



QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

REVIEW REPORT FOR ST BRIGID'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Name of School:	St Brigid's Catholic Primary School
Headteacher/Principal:	Rachael Tyler
Hub:	Aspire
School phase:	Primary
MAT (if applicable):	Not applicable

Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:	Effective
Date of this Review:	24/01/2024
Overall Estimate at last QA Review	Effective
Date of last QA Review	23/01/2023
Grade at last Ofsted inspection:	Good
Date of last Ofsted inspection:	25/09/2019

Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

Leadership at all levels Effective

Quality of provision and outcomes Effective

AND

**Quality of provision and
outcomes for disadvantaged
pupils and pupils with additional
needs**

Area of excellence Not applicable

**Previously accredited valid areas
of excellence** Not applicable

Overall peer evaluation estimate Effective

***The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades.
The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is
developmental not judgmental.***

1. Context and character of the school

St Brigid's is a one form entry Catholic primary school in Stockbridge Village, which is close to the border of Knowsley and Liverpool. It serves an area of extremely high social and economic deprivation and has a strong reputation for supporting vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs.

Consequently, the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is growing and is well above the national average, as is the number of pupils with education, health, and care plans (EHCPs). The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is also well above the national average. Over the last three years there has been a rise in the number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), as numbers of Eastern European and African pupils continue to grow. The school is heavily oversubscribed, as is the Nursery, which offers flexible provision for two-year-olds.

The school benefits from a wealth of open space and attractive outdoor provision for Nursery, Reception and Year 1 pupils. The Nursery building has been creatively converted from its previous use as a community sports centre to provide well-equipped learning areas. Wrap around care is offered for 50 weeks of the year, with priority given to Nursery children. Before and after school provision is available for older pupils.

As part of Knowsley Local Authority Central Collaborative, St Brigid's has access to a wealth of opportunities to engage in high quality professional development, including subject leadership. Guidance and support are also available through Liverpool Archdiocese. The school's values and its motto, 'Trusting in God – we love, believe and achieve ... together', pervade the whole of school life.

2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, demonstrate a highly ambitious vision for St Brigid's. This vision is underpinned by the school's distinctive Catholic ethos and Christian values that staff and pupils live out daily. A love of learning is fostered through the infectious enthusiasm of all staff, which is modelled through the high expectations of the dedicated headteacher and her ambitious senior leaders, who together drive the school forward with relentless passion and commitment. They constantly strive to provide the very best, both academically and socially, for all the pupils in their care. High levels

of nurture and support enable pupils to become resilient and feel confident to try new challenges without fear of failure.

- The personal development of every pupil is given high priority at St Brigid's, and is a significant strength of the school. The wellbeing of all is paramount and is reflected in the accreditation the school holds for this. Leaders know families very well and have built strong trusting relationships and support mechanisms. The learning mentor and experienced team of support staff, maximise each other's strengths to support the complex needs many families have. Consequently, significant barriers are overcome to enable equality of opportunity.
- All pupils have access to a wide, rich set of relevant learning experiences, through the wider curriculum which is enriched by a range of purposeful visits and visitors. A bespoke, carefully adapted personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme addresses local needs and is reinforced through pertinently planned worship themes. As a school working towards 'school of sanctuary' status, St Brigid's fosters a culture of welcome, belonging, diversity and empathy. It works with a range of local community groups, including rangers from the local woods, where pupils litter pick and take part a range of opportunities to care for their environment. Strong links with the local church, provision of food and clothing banks, along with the relentless focus on living by school values and British values, contribute effectively to pupils' wider spiritual, moral social and cultural development. The love, care and support shown to pupils, by all staff, whatever their role, are a pleasure to see.
- Leaders at all levels take ownership of the subjects or areas they are responsible for and know the strengths and next stages of development. This feeds into accurate self-evaluation and a clear structure of next step actions. Professional development accessed through Knowsley Central Collaborative enhances subject leaders' knowledge and confidence. They then support teachers, especially early career teachers (ECTs) and non-specialists, with training and resources to deliver the clearly structured progressional curriculum.
- A variety of pupil leadership opportunities, including school council, reading buddies and Bible buddies who recently visited a local children's home to take gifts, supports the leadership of the school well and develops pupils' leadership skills.
- A range of well attended extra-curricular clubs offers participation for pupils of all ages in activities including, art, choir and multi skills. Residential visits,

including outdoor education at Condover in Shropshire, also provide strong opportunities for team and relationship building, as does the school's before and after school provision.

2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...

... leaders of wider curriculum subjects ensured a more consistent approach to all aspects of monitoring their subject.

