

# Abbey Catholic Primary School

Sutton Road, Erdington, Birmingham, West Midlands B23 6QL

## Inspection dates

13–14 June 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors care deeply about the personal development and welfare of each and every pupil. A warm, caring ethos pervades the school.
- Senior leaders are highly reflective. They know exactly where further improvements are needed.
- Leadership at all levels is a key strength across the school. A strong sense of teamwork is evident. Staff are clear about leaders' ambitions and support them well.
- Focused training and effective support and mentoring have helped to improve the quality of teaching further since the last inspection.
- Staff are highly skilled in teaching phonics and reading skills. As a result, the vast majority of pupils reach the expected standard in reading by the end of key stage 1.
- Over time, outcomes in mathematics have improved. This is a result of strong leadership and good training for all staff.
- The teaching of writing has improved since the last inspection. However, opportunities for pupils to write at length across the curriculum are currently limited.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders, staff and governors are well trained and vigilant. They ensure that children and families receive timely support and help.
- The growing proportion of pupils who join the school with little English soon develop confidence in English and are able to access the full curriculum.
- Following a set of results lower than other pupils' results, leaders commissioned a review of provision for disadvantaged pupils. A more focused approach is now in place and many pupils are now making faster progress.
- Children get off to a good start in Reception. They are safe and happy. They enjoy the range of learning opportunities provided for them.
- This is a happy school where staff promote positive attitudes and pupils care for one another. Staff strongly promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils behave well around school. In class, they work hard and cooperate well together. They enjoy coming to school. Attendance levels are above those found nationally.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve outcomes in writing, especially for the most able and those who are disadvantaged, by providing more opportunities for pupils to write independent, extended pieces across the curriculum.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership at all levels by:
  - developing a comprehensive provision map of support for pupils who are disadvantaged in order to more closely monitor the impact of the funding and accelerate their progress
  - revising the curriculum to ensure an appropriate balance of subjects studied by pupils across the school.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and other senior leaders provide effective leadership for the school. They have a clear vision which is supported by staff and governors. They are energetic and determined to improve the school further and strengthen outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders are analytical and reflective. They carefully check what is happening in the school and evaluate the impact of actions that they have taken. They show an incisive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and act upon them. For example, following the low writing outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, they introduced different moderation and monitoring procedures.
- The headteacher demonstrates a strong commitment to the development of all her staff. She looks for potential and provides high-quality coaching and mentoring. Professional development opportunities are valued by all adults in the school. As a result, leaders are grown from within and the school offers regular support to other schools within the Catholic diocese.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, use detailed systems skilfully to track pupils' attainment and progress. Regular discussions are held with teachers about the progress of pupils in their class. Leaders identify pupils who might be falling behind, and provide additional support to speed up pupils' progress. Leaders check the impact of this support to see if it is improving pupils' learning.
- The leadership of special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. Pupils' individual needs are identified and the curriculum is adapted as necessary. Pupil profiles indicate specific areas of need so that class teachers know what to do to help children to have greater success. The leader provides opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress in detail, but not all parents take up this offer.
- Leaders provide highly effective support for the increasing numbers of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Well-thought-out induction systems give pupils a secure start to school. As a result, this group of pupils makes good progress over time.
- The curriculum includes extensive additional activities and theme days and weeks, such as the recent 'small change day'. These make a good contribution to pupils' learning and to their personal development. Residential opportunities, educational visits and the school's outdoor learning environment add to the richness of the curriculum. However, there is a lack of a broad, balanced curriculum, and leaders are aware of the need to review the curriculum to ensure an appropriate balance between the different subjects. This will make sure that all pupils receive a full curriculum entitlement.
- Following an in-depth look at pupil outcomes, leaders identified that some disadvantaged pupils were not making as much progress as others in the school. Leaders commissioned an external review of the use and impact of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Some of the key recommendations from the review have been put into action and are making a difference for these pupils. Leaders are beginning to develop a comprehensive map of the provision for all disadvantaged pupils so that the funding and its impact can be closely monitored.

