

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Bede's Catholic Junior School

Appleton Village, St Bede's Junior School, Widnes, Cheshire WA8 6EL

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Inspection dates:

11 and 12 March 2025

## Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive academically, socially and emotionally at St Bede's. They say that they love coming to school. Pupils are confident that they can talk to staff if they have a worry. They know that they will be listened to, and they feel well supported by caring staff. They feel happy and safe at school.

The school has high expectations for the achievement of all pupils. Classrooms are calm, purposeful and exciting places to learn. The ambitious curriculum helps pupils to flourish and achieve highly. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils demonstrate exceptionally high standards of behaviour. They are keen to learn and take part in all that is on offer.

Pupils relish the many opportunities to hold leadership responsibilities. They act as prefects, mental health ambassadors, junior safety officers and eco-warriors. They benefit from the many clubs on offer, such as dance, debating and taekwondo. Pupils are also proud of the contribution that they make to the well-being of others through their charity work, for example, by supporting a local food bank and hospice. They develop into thoughtful and kind modern-day citizens.

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

The school has refined and strengthened the curriculum since the previous inspection. Pupils build their knowledge very well through the ambitious subject content, which is ordered in a logical way. This has a very positive impact on their achievement. The published data shows that, by the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in reading, writing

and mathematics is significantly above the national average. Pupils are more than ready for their entry into secondary schools.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They deliver the curriculum skilfully and consistently well. Staff diligently check pupils' understanding. They use this information to resolve misconceptions and to ensure that pupils progress smoothly through the curriculum. Pupils regularly revisit prior learning. This helps them to make connections between their learning across the curriculum.

Reading is given the highest priority. It is visible in every classroom. Pupils appreciate the range of high-quality texts available to them, including from the class and school libraries. Many books are linked to and enhance the wider curriculum. Pupils who find reading difficult are identified quickly and receive the support that they need to help them to catch up quickly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly by knowledgeable staff. Staff support pupils with SEND very well. This ensures that these pupils follow the same curriculum as their classmates. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptionally strong. They engage fully in their learning. Pupils contribute keenly to discussions and work well with others. They are proud to receive 'tokens' for their 'houses' for going above and beyond. As a result, classrooms are calm, focused and positive places to be.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is highly effective. Pupils show a deep understanding and respect for people of other faiths and cultures that are different from their own. Pupils' experiences are enriched by a range of visitors who enhance the curriculum. These include authors who inspire pupils' English work and visits from the police and the fire brigade to help them keep safe. Pupils also benefit from several residential trips linked to the curriculum. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Members of the governing body know the school well. They exercise their expertise effectively to provide the school with support and professional challenge. Governors ensure that the school continues to improve. Staff value the time and the professional development that they receive to deliver the curriculum. Staff appreciate the efforts made to support their well-being. They are unanimously proud to work at the school.

## **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 to be good 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 good for overall effectiveness in February 2020.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	111371
<b>Local authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10366733
<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	308
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Owen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Faith Housley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stbedesjuniorschool.co.uk">www.stbedesjuniorschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Its most recent inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was in November 2019. The next inspection will take place in the next academic year.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

## 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 met with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers. He took account of the findings of Ofsted's online staff survey.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector held a meeting with governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector held a meeting with a representative of the local authority and the archdiocese.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- 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.

### **Inspection team**

Gary Bevin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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