

# Inspection of St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Beauchamp Road, East Molesey, Surrey KT8 2PG

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Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2021

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are deeply engaged with school life. Every pupil has a leadership role. For example, the 'Mini Vinnies', part of the St. Vincent de Paul Society, work to make a difference in the local area. Pupils feel safe and supported.

There are exceptionally high expectations for every child, across every curriculum subject. Pupils work hard to be the best that they can possibly be. All pupils receive the support they need to excel academically and to become confident, articulate, and highly engaged with the world around them.

Behaviour at the school is exceptional. Pupils share a sense of common purpose, underpinned by the school's Catholic ethos and values. All pupils make a tangible contribution to school life. The history curators, for example, have set up a lunchtime club for younger pupils, while reading ambassadors have set up a reading club. The members of the green team are tireless in their work to make the school ever more eco-friendly. Pupils know that the adults want to hear about any worry they have, no matter how small, so that they can help them sort it out.

Parents appreciate the way in which their children are valued as individuals. One parent said, 'Knowing they are in a place where they are championed daily, seen for who they are, encouraged and supported as they start their schooling life is all we could ask for.'

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

Pupils' education begins the moment they enter Reception. Leaders know that this is a vital year. They have carefully considered what children in Reception need to know and be able to do in each area of the curriculum so that they are fully prepared to start Year 1. For example, staff in Reception help children to develop their understanding of important concepts, such as monarchy, so that they are well prepared to begin studying history when they reach key stage 1.

The early success that children experience in their academic learning sits alongside a very carefully structured programme of personal, social and emotional development. From the very start, children learn to identify their feelings and, over time, build up the knowledge and skills they need to become self-regulating, responsible members of the school community. The youngest children are able to scale a problem, and to articulate whether it is a 'pea- or watermelon-sized problem'. Over time, this scaling approach becomes more sophisticated and helps older pupils to approach any difficulties they encounter calmly and reasonably. These well-embedded approaches have, over time, contributed to an extremely calm and productive school environment, where pupils are highly receptive and focused on their learning.

Pupils' engagement, resilience and desire to learn has enabled leaders to implement an extremely ambitious curriculum in every subject. Staff are passionate and have

high levels of expertise in all the subjects that they teach. This means that staff always explain things clearly to pupils and the work pupils get is ambitious and well-designed. All staff know how to check that pupils are learning and remembering more over time in every subject. Pupils know they are expected to work hard to achieve exceptional outcomes. They aim high in all they do to 'lead the way for others both far and near'. Leaders have carefully considered how to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve the best possible outcomes. To ensure that all pupils get the right support, leaders work to identify any possible SEND as early as possible. They utilise external expertise, including support from within the multi-academy trust, extremely well in order to understand how to support individual pupils. When additional support is required, leaders are determined that every minute of the school day is utilised so that pupils with SEND do not miss any learning.

There is a very sharp focus on ensuring that those who are at the early stages of learning to read quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers. There is a phonics programme in place, and all staff are trained so that they are expert in the teaching of early reading. Children in Reception begin learning letter sounds right from the start. As soon as they are ready, children begin to read books that help them to practise the sounds they have learned. Leaders have carefully considered the books that staff will read to children and older pupils, as well as the books that older pupils will study to develop their comprehension of more sophisticated texts. Pupils across the school read widely and often. Pupils that inspectors spoke with, including those who had found learning to read harder, were able to talk about their reading preferences articulately and with confidence.

Pupils across the school were consistently engaged in learning. This was seen in every classroom, but also more widely. For example, pupils often followed up their learning in the classroom with their own linked research projects. Pupils were exceedingly proud of their learning and appreciated the ways in which leaders had anchored the curriculum in local history and geography. These local elements of the curriculum are enriching and engaging for pupils and had been researched extremely thoroughly by school staff. A programme of regular trips and visitors carefully enhances the curriculum.

Leaders have carefully considered how they will help pupils to develop a clear moral compass so that as they grow up, they are well-equipped to make a positive contribution to the world. The leadership roles that pupils hold allow them to experience helping others in meaningful ways. Pupils in the school have developed a deep sense of respect for themselves, for others, and for the school and wider community. Pupils understand the importance of living healthy and active lives, with outdoor play being a key feature. There is a wide variety of extra-curricular activities on offer, including competitive sports, choir and engineering club.

Leaders in the school and the multi-academy trust are steadfast in their commitment to providing every pupil with an exceptional education. All staff share their vision. Staff know that leaders have high standards but understand why this is. All staff in

the school feel well supported by leaders and appreciate the professional development opportunities that are provided through the multi-academy trust. Those who are responsible for governance are highly committed and bring a great deal of expertise to their roles.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school identifies pupils who may need early help and provides a high level of support from within the school. For example, the school employs a school counsellor, a home-school link worker and two emotional support workers for pupils. Where pupils need additional help, leaders refer to safeguarding partners and external agencies appropriately. Leaders have systems in place to manage safe recruitment of staff and allegations or safeguarding concerns about staff. Leaders ensure that pupils learn about safeguarding risks, including online safety, and how to get help if they need it.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	143366
<b>Local authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200891
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	382
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Trust board
<b>Directors</b>	Peter O'Brien
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Brannigan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stalbans.surrey.sch.uk">www.stalbans.surrey.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school provides a before- and after-school childcare provision.
- The school is currently using one registered alternative provider.

## 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, senior leaders and staff. Inspectors spoke with those responsible for governance, local governors, a representative of the diocese and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors 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. Inspectors listened to pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading.

- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans, spoke to leaders and carried out work scrutiny for every national curriculum subject.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding, reviewed safeguarding records, checked the single central register and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school improvement plans.
- Inspectors talked to pupils formally and informally about their learning, what behaviour is like at school and whether they felt safe at school.
- Inspectors reviewed staff's and parents' surveys and also spoke to parents and carers on the gate.

### **Inspection team**

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Debra Anderson

Ofsted Inspector

Bill James

Ofsted Inspector

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