- The school uses additional sport funding effectively. There are strong links with an external sports partnership. A wide range of sporting opportunities are provided, including inter-school competitions. Increased numbers of pupils participate and leaders target those who have not previously been involved. The vast majority of pupils gain their water-safety training certificate and more than 60% can swim 25 metres unaided by the time they leave the school.
- The school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils care about each other and respect those who are different from themselves. They talk enthusiastically about the charity work they undertake. Pupils link democracy to events in school, such as voting for members of the pupil parliament. As a result, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The great majority of parents hold the school in high regard. Many commented on the school being 'like a family' and that their children enjoy the wide range of experiences that the school provides. Some parents raised concerns about the lack of information about the specific progress their child was making. However, 90% of the 107 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey would recommend the school to others.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for further development. They are well informed by school leaders. They take time to check out what they are told by visiting the school regularly. Governors talk to pupils about their learning. They visit lessons and meet with different leaders. As a result, they are able to challenge leaders and hold them to account.
- The governing body was clearly aware of the weak results in writing in key stage 2 in 2017. Governors discussed these in detail with leaders. Governors understand the improvements that are being made and are keeping a close eye on the effect of these on pupils' achievements. Governors state that this has spurred them on to make further improvements and ensure that no complacency exists in the school.
- Governors have a wealth of appropriate skills between them. They undertake training, where relevant, to keep up to date in their work. They are aware that they are not currently fully representative of the wider parent body. A parent election is planned, following advice from the local authority.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Many parents say that staff 'go above and beyond' to ensure that their children are safe at school. Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously. They take action, where appropriate, and work to raise awareness of child protection issues with all members of the school community. For example, leaders produce a safeguarding newsletter each term, containing useful advice and guidance about relevant topics, such as online gaming.
- Staff are vigilant and understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe. They are well trained and know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Effective systems are in place to ensure that children and families receive appropriate support

from a network of external agencies.

- Pre-employment checks on new staff are thorough. Appropriate checks are undertaken on visitors and volunteers to the school. A comprehensive induction process ensures that all new staff understand the school systems and procedures.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They learn to manage risks in the forest school area. For example, when toasting marshmallows, pupils learn to kneel on one knee so that they can easily stand up away from the flames.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school. They monitor teachers' work and check pupils' progress regularly. They provide high-quality professional development for all staff. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it to plan effective learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Teachers create calm, purposeful, learning environments. Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive. Teachers share clear success criteria so that pupils know what is expected. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work on practical tasks in pairs and small groups. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and work hard.
- Questioning is used skilfully to check what pupils know and can do. Some teachers are highly effective in using questions to deepen understanding, for example when discussing the author Michael Morpurgo and links with propaganda. Pupils who have gaps in their knowledge and skills receive extra help in the lesson or in short catch-up sessions. They make good progress as a result. However, some of the most able pupils are not moved on as quickly as they could be and their progress is limited.
- The teaching of reading is a real strength of the school. All adults are highly trained in the use of phonics and how to teach early reading skills. They make the most of every opportunity to provide pupils with the chance to practise and develop their skills. For example, when lining up to come into school, pupils are encouraged to read key-word cards. Teachers choose a range of quality texts to read and share with pupils. As a result, pupils learn to read fluently and develop a love of reading.
- The teaching of writing has improved since the last inspection. Opportunities to write in a range of genres are now provided for pupils of all ages. Writing tasks have a clear purpose behind them. English grammar, punctuation and spelling are taught well over time. A focus on handwriting has enabled many more pupils to write in a fluent, joined-up style, although this is not yet consistent across the school. Writing in other subject areas is not yet as fully developed.
- Mathematics teaching is effective. Teachers are enthusiastic and pupils say that they particularly enjoy this subject. Lessons provide opportunities for pupils to use their skills and knowledge. Teachers link the work with real life, where possible, such as the work on managing a budget. Consequently, pupils see a reason behind their learning and focus well.
- Additional adults provide effective support. They are deployed according to need across the school. They are knowledgeable and understand how best to help individual pupils.

