

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic School

Earlsbury Gardens, Birchfield, Birmingham, West Midlands B20 3AE

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The executive headteacher of this school is Catherine Dalzell. This school is part of John Paul II Multi Academy Company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Matthew Emery, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Maria Gabriella Stirrop.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and inclusive school. Staff have created an environment that makes pupils feel happy, safe and welcome. It is a place where children come first. Staff really get to know every pupil. This gives pupils a strong sense of belonging and a feeling of security.

The school has not ensured that pupils develop the depth of knowledge in some subjects that they should over time. Pupils learn less well in some subjects than others. Leaders have recently strengthened the curriculum to ensure that pupils learn to read well and develop their mathematical knowledge. However, teachers' delivery of the wider curriculum does not yet support all pupils to build their knowledge as well as they could in all subjects.

Pupils at this school are a delight. They enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They are proud of their school and being part of the school community. Pupils behave well in lessons and do their best.

Pupils learn about other faiths and diversity. As a result, they have a well-developed understanding of what makes people different. The school broadens pupils' experiences through a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, gardening and music clubs, with the school's steelpan band being a favourite.

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

Over the last 18 months, leaders have taken significant steps to address the school's previous weaknesses. With support from the trust, they have ensured a stable staffing team. They have introduced new systems and expectations for the curriculum and pupils' behaviour. These improvements have had, and continue to have, a positive impact. Pupils' behaviour is now a strength. They learn without distraction and have positive relationships with one another.

In subjects, including English and mathematics, pupils gain knowledge in a well-considered way. Most teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum well. Where this is the case, pupils build a stronger understanding of the subject. However, some staff do not have the subject knowledge or confidence to deliver some aspects of the curriculum well. Consequently, some pupils do not deepen their understanding well enough.

The curriculum clearly identifies what pupils should learn and in what order. However, some staff do not deliver the planned learning in some curriculum subjects as intended. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning. Where subjects are more established and taught consistently well, the positive impact on what pupils know and remember is evident.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff work collaboratively with parents and carers to develop a detailed

understanding of an individual pupil's requirements. This supports pupils with SEND to follow the curriculum successfully alongside their peers.

Pupils read widely and with enjoyment. They have access to a wide range of books that reflect positively the diverse community. Teachers prioritise the teaching of reading and pupils begin to learn phonics as soon as they join the school. Staff are suitably trained to deliver the phonics programme well. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know, and they do so with accuracy and fluency. Teachers make checks on pupils' learning to identify those who need extra help with learning to read. However, this support does not always happen, meaning that some pupils do not catch up in their learning of phonics quickly enough.

The curriculum for early years is ambitious. There is a warm and caring atmosphere in the classroom. Children happily play and learn together. Children know the systems and routines well. They persevere with tasks and show sustained concentration.

The school has a comprehensive programme to develop pupils' moral and ethical attitudes and beliefs. Pupils learn about positive mental health and how to make the best of their strengths. Staff encourage pupils to be proud of who they are. Pupils consider the needs of others. For instance, they are particularly keen to welcome and support pupils new to the school. Older pupils have a range of opportunities to be positive role models. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain as they learn about important values, including democracy, tolerance and respect.

The school creates opportunities to engage with parents. For example, many families attend the 'Motivational Monday' reading group, where pupils enjoy reading with their parents. Parents are positive about the school and feel well informed about all aspects of school life.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They value being part of the trust and the support provided on many levels. Trustees and those responsible for governance know the school well and work collaboratively with the school. They provide support and challenge in all areas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not deliver aspects of the curriculum in some foundation subjects as it is intended. As a result, not all pupils, including pupils with SEND, achieve as well as they should because they have gaps in their learning. The school should ensure that teachers receive further support and training to enable

them to deliver the planned curriculum more effectively in all year groups and subjects.

- Pupils who have fallen behind with their reading, or those who join the school with limited reading skills, are not supported well enough to catch up quickly. This means that they are not able to read fluently and confidently, which impedes their learning across the curriculum. The school should ensure that pupils who have fallen behind get the help they need to become confident, fluent readers.
- Some improvements to the curriculum are in the early stages of being implemented. Some teachers do not always have the necessary subject knowledge and pedagogical approaches to deliver the curriculum effectively. The school needs to further support staff development so that the curriculum is taught well.

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	147109
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10290663
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	185
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Maria Gabriella Stirrop
Executive Principal	Catherine Dalzell
Website	www.sacredheart-sch.net
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined the John Paul II Multi Academy Company in June 2019.
- The school is within the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Its most recent section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character was carried out in November 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- The inspectors met with the executive principal, head of school and senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The lead inspector talked to a representative from the diocese.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing body and trustees.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, examined pupils' work in art and visited a sample of music lessons.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Minutes of governing body meetings, trust board meetings and reports from external reviews were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to the staff and pupil survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussion.

Inspection team

Cathy Young, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Louise Minter

Ofsted Inspector

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