

St John and Monica Catholic Primary School

Chantry Road, Moseley, Birmingham, West Midlands B13 8DW

Inspection dates

26–27 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Following a period of instability, leaders and governors are taking decisive action to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils.
- The new headteacher and senior leadership team have high expectations and they are focused on bringing about rapid improvements. Plans to support developments are clearly addressing the school's main priorities, but they are not yet sharp enough and leaders cannot easily evaluate their impact.
- Governors know the school increasingly well, including its strengths and those areas for further improvement. However, they need to hold school leaders more rigorously to account.
- Across the school, most pupils achieve the standards expected for their age. In 2017, attainment at the end of key stage 2 was high compared to the national average, including for those pupils who are disadvantaged and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Progress for current pupils across the school in reading, writing and mathematics is improving. Most pupils are now making good progress.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is a strength of the school. Pupils are well prepared for life as citizens in modern Britain.
- The broad curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of exciting and engaging activities.
- Teaching is good, including in the early years. Teachers have increasingly high expectations about what pupils can achieve. They are more regularly providing pupils with opportunities to apply their skills across a range of subjects. However, sometimes there remains a lack of challenge, particularly for the most able. As a result, not all pupils progress as quickly as they could.
- Teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs) ask effective questions to deepen pupils' understanding and quickly tackle any misconceptions. In a small number of lessons, approaches are inconsistent and this leads to some missed opportunities for learning.
- Leaders have introduced new assessment systems to the school. These are helping teachers to focus on pupils' progress. However, they are not yet developed sufficiently well to support school improvement.
- Pupils value their education and rarely miss a day at school. They are proud of their school and show excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils' behaviour is of the highest standard.
- Safeguarding is effective. Pupils feel safe and know that they can trust adults to help keep them safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed recent developments in leadership and management, including in the early years, to secure improvements and strengthen pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - the school has systems in place to effectively track pupils' assessment information
 - development plans are sharply focused and enable leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of the actions taken
 - governors develop a focused action plan to strengthen their effectiveness at holding senior leaders to account.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment provided by teachers and LSAs by ensuring that teaching across the school is of a consistently high standard and opportunities for learning are maximised.
- Improve pupils' progress, especially across key stage 2 and for those who are most able, by ensuring that activities are closely matched to pupils' needs and all pupils are challenged effectively.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- A period of considerable change led to a decline in standards and some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school. The new headteacher, senior leaders and governors are taking rapid and decisive actions to address the areas requiring improvement. These are having a positive impact and they have ensured that the quality of education provided by the school is good.
- The headteacher is ambitious for the school. She demonstrates a drive and determination to achieve the highest standards and the best possible outcomes for all pupils. Senior leaders demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas in need of further improvement. However, while leaders have accurately identified the priorities for development, some plans to address these are not sharp enough. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of their actions.
- The headteacher has high expectations for everyone, and there are performance management systems in place to help staff ensure that improvements are made and targets are achieved. Senior leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching. Teachers value the open and honest feedback that they receive from senior leaders and the opportunities that they have to access effective coaching and training, both in and out of school. Staff spoken to said that they feel well supported by senior leaders. They are positive about recently introduced initiatives. As one member of staff said about the new approaches, 'they are well thought through and in the best interests of the pupils.'
- Senior leaders have introduced new systems to track pupils' progress in English and mathematics. These systems are still in development, and in some cases teachers are continuing to use their own parallel systems as they feel that these better meet their needs. Teachers and leaders do have an understanding of pupils' progress and attainment, but they are currently duplicating effort. The new assessment systems need further work to ensure that they are fit for purpose.
- The school has secure systems in place to identify, assess and track pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Their needs are addressed in a variety of ways, including extra support in class, small-group and one-to-one input. Interventions are matched closely to pupils' needs and they are monitored through regular progress meetings. Communication with parents and carers is strong and they are encouraged to attend termly review meetings. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making small, but effective, gains in their learning. Many are making good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders use the pupil premium grant funding to ensure that disadvantaged pupils are supported effectively across the school and that they have opportunities to take part in all aspects of school life. Senior leaders and staff have a good awareness of the barriers to learning and the challenges that this group of pupils face. As a result, most disadvantaged pupils are working at the standard expected for their age across the school, and rates of progress are improving.

- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, which contains many activities to engage and motivate pupils. For example, Year 4 pupils have recently completed geography projects based around the countries involved in the football World Cup. Year 6 pupils demonstrated a love of learning by enthusiastically talking about the homework projects that they had recently completed as part of a topic on Ancient Greece. Ongoing curriculum developments include strengthening links between different subjects and fostering greater links with the local community, such as Edgbaston Cricket Club and Birmingham Royal Ballet. Music provision is strong, for example all Year 4 pupils learn to play the guitar. The school also makes regular use of its forest school provision to enhance the curriculum further.
- Pupils value the extra-curricular opportunities that the school provides. Topics are brought to life through trips and visitors. For example, Year 5 pupils visit the National Space Centre as part of a science topic. Pupils spoke positively about the range of after-school clubs available. These include many sports clubs, but also the opportunity to complete online reading and mathematical activities.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is extensive and a real strength of the school. Spirituality is at the heart of the school. Pupils follow the approach set out in the school's mission statement, 'We learn through the example of Jesus, to love, respect, understand and value each other.' Pupils from a variety of religious backgrounds spoke positively about this. Parents and pupils value the multicultural aspect of the school and the way in which it encourages pupils to develop respect for each other. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of British values such as democracy and the rule of law. Pupils develop their own class charter at the start of each year, and they are encouraged to reflect upon the choices that they make. As a result of these opportunities, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is used effectively to promote healthy lifestyles, build pupils' resilience and increase their participation in physical activity, for example through 'active curriculum' days, which combine literacy and mathematics skills with physical activity, and through more involvement in inter-school competitions. Training for staff, provided by specialist coaches, is improving the quality of PE teaching across the school.

Governance of the school

- Governance is increasingly effective, and governors are clearly ambitious for the school and its pupils. The governing body is focused on improving the quality of education and ensuring that the school is in a strong position financially.
- Governors now have greater access to a wide range of school information and, consequently, they have a more detailed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Due to a better understanding of the school's data and school improvement plan, governors are beginning to ask more challenging questions in order to bring about improvements. A new committee has been introduced to focus specifically on curriculum and standards.
- The governing body has recently recruited new members with relevant skills and knowledge to continue to challenge leaders to raise standards further. The governing

body now monitors the training governors complete and uses this information to identify any gaps in knowledge.

- However, there is no action plan to link the work of the governing body closely to the school's priorities. The governors are aware of the need to hold leaders better to account for outcomes and to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Keeping children safe is the school's number-one priority, and leaders have created a culture where all staff know that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. As a result, the school is a safe environment for pupils and they are well cared for at all times.
- All staff have regular and appropriate training to understand their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe, and they are vigilant in looking out for indicators of risk or harm. The safeguarding team maintains the required confidential records and, when appropriate, the team shares information with relevant external agencies. Leaders are methodical and persistent in following up concerns.
- Leaders ensure that appropriate checks are carried out on all adults appointed to work at the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Across the school, teaching is effective and enables most pupils to make increasingly good progress. Classrooms are positive and purposeful learning environments. Adults have strong relationships with pupils and act as good role models.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. Along with LSAs, teachers question pupils effectively to extend their thinking and deepen their learning. They also encourage the pupils to answer in full sentences and focus on developing pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills. LSAs provide effective support to groups of pupils. However, in some lessons they could be more directly involved during whole-class teaching in order to maximise the progress of all pupils.
- Following in-school training, teachers expectations of what pupils can achieve across a wide range of subjects have increased. Lessons are planned to build on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding. Teachers generally ensure that pupils are clear about what they are learning and the steps that they need to take to achieve the lesson's objectives. In many cases, tasks are pitched at an appropriate level and teachers identify where additional support or challenge may be required. However, this is not the case in all lessons, and for a minority of pupils, especially the most able, this affects the amount of progress they make in some lessons.
- In the majority of lessons, teaching is of a high quality. However, on some occasions opportunities for learning are lost due to inconsistencies in teaching approaches. For example, resources may not be used to maximum effect or the pace of the lesson may not match the pupils' needs, progressing either too slowly or too quickly. Leaders are well aware of these inconsistencies and they are taking steps to address them through

staff training, modelling effective practice and coaching.

