

Inspection of St Boniface Roman Catholic Primary School

Undine Street, Tooting, London SW17 8PP

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders' goal of making St Boniface 'a happy place to work and learn' is a reality. Staff give pupils the emotional and personal support they need to be happy and successful. Pupils appreciate this. One pupil's comment, 'I have learned not to give up here', echoed the views of others. Parents and carers are confident that their children are safe and well looked after. They are particularly thankful for the support given to them and their children throughout the pandemic.

The school puts its work around communication at the heart of its curriculum. Right from early years, staff have high expectations for pupils to use the vocabulary they are learning and to speak in full sentences.

Pupils take on responsibilities, such as being 'pupil of the day', a buddy, monitor or prefect. Pupils enjoy these roles and take them seriously. Pupils behave well in and around the school. Most keep focused on their tasks and work hard.

Pupils learn right from day one to respect each other, to take turns and to cooperate. As a result, pupils get on well together and they say that bullying hardly ever happens. Pupils feel safe in school. They are confident that staff would help them if they ever had to report any concerns.

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

Leaders focus closely on pupils' language development and communication. Many pupils learn English as an additional language. Staff use a range of strategies effectively, including visual aids, to help pupils to learn. These strategies also help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff know these pupils well. They provide the right level of support to help them to learn the same things as their peers, including in subjects such as physical education (PE).

Pupils' journey of learning to read begins in Nursery. Staff make sure that pupils read books that match the sounds they have been taught. Pupils enjoy reading. They also enjoy it when their teachers frequently read aloud to them, sharing their enthusiasm and passion for books, poems and stories. Staff assess pupils' phonics knowledge regularly. They listen to and support the pupils who need to catch up. Occasionally, some of the support for the weakest readers is not as sharp as it should be. Some staff are not as adept as others in helping pupils to use phonics to sound out words. Some of the strategies being used do not help pupils to consistently develop their letter formation and posture for writing.

Leaders are ambitious for the curriculum. They are clear about what they want pupils to learn in every subject. They know how this learning begins in early years and builds up through the rest of the school. For instance, children in Reception were learning about making biscuits. They confidently spoke about eggs and cooking equipment. They used the vocabulary that they had been taught. This

learning prepares children well for subjects such as design and technology and science that they will learn in future years.

Leaders have planned each subject to take into account the mixed-year group classes in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum plans make clear how pupils' knowledge and skills develop in each subject. That said, sometimes the work that teachers give to pupils is not sufficiently demanding. When this happens, teachers do not use their assessment of what pupils already know and can do well enough. Overall, parents are happy with the school's work. Some are not happy with the move to mixed-year group classes.

Pupils learn from an early age to manage their emotions and to look after their well-being. Staff's expertise in mental health awareness means that pupils who are anxious or need support get the help that they need.

Pupils relished the number and range of clubs and activities that took place prior to the pandemic. They particularly enjoyed clubs such as those for fitness, dance and yoga. Pupils visit places such as the Houses of Parliament. The gardening club recently went to a ceremony at Guildhall to collect an award for being highly placed in a competition. Pupils are looking forward to clubs starting again to complement their Friday enrichment activities.

Governors know the school well. They visit the school to test out for themselves the views of staff, pupils and parents. They set the tone for checking on the well-being and workloads of staff, including the headteacher. There is a strong sense of community at St Boniface. Staff are happy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe at school and are taught a wide range of ways to keep themselves safe, including when online. They have also been trained and feel confident on what to do if the school had to go into a 'lockdown', for example if an intruder came onto the school site. Leaders keep parents up to date with guidance on how they can best protect their children from harm, including in relation to online safety.

Leaders know pupils and their families. They take decisions that are in the best interests of pupils, including working effectively with external agencies. Staff know what signs to look for that could indicate a pupil may be in need of support. They refer any concerns quickly to leaders responsible for safeguarding.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the support given to the weakest readers is not as helpful as it should be. A few staff do not have the same level of expertise as others in supporting the weakest readers to catch up. Leaders need to make sure that further training and monitoring are in place to ensure a consistently expert approach to delivering the phonics programme. Leaders should ensure that staff use strategies consistently well to develop pupils' letter formation and their posture for writing.
- Leaders have thought carefully about curriculum planning and progression to take account of mixed-year group classes. However, there are occasions when lessons and the work given to pupils are not demanding enough. Sometimes, teachers do not make sure that lessons build on pupils' prior knowledge and skills. Leaders now need to put even more focus on supporting teachers in delivering their subject plans, so that lessons fully build on what pupils already know and can do.

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	101042
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10204493
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	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Marielle Brewster
Headteacher	Lisa Platts
Website	www.stboniface.wandsworth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 July 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character. It is part of the Diocese of Southwark. A section 48 inspection took place in March 2018.

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 had 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.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, special educational needs coordinators, subject and phase leaders, members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons with leaders, spoke to

teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils read to staff.

- Inspector also looked at other subjects, including art, design technology and history.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements by checking safeguarding records, and meeting with senior leaders, parents, pupils and governors.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, staff and pupils, including the replies to Ofsted's questionnaires and the free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Sam Hainey, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Frances Hawkes	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Brooks	Ofsted Inspector

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