

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Primary School

Canon Avenue, Chadwell Heath, Romford, Essex RM6 5RR

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 September 2024

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since February 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents and carers said that it is a privilege to send their children to St Bede's. Pupils' extremely positive attitudes and their delight in learning back this up. Pupils behave impeccably. Expectations are clear, and pupils know what happens if their behaviour is not top-notch. Lessons are rarely interrupted. In the playground, pupils play together without arguments, each respecting the other. This reflects the school's strong values and illustrates its high expectations.

Pupils enjoy their learning a great deal and achieve exceptionally well. They explained that this was because their teachers made learning interesting and fun. Another key reason for this is the way that the curriculum is designed and put in place. Key facts and ideas are laid out carefully. Skilful teaching ensures that pupils reach these high expectations. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the same high-quality education as everyone else.

The school's work to promote pupils' personal development is a key element in achieving consistently strong outcomes. Helping pupils to become good citizens, respect others and take responsibility is a centrepiece of the school's work. This includes ensuring that pupils are kept safe and understand how to keep themselves safe.

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

The school has developed its curriculum over the past few years to ensure it provides a broad experience for pupils. From Year 1, the curriculum covers all the subjects of the national curriculum and extends pupils' opportunities effectively. For example, the choir, learning a musical instrument, trips to places of interest and after-school clubs all contribute significantly to pupils' strong achievements.

Making sure that all pupils have the essential knowledge and skills is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Extensive emphasis is given to reading, writing and mathematics. This helps pupils to gain the understanding they need to tackle more complex ideas across the other subjects. Curriculum thinking breaks down clearly how pupils should build their knowledge securely. Teaching adjusts these plans to ensure that learning is firmly rooted in pupils' minds. Where necessary, work is repeated, often in a different way, to help all pupils learn effectively across subjects.

The school's teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is highly effective. As a result, pupils achieve very well in these subjects, including in national assessments. This supports pupils' learning across the curriculum. Learning in nearly all other subjects benefits from the way pupils are taught to read, write and work with numbers.

The school's adopted phonics scheme is used consistently by all teachers. The books that pupils read complement the sounds that they are learning in phonics. Adaptations are made to ensure that extra help is given to those pupils who need to catch up. Reading and language comprehension are linked. As a result, the quality and scope of pupils' reading and writing go from strength to strength as they move through the school.

Many of these characteristics are evident in the early years, especially in literacy. Children learn to read from the start. They increasingly recognise the sounds that letters make. They learn how to form letters and numbers accurately. The structured programme helps children to become increasingly fluent readers. Where they struggle, expert staff support helps them catch up. The curriculum includes a focus on children's personal, social and emotional development, alongside clear expectations about routines and behaviours. Nevertheless, the curriculum is not broken down as effectively in early years as it is in Years 1 to 6. What staff want all children to learn across all areas of learning is not clearly identified.

The support for pupils with SEND is strong. Teaching and learning support assistants know the children well and are thoroughly trained, for example in helping pupils to read. In lessons, pupils with SEND are given similar work to others but this is adapted to meet their needs. They are working towards the same outcomes, but their journey is different, with regular opportunities along the way to help reinforce learning. The result is that pupils with SEND achieve well.

All this work on the curriculum is underpinned by the school's strong values and the consistency with which they are promoted. This ensures that behaviour is first-rate and that attendance is strong. Pupils' personal skills and all-round development are promoted very effectively, including what it means to be a citizen in modern Britain.

The governing body is highly effective. It acts as a critical friend to the school, providing support and holding it to account in equal measure. With the school, it prioritises workload and well-being. Staff note how much they enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in early years is not as well defined as it is in Years 1 to 6. As a result, teaching is not supported by a clear understanding of how children's learning and experiences build towards agreed end points. This makes it difficult to ensure that all children have a consistent experience, albeit adapted to their individual needs. The school needs to carry out further work to design and agree exactly what children need to learn and how this builds progressively to meet the identified outcomes.

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	102845
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10345848
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	444
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Butcher
Headteacher	Gary Nott
Website	https://st-bedes.redbridge.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 February 2015, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- St Bede's Catholic Primary School is larger than the average-size primary school.
- This school has a Catholic religious character. The previous section 48 inspection was in March 2020, and the school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight years.
- Early years provision is part time in the Nursery and full time in the Reception classes.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and, where possible, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors also looked at the curriculum and visited the early years provision.
- 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.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector also met with the chair of the governing body and governors and spoke to a representative of the local authority and the Diocese of Brentwood.
- Inspectors considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including written comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and staff survey.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Tom Hart	Ofsted Inspector
Fiona Jatta	Ofsted Inspector

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