

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Elphege's RC Junior School

Mollison Drive, Roundshaw, Wallington, Surrey SM6 9HY

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 September 2021

Outcome

St Elphege's RC Junior School continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

At St Elphege's, everyone knows your name. It is warm, friendly and a place where pupils and families thrive. In class, pupils are engaged and enthusiastic. They are very positive about their school and enjoy talking to each other about their learning. All pupils are supported and expected to achieve.

Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils. Teachers bring learning to life through a well-planned and stimulating curriculum. Music is a real strength of the school. Pupils take part in a wide range of learning opportunities. A number of lunchtime and after-school clubs are provided, including choir, netball, jazz, ballet and animation. The 'plant hospital' provides an excellent base for pupils to develop their social skills and horticultural knowledge.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They said that staff are approachable, and school is a 'family away from home'. Parents were particularly impressed with the learning provided when most pupils had to learn from home.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent and is guided by the school's 'golden rules'. Pupils feel safe and said that bullying hardly ever happens. If it happens, teachers deal with it quickly. Pupils know what to do if they are worried. They are confident that teachers will sort out any concerns they may have.

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

Leaders are ambitious. The curriculum goes beyond what is expected by the national curriculum. A broad range of subjects is taught. This was also the case when pupils were not in school due to COVID-19 (coronavirus). Curriculum planning is strong. It is embedded securely and consistently in all subjects across the school.

Leaders and teachers carefully consider the knowledge they want pupils to learn in order to succeed. They recognise that pupils have their own experiences and ideas. For

example, in history, pupils learn about migration to Britain through studies on the Romans and Vikings. They then apply this to their knowledge of migration today. Pupils have excellent recall of knowledge that they have previously been taught.

Staff are determined that every child should read fluently. All staff are trained in delivering the carefully planned phonics programme. Thought has been given to the books used to help pupils catch up. These books are appropriate for the age of the pupils, but still closely match the sounds they know.

Teachers are really clear about how reading develops within individual year groups and across the school. They are enthusiastic readers themselves and share their love of reading with pupils. Books are chosen carefully to develop the language needed in support of the whole curriculum. Pupils talk passionately about the books they have read. They make links between themes that are explored. For example, pupils have read 'Street Child' and 'Escape from Pompeii'. They spoke about similarities and differences in how these books cover the theme 'escape'. It is clear that reading plays an important part in helping pupils to remember key knowledge.

Music is taught consistently well across the school. Pupils show increasing knowledge and skill in performing and composing. The curriculum is coherently sequenced and planned. This results in pupils remembering more about musical notation and the way that music is constructed. It also means pupils are able to build and organise their compositions as well as use their imagination. Pupils listen to a wide range of composers and musical styles, within music lessons and across other subjects.

The art and design curriculum is also strong. Leaders have chosen a diverse range of artists for pupils to learn about. This helps pupils recognise themselves as artists. Leaders have collaborated with their high school colleagues to improve transition and prepare pupils for what comes next. For example, in Year 6, pupils learn about two-point perspective when sketching landscapes.

Leaders and staff work effectively to ensure all pupils make progress through the curriculum, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are clear that pupils with SEND should remain in the classroom. Leaders ensure that they experience the same ambitious curriculum as their peers.

Pupils have many opportunities to take on responsibilities within school. For example, they support younger peers in the playground. Pupils organise their own fundraising events, inspired by what is happening in the world around them. Pupils compete in sporting tournaments and singing competitions. All pupils, including those with SEND, take an active part in wider school life. Plans are in place to expand the range of clubs on offer further.

Leaders are proactive in preparing pupils for adult life. They teach pupils how to stay healthy and safe, and how to understand their feelings. Pupils behave very well in lessons, which means everyone can concentrate on learning.

Staff feel that their well-being is prioritised by leaders. They said they can approach the leadership team at any point of the day to access support. A dedicated well-being forum is in place for staff to share their views.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety is prioritised. Staff are trained regularly. Leaders and staff know the dangers that pupils face and the signs to look out for. Systems are in place to log concerns, no matter how small.

Leaders take quick, appropriate and decisive action to secure the help pupils need. This includes help from external partners and agencies. Staff take disclosures of abuse seriously and handle these and other concerns with sensitivity. This includes disclosures relating to peer-on-peer abuse.

Safer recruitment systems are robust and checked termly by the governing body.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in October 2015.

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.

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

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| Unique reference number | 102996 |
| Local authority | Sutton |
| Inspection number | 10199456 |
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 381 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Tom Tamplin |
| Headteacher | Martin Jones |
| Website | www.stelphegesrcschools.org.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 13 and 14 October 2015, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The previous head of school was appointed as headteacher in September 2021.
- St Elphege's RC Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is part of a federation which also incorporates St Elphege's RC Infants School and Regina Coeli Catholic Primary School.
- St Elphege's RC Junior and Infants schools operate as one school, sharing the same leadership team and governing body.
- The school's last section 48 inspection of religious education took place in May 2016. The school's overall effectiveness as a Catholic school was graded as outstanding.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, inclusion manager, representatives from both the local authority and the diocese and three members of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, music, and art and design. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also considered some other curriculum subjects as part of this inspection.
- The inspector reviewed safeguarding arrangements by scrutinising records, talking to leaders and staff and through discussions with pupils.
- The inspector considered the views of parents, staff and pupils through Ofsted's online surveys. This included 67 written comments from parents.

Inspection team

Alison Colenso, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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