3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- Exceptionally strong leadership and skilled teaching by all adults in the well-resourced attractive Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision ensure that children get off to a flying start from the age of two. Meticulous monitoring and tracking ensure that every child's needs are fully met and learning is maximised. Due to very low starting points, language and communication have a very high profile at St Brigid's. The best practice use of WellComm in EYFS to identify and support speech and language is now used across the school. A range of strategies, including, 'talk therapy' and 'Lego therapy', is subsequently delivered to support these early identified needs.
- Nurturing relationships, confidence building, and the skilled development of independence in the EYFS ensure that children are well prepared for Year 1, where there is a seamless transition and further opportunities to access continuous provision.
- Early reading is a priority and skilled staff deliver the chosen phonics scheme with fidelity. Clear visuals and modelling, appropriate use of technical vocabulary and animated delivery enable every child to make strong progress. This flows smoothly into the school's guided reading strategy which leaders are currently in the process of reviewing. Writing continues to be a priority. However, the well-embedded Pathways to Write Scheme is supporting teachers and pupils in accelerating progress. As one pupil said, "We get told exactly how to improve our writing". Fun learning reinforces the grammar and punctuation pupils need to use in their writing. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils enjoyed engaging in 'punch, slide' actions when deciding together where a semicolon should replace a co-ordinating conjunction. A love of reading is developed well through a range of strategies, including high-

quality texts, opportunities through 'family learning' for parents to make story sacks with their child, use of the local library and storytellers.

- The mastery approach to mathematics provides clear structure and progression, whilst the use of the concrete, pictorial and abstract methodology supports pupils well in understanding and embedding their learning. This was observed in a Year 5 lesson where Numicon was used very effectively to enable pupils to visualise their learning as the teacher modelled the process of short division. Pupils value 'flashbacks' at the beginning of lessons to reinforce their prior learning and receive targeted follow up support. Consequently, pupils make good progress in mathematics.
- In wider curriculum subjects, the well-planned curriculum design enables sequential progression which begins in EYFS. Subject leaders have opportunities to spend time in Nursery and Reception to observe for themselves and discuss where their subject begins. Knowledge organisers, which introduce new learning and provide an overview of the unit of work, are well used by pupils. As one pupil said, "Our knowledge organisers mean we don't always have to ask our teacher". Opportunities have been well planned to reinforce and build on key knowledge and make connections between learning in different subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils, whilst learning about the Shang Dynasty in history, were able to draw on their knowledge about China from Year 2 geography. Opportunities to consider and discuss controversial questions, such as, 'How is mining linked to pollution and climate change?' in Year 4, utilise prior learning well. Pupils spoken with were readily able to link their knowledge gained in earlier year groups about plastic pollution and the impact of deforestation, to their current work in Year 4 and apply this in their current learning.
- Interesting and engaging learning tasks, skilled questioning, addressing of misconceptions, effective use of talk partners and clear teacher modelling are just a few of the strategies that ensure a strong culture of learning.
- Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is threaded throughout the curriculum and reinforced in worship, as are school and British values. Consequently, pupils move on to their secondary education as well-rounded individuals ready to embark upon the next stage of their education.

3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...

... further refinements were added to the current strategies which support pupils in building on prior learning, so that every opportunity is maximised to enable pupils' retention and recall.

4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well

- The highly inclusive culture at St Brigid's ensures that every barrier to learning is rigorously addressed and eliminated, wherever possible. Two senior leaders who proactively share the leadership of SEND are supported by a skilled teaching assistant who manages SEND provision for two-year-olds. Together, they ensure that additional needs and vulnerabilities are quickly identified and addressed early. Targeted intervention and robust liaison with relevant external agencies ensure timely support. Systems and procedures for identifying pupils with SEND and monitoring those pupils at risk of requiring SEND support are precise and rigorous. Impact is closely monitored and refined, where necessary, without delay.
- The exceptionally strong leadership of SEND ensures that staff are very well supported to provide relevant adaptations to the curriculum. Therefore, all pupils with additional needs access the same learning but with relevant smaller steps, where appropriate. Regular update training for staff and monitoring of provision for SEND pupils ensure that refinements or further training needs are quickly addressed. SENCO advice in pupil progress meetings is welcomed and ensures that the most appropriate support is planned for both SEND pupils, and others who need additional support to reach age-related expectations. High numbers of EHCPs reflect the complexity of high needs at St Brigid's and also the tenacity of leaders in ensuring that the most appropriate support is provided. As a result, pupils with SEND make at least good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders, teachers, and support staff know the families well and have built trusting relationships. Consequently, parents readily access the help and advice that is available and feel very supported. This enables them to work in partnership with the school to support their child's academic progress and personal development.
- At the end of Reception, the proportion of disadvantaged children reaching a good level of development in 2023 was less than half that of their non-disadvantaged peers. This significant difference is greatly diminished by the

time pupils leave Year 6, when their outcomes are close to or above national age-related expectations for all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The take up of extra-curricular activities for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is high and is closely monitored. All pupils are provided with equal opportunity for curriculum enrichment visits and are supported, where relevant, to enable this. As pupils with SEND or other vulnerabilities move on to secondary education, additional support and effective liaison enable the best possible transition.

4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...

... the strong practice in place for SEND pupils was to be shared with other schools.

5. Area of Excellence

Not applicable

Following the QA Review

Leaders will continue to access the range of offers available from Challenge Partners, especially through the Aspire Hub.

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice (SLP) events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)