

Inspection of a good school: St Raphael's Catholic Primary School

Hartfield Avenue, Northolt, UB5 6NL

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 January 2022

Outcome

St Raphael's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a safe and welcoming place where pupils enjoy their learning. This is because of the care staff show them. Pupils are polite and friendly to staff and each other. Leaders and staff want all pupils to achieve well. Teachers establish routines and have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are highly motivated to learn.

Adults encourage pupils to behave positively, and pupils live up to these expectations. This begins in the early years where children learn to concentrate and develop their independence. Pupils pay close attention to teachers during lessons and move around the school sensibly.

Pupils know that their opinions matter. They have many opportunities to contribute to the life of the school. For example, pupils are proud to be chosen as health and learning ambassadors. Staff prioritise pupils' mental and physical well-being. Pupils know how to use the 'zones of regulation' to manage their own behaviour and emotions.

Pupils are safe and said that they felt safe in school because adults listen to them. Bullying rarely happens in the school and when it does adults are quick to deal with this.

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

Reading is a whole-school priority. Leaders ensure that pupils learn to read in a systematic way. Pupils use their decoding skills to read unfamiliar words. Books that pupils read match the letters and sounds that pupils learn and know. Pupils read high-quality texts and speak enthusiastically about their favourite authors. In the early years, children enjoy listening to stories. This helps them to learn new vocabulary and phrases, and deepen their understanding of stories. When pupils fall behind, leaders provide additional support to help them to catch up. However, on occasion, the support for a minority of weaker readers is not as effective as it could be.

Leaders have reviewed the school's curriculum. In many subjects, including mathematics, curriculum thinking is well developed and embedded. Leaders' recent work to secure some subject improvements has been positive. For example, in computing this helps pupils to build on their previous knowledge. Pupils in Year 5 used complex algorithms to design their own games. Staff receive bespoke support to broaden their subject knowledge.

In some subjects, including history and geography, subject thinking is not as well developed. The order in which content is taught in these subjects is not sequenced as well as it could be. Planning does not make clear which are the most important things that pupils should know and remember. Leaders have begun work to address this. The review of subject planning and staff training has been slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pupils with SEND receive strong, effective support. Staff are trained to help them. Leaders work closely with teachers to implement well-devised plans. Pupils with SEND receive the full curriculum and participate in lessons confidently. Leaders draw upon external support and advice effectively to provide the support that pupils with SEND need.

Teachers check that pupils understand what they are learning. This helps them to identify and address any misconceptions. Pupils' sensible behaviour helps lessons to proceed uninterrupted. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards their learning and remain focused on their work. Staff set high standards for pupils' behaviour. In class, established routines help pupils settle down quickly. This begins in the early years where children learn to take turns and help each other. Low-level disruption is rare.

Before the pandemic, pupils enjoyed a range of enrichment opportunities, including regular outings and visits. COVID-19 has limited these. Staff provide pupils with alternative opportunities in school to support their learning. Pupils value the many responsibilities that they can take on, which encourage them to grow into confident individuals. Leaders have planned how they will strengthen pupils' wider development.

Staff feel respected and value that leaders consult with them about any changes, including those to ease their workload.

Governors are knowledgeable and know the school's priorities. They reflect on and consider the effectiveness of leaders' actions. For example, they have evaluated the use of catch-up funding and pupils' reading experiences.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have a strong oversight of safeguarding arrangements. They ensure that staff training is up to date and reflects the latest statutory requirements. For instance, leaders have focused on deepening staff's awareness of sexual harassment issues. Staff understand their responsibility to report any concerns. Leaders are quick to act, involving

other agencies when needed. They make sure that pupils and families get the help they need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when working online. Pupils said that if they felt uncomfortable, they would seek support from a trusted adult.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The knowledge that pupils need to learn in some subjects is not sufficiently well planned and sequenced. Subject planning does not yet identify the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about and are making any necessary amendments in response to the pandemic. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied. Leaders should ensure that curriculum planning for all subjects sets out the knowledge that pupils should know and by when.
- The support for a minority of pupils, particularly in Years 2 and 3, who need help with their reading is not as strong as it could be. These pupils do not become fluent, confident readers as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff working with these pupils have the necessary knowledge and skills to provide precise and effective support in reading.

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 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2012.

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	101925
Local authority	Ealing
Inspection number	10211300
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	558
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Benedict Cassidy
Headteacher	Tracey Brosnan
Website	www.st-raphaels.org/
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the post in September 2020.
- The school is in the process of moving from a three-form entry to a two-form entry school.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders, including members of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: reading, history and computing. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection. The inspector met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read. Meetings with pupils and teachers to gather their views were also held. A telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority.

- During the inspection, the inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to safeguarding, pupils' personal development and behaviour. The views of parents and staff were also considered, including through surveys.

Inspection team

Noeman Anwar, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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