

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

Montacute Road, Morden, Surrey SM4 6RL

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 July 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils do their best to live up to the values of the school, which include, for example, teamwork and ambition. They take part in lessons with enthusiasm and work hard. Pupils are happy and safe at school, and they collaborate well with their peers. They trust the adults around them. Pupils are confident that if they have any concerns they can always talk to an adult in school.

Across the school, pupils show 'St Teresa's little ways'. These are small, kind deeds like opening doors for adults, or picking up a jumper for another pupil, for example. Pupils try hard to be courteous and respectful towards everyone. Bullying is not something that happens often. If it does, adults very quickly deal with it.

Adults have high expectations of pupils. Staff encourage pupils to never give up and do their best. Pupils meet these expectations as they achieve well across a range of subjects.

Leaders create opportunities for pupils to follow and develop their interests. Budding journalists publish their own termly magazine for the school community. Those who have interests in science and engineering get to present their personal projects to the whole school. Pupils who are keen athletes join inter-school competitions. Recently, pupils received the school of the year award from the local authority for their 'etiquette, respectful behaviour, and fair play'.

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

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of early reading. They ensure that all staff receive training to develop their subject knowledge of phonics. As a result, staff deliver the phonics programme consistently well. They focus on making sure that pupils learn and master sounds securely. Tasks and resources are selected carefully to support this approach.

Leaders and teachers use assessments effectively in order to identify pupils who are falling behind in the phonics programme. These pupils are supported at the earliest opportunity. Staff help them to catch up and keep up. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), develop into fluent readers. Across the school, pupils demonstrate a genuine love of reading. They readily talk about their favourite books and authors. Parents support reading at home. Additionally, they sponsor books from the school's wish list to add to either the school or the class library.

Leaders' curriculum thinking is strong. The way subject content is taught and practised is carefully ordered. Pupils' build well on their prior learning and acquire knowledge over time. The curriculum prepares pupils for the next stage in their education. In the early years, for example, children grow potatoes and learn about farm animals and minibcasts. This knowledge prepares them for when they learn more about plants and animals in Year 1 and beyond.

Teachers introduce subject matter clearly. They consider what pupils already know and can do, and how this will help them to make sense of new learning. In history, for example, pupils in Year 6 applied what they know about the experiences of the Windrush generation and compared those with the evacuated British children of World War II. But there are times when teachers give pupils large amounts of new information all at once. This affects how well pupils are able to grasp the essential ideas that teachers want them to remember.

Pupils engage well in lessons. They contribute actively to discussions. They show genuine interest in what they are learning. Disruptions due to off-task behaviour are rare.

Leaders and staff work well together to ensure they meet the needs of pupils with SEND. They gather as much information and as early as possible to ensure pupils' needs are identified. They also work closely with parents and external specialists to address pupils' needs effectively. In classrooms, teachers make adaptations so that pupils with SEND can understand the same knowledge as everyone else. All pupils learn well across the curriculum.

Beyond the formal curriculum, leaders provide pupils with plenty of opportunities to support their all-round development. Pupils learn in depth about a range of social and environmental issues. For example, they recently held a debate with their counterparts from their partner school in Singapore on the significance of World Earth Day. They also get to choose a local, a national, and a global charity, and they raise funds for their selected charities throughout the year.

Staff are proud to be part of this school. They like that leaders are approachable and open to new ideas. Leaders ensure staff get sufficient time to carry out additional responsibilities. They regularly review processes like marking and assessments to ensure they remain manageable for staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff maintain an attitude of 'it could happen here' towards safeguarding. Leaders and governors ensure that training is comprehensive and up to date. Staff are clear on the actions they need to take to keep pupils safe and protect them from harm.

Checks on the suitability of staff are rigorous. Leaders ensure that new staff only start working once they complete an induction process which includes training on safeguarding processes.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe at school, at home or when online. Through the curriculum, they are given helpful information on potential risks in different contexts, for example road safety and stranger danger.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers give pupils lots of new subject content to think about in one go. This makes it more difficult for pupils to understand and remember what their teachers want them to. Leaders should support teachers to introduce new ideas in a way that is manageable for pupils and enables them to retain essential information over time.

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 February 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	102669
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10211398
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	486
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Giles Burton and Mrs Tracy Dunleavy (co-chairs)
Headteacher	Justin Dachtler
Website	www.st-teresas.merton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provider.

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.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and history. For each deep dive, he spoke with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.

- In inspecting safeguarding, the inspector carried out a scrutiny of the school's single central record of pre-employment checks and other records.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and their responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Edison David, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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