They provide support and challenge in equal measure. Consequently, pupils do not depend on them, and they develop greater independence in their learning.

- Learning journals created in each class capture the wider curriculum work done together. Pupils enjoy working in groups to carry out science experiments or to learn about the Tudors. However, pupils' books do not reflect a broad, balanced curriculum.
- Occasionally, the work that pupils are doing is too easy for some or lacks the challenge that others require to keep them focused. Where tasks are matched appropriately to pupils' needs, pupils make stronger progress.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. All adults have a strong commitment to supporting pupils' emotional well-being.
- Pupils are confident. They enjoy sharing what they are learning. Pupils demonstrate pride in their school, in their own achievements and in those of others. They talk of belonging to the 'Abbey family'. Pupils of all ages get on well together and take care of each other.
- Pupils are given a range of opportunities to take on a leadership role in the school. Pupils are elected to the sports council, the 'liturgy' team or as peer mediators. Children are keen to engage in the activities that play leaders organise at lunchtimes. The pupil parliament meets to take account of everyone's views. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They know not to share personal information and know what to do when unkind comments are made on social media. Pupils look forward to participating in the annual 'bikeability' sessions, where they learn to cycle safely.
- Pupils demonstrate great tolerance and respect for others. The range of visits to different places of worship, such as the synagogue and mosque, help them to develop understanding and respect for those who have a different faith from their own. Their perception is that there is no bullying at school but that, if there was, they know for certain that adults would help to resolve it very quickly.
- The vast majority of pupils take great care with the presentation of their work. They use rulers to underline, finish diagrams and pictures off carefully and use fluent, neat handwriting. This has improved since the last inspection. Some pupils need further support and encouragement in order to do this consistently well.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school is an orderly place where expectations are made clear. Pupils respond quickly to the hand signal, even on the playground, stopping and listening to the adult almost instantly. The behaviour system is effective because staff apply it consistently

and pupils say that it is fair. Pupils enjoy 'going for gold' and respond well to positive praise.

- Behaviour outside on the playground is good. There are appropriate levels of supervision and a wealth of activities for pupils to enjoy, especially at lunchtimes. Pupils are polite and courteous. They hold doors open for adults and use good manners. They ensure that visitors to the school are welcomed; they find them chairs to sit on and show them around.
- Classrooms are calm and purposeful places in which to learn. Pupils work equally well together or on their own. When teaching is less engaging, some pupils allow their attention to wander and do not fully concentrate.
- Pupils are compliant and follow instructions well. They have positive attitudes to their learning. However, many pupils are not yet taking full ownership of their learning and, consequently, do not fully challenge themselves to do even better.
- The vast majority of parents say that their children like coming to school. As a result, attendance is above national averages. Leaders monitor the attendance of different pupil groups closely. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced over time.

### Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Following a drop in outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017, particularly in writing, leaders took decisive and effective action. This has ensured that the progress of current pupils in school is improving.
- After a good start to learning in the early years, pupils achieve well in key stage 1. In 2017, outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics rose so that they were similar to national outcomes at the expected level. More pupils reached greater depth, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been higher than nationally for the last four years. This is a result of the high-quality teaching in phonics and early reading skills. In 2017, all pupils in Year 2 reached the expected standard.
- Pupils read books that are appropriate to their age and reading ability. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading. Current pupils demonstrate good comprehension skills. Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 are similar to those found nationally.
- Achievement in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 is strong. Pupils' progress in 2017 was very good. Attainment at the expected standard is above that seen nationally, and a higher proportion of pupils reach greater depth.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are improving, although this is not yet consistently strong across the school. Leaders have introduced a 20-day challenge for disadvantaged pupils to accelerate their progress. School assessment data indicates that many current disadvantaged pupils are now making faster progress. Some disadvantaged pupils also have SEN and/or disabilities and, for this group, progress and attainment are more limited.

