

Inspection of The Oratory Roman Catholic Primary School

Oliver Road, Ladywood, Birmingham, West Midlands B16 9ER

Inspection dates: 30 November and 1 December 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Despite improvements in recent months, the overall quality of education at this school is poor. In some subjects, pupils learn the curriculum well. In mathematics, for example, staff have clear expectations and explain new information effectively. Pupils know and remember the important facts in this subject. However, the curriculum on offer to pupils is too narrow. Pupils do not have the chance to learn the full range of subjects in the national curriculum. Although leaders intend for this to happen, they have not yet thought carefully enough about what they expect pupils to learn.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and on the playground has improved significantly in recent months. Pupils know that they must be 'ready, respectful and safe'. Most pupils rise to this expectation, and others are well supported when they find this difficult. In most lessons, pupils listen attentively and respond well to staff.

Pupils are happy to be at the school and feel safe. This is because they know that staff care about them and look after them well. Some pupils say that bullying can happen, but they have faith in the staff to sort out any problems. Leaders' records support this view. Most issues, if they do occur, are disagreements over football.

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

The school has faced significant challenges since the previous inspection. This is not solely related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governors have had to manage these challenges, which have included recruiting a high proportion of new staff. However, they have not ensured that the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been addressed.

New leaders have started to tackle the weaknesses in the curriculum. However, the curriculum currently in place is not broad and balanced. Too many subjects, including art and design, design technology, computing, music and modern foreign languages, are not taught. While planning shows when these subjects will be delivered, leaders have not decided on the content. In other subjects, such as history, leaders have identified the skills they want pupils to develop. However, they have not identified the knowledge they intend pupils to learn. This means that pupils do not build on their knowledge and understanding progressively. There is a similar issue with some areas of learning in early years. Leaders have identified what topics children will cover, but not the key knowledge that children will learn.

Early reading and phonics are coherently sequenced. There are clear expectations for what pupils should know and by when. Staff teach daily phonics lessons in Reception and Year 1 following the agreed phonics programme. However, too many pupils do not keep up with the programme. Although staff use assessment strategies to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, the extra support that pupils get to try and help them catch up is not always effective. As a result, these pupils do not read fluently or confidently. Too many children in early years are not ready for their next

stage of learning to read in Year 1. In key stage 2, pupils read more fluently and confidently. This is because the support they receive happens more frequently.

The curriculum in mathematics is well sequenced. In early years, it sets out clearly what children will learn. This builds progressively as pupils move through the school. Staff use models and images to support pupils' understanding and recap on learning at the start of lessons to help them remember their learning. Staff use assessment strategies to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge at the end of a term. This helps to inform what they need to revisit in future lessons. For most pupils, this helps them to learn the intended curriculum.

Leaders' ambition is for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to access the same curriculum. Leaders have ensured that there is more accurate identification of pupils' needs. Many pupils with SEND are now starting to receive more effective support to access the curriculum. However, these improvements are at an early stage.

In most lessons, pupils learn without interruption. They work well collaboratively. Children in early years know how to share and take turns.

The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is well established. Events such as 'healthy body and healthy mind week' support pupils to understand the importance of being healthy. Pupils actively contribute to the life of the school through being a 'prayer partner' or being on the school council. Play leaders support younger pupils to stay active at playtimes. Pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and respect.

Staff feel that leaders are considerate of their workload and that their well-being is promoted.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders train all staff about safeguarding, and staff recognise the signs that a pupil might be at risk of harm. Staff report anything of concern through the systems agreed in school. Leaders make a written record of all concerns. Leaders take appropriate action when issues arise. This includes liaising with external agencies when required. These processes help to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Through the curriculum, pupils learn about staying safe when online and out in the community. Pupils know whom to talk to if they are worried about something.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not provide several pupils at the early stages of reading with effective support to help them catch up quickly. As a result, these pupils cannot read with confidence and fluency. Leaders should ensure that the support given to these pupils is effective and enables them to learn to read.
- The curriculum is narrow and does not cover the national curriculum. As a result, pupils do not experience a broad and balanced range of subjects. Leaders should urgently increase the curriculum offer so that pupils experience an appropriately sequenced and ambitious curriculum that meets the requirements of the national curriculum.
- Some subject curriculums, including some areas of learning in early years, are not appropriately sequenced to build on pupils' learning from one year to the next. As a result, pupils learn a disconnected series of facts and do not always learn what is most important. Leaders should urgently review the planned curriculum in some subjects, including in early years, so that pupils' learning builds logically over time.
- Actions taken by leaders, including governors, have not addressed the weaknesses in the school's curriculum. As a result, pupils do not receive an acceptable standard of education. Leaders, including governors, should take urgent action to improve the quality of education on offer at the school.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	103427
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10241249
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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Fr Anton Guziel
Headteacher	Catrina Wilson
Website	www.oratory.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 November 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Catholic primary school.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in July 2019. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- Leaders do not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, His Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons

responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the SEND consultant, subject leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body. They spoke to a representative of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, physical education and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. Pupils' case files were reviewed. The single central record of the checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about how safe they feel in school and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- Inspectors spoke to parents and carers informally.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Karen O'Keefe

Ofsted Inspector

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