

Inspection of St James' Roman Catholic Primary School

Maybury Close, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent BR5 1BL

Inspection dates: 2 and 3 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St James' Roman Catholic Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St James' Roman Catholic Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy. The school remains outstanding.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils come to school each day with a smile on their face. They greet everyone with enthusiasm. The whole school community shows respect towards one another. Pupils feel safe at school and are happy to talk to any adult about their worries. Staff have created an environment in which bullying is not tolerated.

All pupils have access to a broad and ambitious curriculum. Children in Reception cannot wait to get stuck into the wealth of activities on offer. They learn how to work and play with each other in harmony, but also independently.

Teachers work hard and expect pupils to do the same. They have high expectations for all. Pupils produce quality work across all subjects. They have a thirst for knowledge and love talking about their learning.

Leaders make sure that educational experiences are not limited to what happens in the classroom. Staff plan regular trips which link to the curriculum. They have developed the forest school provision to which all pupils have regular access. Pupils are incredibly proud of their school garden. They are enthusiastic about all the jobs and responsibilities that are on offer.

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

Teachers have secure subject knowledge across subjects. Leaders make sure that staff's training is a priority. Staff share their expertise with each other. Teachers in the early stages of their career feel supported. Support staff are highly skilled.

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum. It is carefully sequenced. Thought has been put into when units are taught. Links are made within and across subjects. For example, work done on Ancient Egypt connects with the geography on Africa. Pupils can find Egypt on a map and talk about the warm climate. They can also refer to the Ancient Egyptian belief system and compare it to other ancient civilisations.

Leaders are always looking at ways to improve the curriculum. They make adaptations to ensure it is representative of life in modern Britain. Pupils love learning. They produce skilful pieces of art and can refer to artists by name and style. They are eloquent about democratic voting. This takes place regularly throughout the school year. Older pupils are quick to point out that the democratic system was first used by the Ancient Greeks and are keen to talk about their visits to the Houses of Parliament. They easily explain what politics, rule of law and freedom of choice mean to them. These concepts are taught across a range of subjects and experiences.

Teachers check what pupils know and remember at the start of each unit and frequently in lessons. Teachers are clear about what pupils have learned before and what comes next. In science, for example, pupils move from naming the parts of a flower to identifying, knowing and describing the functions of different parts of

flowering plants. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge regularly during lessons. They give them individual feedback. Pupils know what they need to do to improve. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have access to the full curriculum. They are supported in accessing materials in class. Pupils with SEND work alongside their peers. Staff are quick to identify pupils' needs, working well with outside agencies to ensure they receive the best advice and support.

Reading is a strength. Pupils are keen to talk about their favourite books and authors. Teachers promote the love of reading through carefully selected texts. They share these with the whole class. In Reception, children love their phonics lessons. They are actively involved and thoroughly enjoy the reading sessions. Children remember the sounds they have learned so far and are keen to show off the new sound of the day. In Years 1 and 2, reading routines are also clear and established. Staff make sure that pupils do not fall behind. Lessons are carefully planned. One-to-one reading sessions with some pupils identify the key sounds that need extra practice at home. Books match the needs of each child. Pupils become confident, fluent readers.

Pupils learn about relationships at an age-appropriate level. They care about one another and celebrate each other's differences. Reception children are included in all aspects of the school's day-to-day life. They are academically and emotionally ready for their move to Year 1. Leaders make sure the curriculum equips older pupils for their transition to secondary school. They prepare them well for the wider world.

Pupils have access to a wealth of experiences. They attend a broad range of clubs. They can develop their athletic and creative skills. For example, they practise their singing daily in assembly and can join the school choir. All talents are nurtured.

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Leaders quickly and transparently deal with any concerns raised. Governors know their school well. They support and challenge leaders effectively. Leaders engage professionally with all stakeholders. Staff work hard but feel supported by school leaders. Their well-being is always considered, and systems are adapted to reduce workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

A strong culture of safeguarding is evident across the school. Leaders, including governors, make sure that safeguarding is an important element of every meeting. Systems are regularly updated, and training is followed up by regular checks on staff's knowledge. Staff are extremely aware of their role in safeguarding. They know what signs to look out for and exactly how to record and report concerns. Engagement with outside agencies is strong. The safeguarding team works closely with local agencies, including representatives of the local parish church, to support their families in the best way. Safer recruitment systems are rigorous.

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

Unique reference number	137958
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10204497
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mary Hutchinson
Headteacher	Lisa Weeks
Website	www.st-james.bromley.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic school. The last denominational inspection (section 48 inspection) took place on 9 May 2018.
- The school converted to an academy on 1 April 2012.
- It is a stand-alone academy and sits within the Bromley Catholic Schools Umbrella Trust.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders. They met with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. A phone call was made with the school improvement partner and a representative of the diocese.

- Inspectors met pupils to understand their views on the school
- Inspectors did deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and history. As part of the deep dives, inspectors met with leaders to discuss curriculum plans, visited lessons with senior leaders, met with teachers and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the well-being and behaviour of pupils during lesson visits and around the school. They observed pupils as they arrived at school in the morning.
- Inspectors considered the effectiveness of safeguarding through discussions with leaders, teachers and support staff. They looked at records relating to safeguarding, including pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors spoke to most of the staff about their workload and well-being. They considered staff's responses to the Ofsted survey. They also looked at the parent and pupil surveys.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, curriculum documentation and school policies.

Inspection team

Aliki Constantopoulou, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Boyle

Ofsted Inspector

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