

Inspection of a good school: St Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School

Cricket Green, Mitcham, Surrey CR4 4LA

Inspection dates:

22–23 January 2020

Outcome

St Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Since the last inspection, there has been a high number of staff changes. Some standards have declined. Recent appointments, including a range of skilled and enthusiastic senior and subject leaders, show a clear determination to turn things around and raise standards. However, it is clear that there is more to do in reading, mathematics and the foundation subjects.

Pupils like coming to school and feel safe there. Leaders are working hard to ensure that pupils enjoy learning. They are developing the wider curriculum to make it more relevant, challenging and interesting. This includes providing a range of trips, visits and clubs.

Pupils say that their teachers are kind. Pupils report that behaviour in the playground is usually good. There are lots of activities and organised games at lunchtime for pupils to take part in. Behaviour in class is not always as positive, particularly when the work is not demanding enough. Pupils said bullying happens sometimes. However, they are confident that it is dealt with. They appreciate having a 'trusted adult' who will help them.

The majority of parents and carers are positive about the school. However, some, including those who have children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), feel their children are not supported as well or as quickly as they should be.

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

Pupils study the full range of subjects throughout their time at school. Pupils with SEND enjoy the same offer. Leaders have responded to the school's declining standards by looking closely at how subjects can be improved. Their development plans are well thought out. However, this work is in the early stages of improving what pupils learn and when. On occasion, current curriculum weaknesses lead to pupils becoming bored or distracted and disrupting the learning of others.

Plans are in place to raise standards and improve teacher knowledge in English. Teachers have been supported in how to use good-quality texts to support reading and writing across the curriculum. Pupils in the Nursery experience a wide curriculum and enjoy retelling the stories they know. Leaders work hard to develop children's language and social skills. Some adults are skilled at supporting learning through play. They take every opportunity to extend children's speaking and listening skills. However, not all adults working in the early years are as skilled as others and some learning opportunities are missed.

Phonics is taught daily in the early years and key stage 1. Some teachers have good subject knowledge and clearly understand how children learn to become good readers. Where teaching is most effective, adults follow the school's scheme of work by modelling the sounds letters make clearly and correctly. They ensure that the books children read are well matched to the sounds they know. Adults regularly listen to children read in class. They check what children understand and quickly address misconceptions, including how to form letters and spell words accurately. However, the teaching of reading is not routinely this effective. Not all pupils develop phonics knowledge well enough to prepare them for key stage 2. Not all children are heard reading often enough and therefore misconceptions are not identified.

The mathematics curriculum is well embedded across the school. Teachers have good knowledge of what to teach and when to teach it. They follow a scheme which they adapt and supplement when necessary. Most pupils in key stages 1 and 2 can apply mental mathematics to problem-solving and are confident in explaining their understanding. Where pupils struggle, it is because they move through the topics too quickly and do not get enough time to properly understand what they are learning. This is particularly the case for pupils with SEND.

A promising start has been made to improving the planning of foundation subjects across the school. For example, the programme in history is now carefully aligned to the ambitions of the national curriculum. However, the delivery of these plans is in the early stages. In history and geography, teachers are uncertain about how to build pupils' learning as they get older. Pupils have difficulty remembering what they have learned earlier in the school. Consequently, they are not building up a deep-enough understanding of the world they live in.

Visits are planned well to enrich the curriculum. For example, Year 5 went to the Science Museum during the inspection. Leaders make good use of local transport links for school visits. This teaches pupils about the opportunities available in London and helps them understand the importance of considering their carbon footprint.

Teachers are supportive of leaders' efforts to improve the school. They expect to work hard but know that leaders take their well-being seriously and support them in making the changes needed. An audit has recently been carried out with staff to identify their training needs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Governors and leaders ensure that their statutory duties are met and have put strong systems in place to keep children safe. Leaders work effectively with a range of professionals to ensure that pupils are protected. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and know what to do if they think a child may be at risk.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. The curriculum supports them to learn about dangers and make the right choices. They learn about keeping safe online. They know that they should not share personal information and they take online behaviour seriously.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all pupils make enough progress in developing their phonics knowledge. Leaders need to ensure that all those who teach early reading have good subject knowledge and assess their children regularly by checking the sounds they know. They then need to ensure that children are always given books that match their phonics knowledge.
- Although mathematics teaching meets the needs of most pupils, there are some who do not make the progress they should. This includes some pupils with SEND. Leaders need to ensure that these pupils have enough time to consolidate their learning before moving on to the next unit of work so that they remember more securely over time.
- Leaders have made a positive start to reorganising the way in which foundation subjects are sequenced. Nevertheless, the school's curriculum is not sufficiently well planned in some subjects. Curriculum leaders need to ensure that work builds and secures pupils' long-term subject knowledge as they move through the school. This is a key factor in helping to stop pupils occasionally becoming bored or distracted in lessons.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2016.

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 the school and 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	102667
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10121589
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	430
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Helen Arnold
Headteacher	David Hennessy
Website	www.sspp.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18–19 May 2016

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average voluntary aided Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Southwark.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with senior leaders, subject leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority. In addition, I held a telephone discussion with a representative from the diocese.
- I scrutinised a range of documentation, including safeguarding policies, checks on staff and visitors, staff training records and records of safeguarding concerns.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and humanities (history and geography). These entailed discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, discussions with teachers, discussions with pupils about their learning and looking at examples of pupils' work.
- I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes, lunchtimes and in class. I also spoke to pupils about their experiences at school.

- I considered the responses to Ofsted's Parent View survey and the staff and pupil questionnaires, as well as the views of parents I met at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Lou Anderson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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