

Inspection of a good school: St John's Roman Catholic Primary School

St Elmo's Road, London SE16 6SD

Inspection dates:

29–30 October 2019

Outcome

St John's Roman Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said they really enjoy coming to school. They know that teachers have high expectations for them. They said that learning is fun, and teachers know when pupils need help. They take pride in presenting their learning in books. This was seen in pupils' science work. However, in their art work, older pupils were able to identify where they could improve their work further.

Pupils enjoy the wide variety of trips that link to their topics. The parents who were spoken with agreed that the school offers a rich experience of learning outside the classroom. This includes visits to museums and music concerts at the Albert Hall. Pupils behave very well in class and in the playground. Pupils are courteous and polite, and they clearly enjoy each other's company. Staff say behaviour is consistently good. The school ethos of 'Love and Serve' can be seen in the strong relationships between pupils and all staff. Parents and staff said that St John's is a happy 'family'.

Pupils are clear that bullying rarely happens. They know who to go to if they are upset. They said that they are confident that all adults listen and act fairly if issues arise.

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

Where leaders have developed subjects well, pupils are developing a deeper understanding of what they are learning. For example, Year 1 pupils are developing secure skills in their science work. Pupils in Year 2 can recall the previous learning about the properties of materials in science. However, pupils' art work needs to improve. Recent staff training has shown teachers how to plan more effectively to teach the skills in art. The art books show that younger pupils are beginning to learn techniques for sketching well.

Leaders ensure that reading is prioritised across the school. The local library is used often. The number of pupils participating in the local authority summer reading challenge has increased.

Teaching of early reading skills is secure and enables a significant number of pupils to meet the

expected standards in reading. Where pupils are falling behind, additional support is given straight after the daily whole-class phonics sessions. This enables pupils to practise sounds and blend, so they can catch up with their peers. Leaders had identified that pupils' reading books did not match the sounds that pupils had learned closely enough. This has now been addressed and pupils are reading more fluently.

Children in the early years have a strong start. Children enter the Reception Year not being able to read simple sounds securely. However, they benefit from well-planned activities that securely develop their early reading skills. In the number sessions, teachers skilfully set out tasks that engage children, and are linked to stories and children's physical development. Children practise hand-to-eye coordination when rolling a ball towards numbered skittles. They then count up the skittles they have knocked down.

Leaders have mapped the science skills across the year group topics. This ensures that teachers plan and teach scientific concepts in a logical order. Teachers have strong subject knowledge in science. Previous learning is referred to regularly. Pupils are encouraged to explain their answers using scientific vocabulary accurately. This helps pupils to recall important knowledge.

Where barriers to pupils' learning are identified, leaders work with the well-motivated staff team to remove them. Adults adapt the learning so that activities remain appropriate and ambitious for pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This helps pupils with SEND to access learning across the curriculum.

Leaders and governors consider staff workload and ensure that they have fewer meetings as necessary. Support staff value the time given to prepare resources for pupils in school time.

Leaders have rightly identified in which subjects the sequencing of pupils' learning was less effective. Their plans to address this have been successful in science. This needs to be further developed in art.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All records related to safeguarding are well maintained. Governors regularly review the single central record to ensure that all the suitability checks have been completed for staff. Leaders ensure that staff training is up to date, so they are confident in identifying when a pupil may be at risk. The school system to log concerns is monitored regularly by leaders to ensure that information is shared effectively. As a result, pupils are well supported.

Leaders ensure that pupils and parents have regular e-safety updates through the planned curriculum and workshops. Pupils know how to identify risks online to keep themselves safe when using technology.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong in art as it is in other foundation subjects. This is now being addressed through high-quality training. Resources showing teachers what drawing techniques look like, particularly in sketching, are available for staff to refer to. Leaders need to check that the revised teaching programme is having the intended impact on further strengthening pupils' knowledge and mastery of skills in art.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged St John's Roman Catholic Primary School to be good.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	100841
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10110486
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	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Co-Chair	Jane McManus Anne Cutting
Executive Headteacher	Janice Babb
Website	www.stjohnsrotherhithe.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 April 2016

Information about this school

- St John's Roman Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school. The largest pupil group are of White British origin. There is a large number of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL). This has been identified as in the top 20% nationally.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is above the national average.
- The school has formed a hard federation St James the Great Roman Catholic Primary. There is now one governing body for both schools.
- The executive headteacher supports another local school at the request of the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the executive headteacher, head of school and other members of the leadership team. A meeting was held with members of the federation governing body and the local authority representative.
- The subjects considered as part of the inspection were reading, science, art and

mathematics. In each subject, I visited lessons in different year groups, scrutinised pupils' work, and held discussions with subject leaders, teachers, support staff and pupils.

- I reviewed the school's policies, procedures and records on safeguarding. I held meetings with the executive headteacher and head of school, as designated safeguarding lead, to review examples of actions taken to keep pupils safe. I also checked staff members' understanding of how to keep pupils safe from harm.
- I observed pupils' behaviour before school, in lessons and at lunchtime. I spoke with pupils informally when visiting lessons and in groups to gather their views on the school.
- I analysed a variety of documents and records relating to behaviour and attendance.
- The 42 responses and free-text comments submitted to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, were considered. On day two of the inspection, I spoke with parents before the start of the school day to gather their views on the school.
- The 20 responses to Ofsted's survey for staff were considered alongside the views of teachers gathered during the meetings with the inspector.

Inspection team

Sara Morgan, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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