- Teachers are now more accountable for the progress their pupils' make. Regular assessments and termly meetings enable leaders and teachers to review more accurately the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, including the most able. Standardised tests in English and mathematics have been introduced to support teachers' judgements, but it is too soon to see the impact of these on pupils' progress.
- Reading has a high priority across the school. Phonics is taught systematically and effectively, helping to ensure that pupils' decoding skills are strong. Pupils readily apply these skills to support their writing, although some have to be reminded to use them when reading unfamiliar words. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. This is monitored through pupils' reading records. Older pupils read confidently and with increasing fluency. Teachers place a strong emphasis on developing pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills. For example, during the inspection, pupils across key stage 2 completed age-appropriate tasks linked to what they could infer from a text or what they could predict might happen from what they had already read.
- Pupils have opportunities to write regularly and at length. Pupils' books seen during the inspection show that standards are rising and reflect good progress across the year. Increasingly, pupils complete tasks that enable them to apply their skills across a range of subjects. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the way teachers give pupils feedback. This occurs when they do not follow the school's marking policy.
- Following the introduction of a new approach to the teaching of mathematics, teachers plan lessons that enable pupils to develop their problem-solving skills as well as developing their ability to complete calculations quickly and accurately. Pupils' books clearly show the impact of this new approach. For example, pupils' written explanations have become sharper over time. In each lesson, pupils all work towards the same learning objective but with varying amounts of support or challenge. However, on occasion there is not sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. From the youngest to the oldest pupils, it is clear that they enjoy coming to school. They demonstrate excellent attitudes and have a love of learning. Almost without exception, pupils are polite and friendly. They are respectful to adults and each other, responding quickly to teachers' requests.
- Leaders and staff have created a positive, nurturing environment in which pupils are able to thrive. Each classroom includes a range of displays to support pupils' learning and celebrate their achievements. Pupils take a pride in their work, their school and themselves. They are caring and considerate to each other.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they have any worries or concerns. They are taught how to keep safe, for example through learning about road safety, fire safety and 'stranger danger' as well as how to keep safe online.

E-safety workshops support parents' understanding of the possible risks associated with their children using the internet.

- Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to school life and the wider community, such as raising money for local and national charities. They have the opportunity to take on a range of school-wide responsibilities, such as play leaders, house captains, lunchtime 'supervisors' and assembly monitors. All classes elect two pupils to act as representatives on the school council. Pupils feel that the school council can make a real difference to the life of the school, for example by influencing options that are available on the lunch menu. Pupils take these responsibilities very seriously and they are helping to prepare pupils well for the next stage in their education.
- The school widens pupils' aspirations by introducing them to the world of work and possible career options, for example through visits to Birmingham airport and the chamber of commerce. Pupils have opportunities to develop relevant skills such as team working, problem solving and presentation skills. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were learning about the legal system and the different roles within it.
- Pupils know the importance of keeping themselves healthy and making informed choices about healthy eating. Pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs are well provided for through the school's nurturing environment and supportive staff.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club. Pupils enjoy this time as an opportunity for socialising with each other and adults. The atmosphere is welcoming and relaxed. Adults are friendly and respond well to the pupils' needs, providing support and input or enabling pupils to play freely and make independent choices.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Behaviour in classrooms and around school is of a consistently high standard, with almost all pupils eager to learn.
- Pupils model the school's high expectations by being well mannered and friendly. They show respect for the ideas and views of other pupils, for example by listening respectfully when a pupil read a prayer that they had written.
- The school's behaviour policy is clear and used consistently across the school. There are a number of ways in which pupils' good behaviour is celebrated, including house points, stickers and the 'golden book'. Pupils say that poor behaviour is rare. This is supported by the school's record of incidents.
- Pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms that it can take. Those spoken to were very clear that bullying is not something that happens in school. However, they were equally clear that if it were to occur, staff would 'sort it' quickly.
- Pupils are keen to come to school and rarely miss a day. As a result, attendance for all groups of pupils is high and is consistently above the national average. Staff are rigorous in following up any absence to ensure that pupils are safe. Staff track patterns in attendance, including lateness, and work closely with families to provide any additional support that may be required to support pupils' attendance. The school regularly celebrates those pupils with high attendance by awarding certificates and small prizes.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 dipped in 2016. This was mainly due to poor outcomes in reading. However, due to improvements in teaching, and in particular of reading, outcomes improved considerably. In 2017, the proportion of pupils who reached the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics was high compared to the national average.
- From a review of pupils' work across key stage 2, most current pupils, of all prior attainment levels and abilities, are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2017, at the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils' attainment was above that seen nationally for other pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment for pupils who speak English as an additional language was equally as strong.
- Historically, attainment at the end of key stage 1 has been very high. In 2017, attainment at the end of key stage 1 was similar to that seen nationally for pupils reaching the standard expected for their age. This is a more accurate and realistic outcome.
- In recent years, the progress pupils make across key stage 2 appears to be very low. This is in part due to historical data and changes in the system of teacher assessment; however, it is also in part due to some lack of challenge for the most able pupils. As a result, too few pupils have reached the higher standards expected for their age at the end of Year 6. Leaders and teachers are addressing this weakness, and provision for the most able is starting to improve. In-school data for current pupils shows that more pupils are making good progress in both key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Over time, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been consistently above national figures. Due to the effective teaching of phonics, the attainment of current Year 1 pupils is also very strong.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress during their time in the Reception class and they are well prepared for their transition into Year 1. On average, they enter the early years with knowledge and skills that are a little below the level that is typical for their age. Over at least the last three years, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development has been above the national average. Current children in Reception are making good progress.
- The children are well cared for. Safeguarding procedures are effective, and welfare requirements in the early years are met fully.
- Children's behaviour is good and they show respect for each other. They have a growing confidence and they are eager to join in activities. They play cooperatively, sharing resources and discussing their activities. Children respond well to instructions from adults. The children know and follow clear classroom routines so that little learning time is wasted. The children choose from a range of activities and the majority

