, and enjoy receiving awards for doing the right things for the right reason. However, a minority of pupils are not supported well enough to help them to develop appropriate learning behaviours, leading to disruption that can affect other pupils' learning. The school's work to improve attendance has had significant impact on how frequently pupils come to school. Those who are considered persistently absent have reduced in number. The pastoral team builds positive relationships with families, helping them to understand the importance of being in school regularly.

'Learning outside of the classroom' matters to pupils at this school. Pupils enjoy opportunities to use the skills they learn in the classroom through activities such as birdwatching, gardening and when acting as junior police community support officers. Pupils successfully learn about water and online safety and many also learn to ride bikes safely on local roads. Pupils reflect on opportunities to sing at community events and raise money for those in need as being positive ways in which they support their community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Due to significant changes in staffing, not all staff have been sufficiently well trained to deliver the school's mathematics curriculum. Some do not have the required subject knowledge to deliver the curriculum well and do not consistently identify misconceptions in pupils' mathematical learning. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they should. The school should ensure that all staff receive further training to enable them to deliver the curriculum as intended, and effectively.
- Not all pupils are supported well enough to meet the expected learning behaviours. A minority of pupils disrupt the learning of others. The school should ensure that all pupils display a readiness for learning and understand and meet the school's expectations of behaviour.

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 predecessor school, St Philip's Catholic Primary School, to be good in March 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' 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	141929
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10294609
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joanna Griffin
Principal	Carmel Hinton
Website	www.st-philips.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Philip's Catholic Primary School became a member of the Emmaus Catholic Multi Academy Company in 2021. The trust is responsible for nine other schools.
- As a Roman Catholic school, it last received a section 48 inspection in November 2018. This means that the school is due another inspection by November 2026.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 met with a range of leaders, including those responsible for the curriculum, teaching and learning, behaviour, attendance, personal development and safeguarding.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also heard a selection of pupils read.
- The inspector spoke with the chair of the trust and the Catholic school executive leader.
- The inspector spoke with the chair of the local board of governors.
- The inspector considered the survey responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments from parents.
- The inspector evaluated the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Tony Bradshaw, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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