- Most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. They make stronger progress in reading than writing or mathematics. This is a result of effective support and appropriate interventions.
- The achievement of the most able pupils is improving. More pupils reached greater depth at the end of key stage 2 in 2017. While some do well, their achievement is sometimes held back because work lacks challenge. Teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities to develop longer pieces of writing in different subject areas. Analysis of current school assessments for reading and mathematics show that the standards achieved in last year's key stage national tests are likely to be maintained. However, work in pupils' books does not fully represent what individual pupils know and can do across the wider curriculum.

### Early years provision

**Good**

- Children start Reception with skills and knowledge below those which are typical for their age. Over time, the proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development has risen steadily and is now above national averages. Children make good progress in the early years.
- Leaders have ensured that the early years curriculum is interesting, engaging, broad and balanced. Children develop curiosity and want to find out more. Activities have a clear purpose behind them and build upon what the children have previously learned to do. For example, children enjoyed painting and drawing a range of animals following their visit to the zoo.
- The development of children's language and communication skills is given a high priority. Daily sessions in small groups help children to develop a wider vocabulary and a deeper understanding of what is being said. Questions are used well by adults to encourage pupils to explain themselves clearly. As a result, pupils quickly gain confidence to engage in conversation with others.
- Children develop perseverance and resilience through the range of activities on offer. They cooperate with each other and learn to take turns. For example, two girls took turns to be the customer and the shopkeeper in the role-play area. Boys shared in the water play as they explored containers which were full or empty. Behaviour is good.
- The teaching of early reading skills is highly effective. All staff are well trained. They help pupils to use the sounds that they learn in their independent writing. As a result, pupils make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- Monitoring is thorough. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the early years. They track children's progress carefully and know when children are not being sufficiently challenged. Leaders look for ways to develop the provision further. There is a strong drive to improve standards.
- Parents comment that their children are well cared for and safe in the early years. They value the information given to them before their children start school.



## School details

Unique reference number	103422
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10047488

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tracy Smith
Headteacher	Julie-Anne Tallon
Telephone number	01213731793
Website	<a href="http://www.abbeyrc.bham.sch.uk">www.abbeyrc.bham.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:a.jackson@abbeyrc.bham.sch.uk">a.jackson@abbeyrc.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	12–13 March 2014

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Two-thirds of the pupils are White British, the remainder coming from a range of other ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen since the last inspection and is now similar to national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average.
- The school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school belongs to the Erdington consortium of schools and the Kingsbury School Sports Partnership.
- The headteacher and deputy regularly provide leadership support to other schools

across the Catholic Diocesan School Partnership. At the time of the inspection, the substantive deputy headteacher was on secondment; he has recently been appointed to the headship at the school of his secondment. The acting deputy headteacher has been appointed to the permanent deputy headteacher role with effect from 1 July 2017. There is also an acting assistant headteacher in place.

- There is a privately managed out-of-school club for children on the school site. This is inspected separately.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other key leaders. The lead inspector spoke with seven members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair of governors.
- The lead inspector held telephone discussions with a representative from the school improvement team at the local authority and with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors made visits to classrooms on both days of the inspection. Many of these visits were with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books to look at work across the curriculum.
- Pupils were spoken to formally and informally. A group of pupils accompanied an inspector on a learning walk around the school. Inspectors heard pupils read. They observed behaviour in classrooms, in corridors, at lunchtime and outside on the playgrounds.
- Inspectors talked to parents before school started on both days of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the 107 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 99 responses to the free text service.
- Inspectors noted and analysed 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan, records of monitoring, reports to governors and minutes of meetings. Information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed and discussed with leaders. The school's website was looked at in detail.

## Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Adam Hewett	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Griffiths	Ofsted Inspector

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