

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School

Great Strand, London NW9 5PE

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 March 2025

Outcome

Blessed Dominic Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

At Blessed Dominic, pupils thrive because of the exceptional care they receive, coupled with high ambitions for every child. Pupils love coming to school as indicated by their high attendance and excellent academic achievement. The school's values of 'love, learn, believe' are evident in lessons. Pupils benefit greatly from a range of activities that help to develop their physical fitness and support their social and emotional needs. They value the excellent relationships that they have with staff. Pupils feel, and are, safe and protected.

The school has very high standards for pupils' behaviour. It has a clear and well-considered approach to support and promote these expectations. Pupils respond well to the guidance that they receive from adults. This helps them to make thoughtful choices. As a result, pupils behave exceptionally well throughout the school. Pupils show kindness and compassion to one another and are respectful to adults.

The school supports pupils to develop their character and resilience. Pupils take on leadership roles such as eco-ambassadors, who raise awareness about our role as stewards of the environment. This provides pupils with the chance to see how they can have a positive impact on others and their community.

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

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious. It challenges pupils to think like a geographer, artist or mathematician. The school has thought carefully about the order in which pupils should learn key knowledge. This allows pupils to build on their knowledge over time.

Pupils get frequent opportunities to practise and apply their understanding through purposeful activities. As a result, they achieve fluency in key skills and knowledge in a wide range of subjects, including, for example, mathematics, art and physical education. Pupils achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Provision in the early years is highly effective. Its curriculum provides a strong foundation for children's learning and development. Staff create a stimulating and purposeful environment. They support children to engage well with the learning activities and resources. These are carefully designed to ensure that they match children's next steps in learning. This ensures that children are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leaders provide high-quality professional development that helps staff to teach the curriculum effectively. This means that staff have a wealth of strategies to support pupils in learning the curriculum well. Staff break learning down into small steps and provide pupils with effective support for learning new or tricky concepts. As a result, pupils are highly confident in recalling content previously taught and connecting this with new learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. Their specific needs are fully understood. Staff check pupils' understanding and quickly identify misconceptions. This means that gaps in pupils' learning are filled quickly. Staff provide well-chosen resources and make effective adaptations. This enables pupils with SEND to access the learning successfully.

Phonics is taught well from the start and helps pupils to become confident readers. They learn the sounds that letters make quickly and apply this to reading and writing. Pupils who are not keeping up with the programme are identified quickly. They get the support they need to become confident, fluent readers. Leaders have established a strong reading culture across the school. The love of reading permeates through the curriculum. Older pupils enjoy talking about the books that they have read. They confidently use the vocabulary that they have learned in their own writing.

The school's personal, social, health and economic programme ensures that pupils have a strong understanding of what it means to be equal, accepted and different. They celebrate their own uniqueness as well as other beliefs and religions. The school provides a wide range of clubs and activities in music, art, sport and the environment. Disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND are fully included and enjoy this extensive provision. Pupils have a rich understanding of the diverse range of cultures at the school. Staff celebrate pupils' wider awareness of life in modern Britain at every opportunity. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the future.

The school's commitment to reducing staff workload helps teachers to focus on providing the best possible education for pupils. All staff are committed to achieving the school's aims for improvement.

Governors hold leaders to account effectively while supporting the school's vision and priorities. They are well informed about pupils' achievements and the curriculum. They help to set high aspirations for all aspects of the school's work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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	101339
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10345729
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Frayne
Headteacher	Monica McCarthy (executive headteacher) Daniela Sulis (acting headteacher)
Website	www.blesseddominic.barnet.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 to 13 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is larger than an average-sized primary school.
- The previous headteacher retired at the end of the last academic year. An executive headteacher was appointed this academic year as an interim arrangement.
- The school has a breakfast club, which is overseen by the governing body.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in September 2021.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other members of the senior team.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and personal development and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents and carers, and staff. This included any free-text responses in Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Nasim Butt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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