show resilience by focusing on a task for an extended period, even when working independently.

- The early years learning environment, indoors and outside, effectively supports all areas of learning. Where possible, the early years curriculum is adapted to match children's interests. For example, during the inspection, 'pet rocks' fascinated the children. These provided a strong stimulus for writing, but also extended to other creative activities such as the use of building blocks to build a house for their 'pet'.
- There is a strong focus on developing children's speaking and listening skills. Adults model vocabulary effectively and encourage the children to talk about what they are doing and learning. While this is beneficial for all children, it is particularly helpful to support the progress of children who speak English as an additional language.
- The teaching of early literacy skills through phonics is effective, and additional targeted support is provided for those who require it. Children's writing books reflect the strong progress many have made during the year. The majority of children use their phonics skills well to help them write new words. During the inspection, the teacher encouraged the most able children to write more complex sentences by using connectives such as 'and' and 'because'.
- Mathematical activities support children's early number development. For example, a small group of children were searching for pebbles with numbers written on them in the sand tray. They then placed the pebbles in order to create a number line. The children spoken to were confident about saying which number is one more or one less than a given number up to 20.
- The early years leaders have a good knowledge of the children and plan activities to address their needs and to help them catch up if necessary. During focused activities, adults ensure that all pupils, including the most able, make good progress. However, planning for activities that pupils choose independently does not specifically address the needs of the most able pupils and so some learning opportunities are lost.
- Early years staff are welcoming and encourage regular communication with parents. This includes strong transition arrangements to welcome new children into school. These arrangements are effective in building confidence and ensuring that the children settle quickly.
- Leaders' plans to further improve provision within the early years are not focused tightly enough and lack specific detail. Similarly, their use of data is not as effective as it should be. Leaders are aware of these shortfalls, and they are areas for development.

School details

Unique reference number	103478
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10047527

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Foster
Headteacher	Melanie Elliott
Telephone number	0121 464 5868
Website	www.stjonmon.bham.sch.uk/
Email address	enquiry@stjonmon.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 May 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and has one class per year group.
- The ethos of this school is Catholic. A Section 48 inspection to evaluate the quality of Religious Education and the Catholic nature of the school took place in November 2013.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2017.
- Pupils are from a wide range of ethnic minority backgrounds. While the majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, only a very small proportion of pupils are in the early stages of learning to speak, read and write in English.
- A larger than average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is around double the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is close to the national average.
- The school offers a breakfast club before school. This provision is managed by the governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 15 lessons or small-group sessions. A number of these observations were undertaken jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with pupils and listened to some pupils read. They looked at examples of pupils' work and spoke to pupils formally and informally. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school, as well as in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, other leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham Diocesan Education Service.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, records relating to safeguarding and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, school performance data and the school's website.
- Inspectors spoke to a sample of parents on the first day of the inspection. They also considered parents' opinions through their responses to the school's own survey of parents.
- Inspectors considered responses to the school's own survey of pupils.

Inspection team

Catherine Crooks, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Ogden

Ofsted Inspector

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