

Inspection of a good school: St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School

Bonner Road, Bethnal Green, London E2 9JY

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 March 2022

Outcome

St Elizabeth Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils really like coming to this school. They said it feels like a 'second family' for them. Professional relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, pupils learn in a calm and purposeful environment without interruptions. Pupils described incidents of bullying as incredibly rare. They said that this is a school where everyone respects one another. If disagreements happen, teachers sort things out quickly. Pupils are kept safe in school.

Parents and carers also hold positive views of the school. One parent, echoing the views of many, commented: 'The school has got better over the years, and staff are brilliant.'

The curriculum reflects leaders' ambitions for what pupils can achieve. Leaders and staff work together to support all pupils and ensure that they do well, particularly in reading and mathematics. Leaders also ensure that the curriculum gives pupils plenty of opportunities to learn about important issues, such as diversity and equality.

Pupils are keen to help their peers. Many enjoy taking on roles of responsibility. Older pupils support the younger ones in encouraging them to play together. Democratically elected positions, such as being members of the school parliament, provide ways for pupils to contribute to wider school life.

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

Leaders have put in place a broad and exciting curriculum. Their work has been shaped by a clear set of values, with a focus on preparing pupils well for their future lives. Ensuring that all pupils get a strong foundation in reading and mathematics is central to this. Leaders have done much to strengthen these aspects of the curriculum. Crucially though, other curriculum areas have not been overlooked. In most subjects, leaders know what they expect pupils to learn, as well as how this knowledge should be taught. Staff spoke highly of the way in which leaders bring about developments while having regard for the workload pressures on them.

Recent changes to subject leadership have supported a renewed focus on further improving the way subjects are planned and taught. With support from the local authority and diocese, leaders' work to strengthen the curriculum is progressing well, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reading is a high priority. All staff receive the training that they need to deliver the phonics programme consistently. Teachers have strong knowledge of how to teach early reading. They model sounds accurately and pick up on pupils' misunderstandings quickly. Pupils learning to read access books that match the sounds that they know. This helps them develop confidence and fluency at an early stage. Pupils who struggle with their phonics get the extra help they need to catch up.

Children in the early years are taught phonics as soon as they start school. As children play and explore throughout the school day, teachers help them to practise using their phonics knowledge. Story times are also used well to build up children's vocabulary. For example, in the Nursery class, children enjoyed learning the names of colours as they joined in with a class story about animals.

Older pupils enjoy the books that they read. Leaders and staff deliberately select books to broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world. For example, Year 6 pupils recently explored themes related to democracy and liberty when reading a book about the plight of refugees.

Leaders expect pupils to build up their knowledge step by step. Most subjects are planned and taught to ensure that this is the case. However, in a few subjects, such as science, the sequence of learning is not defined as effectively. Sometimes, this means that pupils' prior learning does not help them to make sense of the new knowledge that they are taught.

Leaders quickly identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Each pupil has a plan which sets clear expectations for the extra help and resources needed to support them learn well. Pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. This is complemented by therapeutic and nurture groups to meet pupils' social and emotional needs.

Pupils take part in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. These include yoga, string instrument tuition and gardening. Leaders work with charities and outside agencies to promote pupils' health and well-being. Pupils like that each class has a quiet, calm space for reflection. The curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education aims to help pupils learn more about themselves and the wider world. For instance, pupils learn about how to stay healthy, as well as how they can treat others with empathy and respect.

Governors are committed to making sure their vision is threaded through school life, including the curriculum. They work well with leaders to ensure that the school serves its pupils well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that the necessary checks are made on adults who work in the school. Staff have received the training that they need to keep pupils safe. For example, leaders ensure that everyone is aware of the issues within the community that could affect pupils' well-being. All staff know how to report any concerns, and systems are in place so that this can be done quickly. Leaders act effectively when concerns arise.

Leaders ensure that pupils are taught how to stay safe online. Visits by national child safety charities have helped pupils to learn about how to keep themselves safe outside of school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, such as science, the planned sequence of learning has not been thought out in full. In some cases, this causes pupils to struggle to build on prior learning and make sense of new concepts. Leaders should continue their work to refine the curriculum. This includes defining the sequence in which pupils need to develop their knowledge and skills and supporting staff to put this sequence into practice in the classroom.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

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 | 133288 |
| Local authority | Tower Hamlets |
| Inspection number | 10211410 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 391 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Timothy O'Sullivan |
| Headteacher | Angelina John (Executive Headteacher) |
| Website | www.st-elizabeth.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 8 and 9 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school currently makes use of one alternative provision.
- At the time of the inspection, several subject leaders were new to their roles.
- The school has a Catholic religious character. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in November 2019.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- As part of this inspection, the inspector met with the executive headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector also held meetings with other leaders and teachers.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority and a diocesan school adviser.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection.
- The inspector listened to selected pupils read and spoke with pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector considered information relating to safeguarding, including the school's single central record of vetting checks on adults working at the school.
- The inspector took account of responses to the online Ofsted Parent View survey and the views of parents spoken with at the start of the school day.
- The inspector took account of responses from pupils and staff to the Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Tim McLoughlin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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