

Inspection of St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, Littlehampton

Highdown Drive, Wick, Littlehampton, West Sussex BN17 6HL

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 September 2022

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	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy, feel safe and are well supported at St Catherine's. Relationships between everyone are special. Pupils are confident to share any concerns as they know adults will listen and help them.

Expectations are high, and pupils rise to meet them. In lessons and around the school, pupils behave well. Pupils strive to earn the 'good disciple' award in recognition of their all-around effort. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other. Pupils enjoy playtimes. They know that adults will help resolve any problems. This means any bullying, which is extremely rare, is dealt with promptly.

Pupils are proud of their school. They are keen to contribute to school life. Pupils last year raised money selling vegetables to revamp the prayer garden and create an area for growing. Pupils are aware of the needs of others. They supported the 'crisp packet project' which recycles empty packets into blankets for the homeless. Pupils enjoy having the opportunity to take on roles of responsibility. Year 5 are proud to be 'guardian angels' and support children in the Reception Year. As one pupil said, 'We get to know them and teach them right from wrong.'

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

Leaders and governors have high aspirations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff and parents are rightly positive about the improvements to the school that have been made since the last inspection.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is creative and ambitious. It is well structured and covers the national curriculum. Leaders have set out clear expectations of what pupils should learn in every year group, including the early years.

All lessons start with teachers making sure pupils remember previous learning. For instance, in the Reception Year, inspectors saw children recap matching two numbers to objects before moving on to higher numbers. Teachers check pupils' understanding throughout the lesson. This enables pupils to build their knowledge and skills. However, systems are not yet fully in place, other than in reading and mathematics, for teachers to ascertain what pupils have remembered over time.

From the youngest children to the oldest pupils, classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils are eager to contribute in lessons. They love to learn and work hard. Older pupils are able to talk about how their learning in previous years is helping their learning today. In geography, for example, pupils use their knowledge of volcanos to further understand the features of mountains.

Early reading is well taught. The reading curriculum enables pupils to experience a wide range of books and vocabulary. The youngest children start to learn phonics

straightaway. In both early years and key stage 1, there are daily phonics lessons. Leaders have purchased books that match the sounds pupils are learning. This allows pupils to become fluent readers. Those pupils who struggle with their early reading receive daily support to ensure that they catch up quickly. Across the school, pupils enjoy reading.

Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has effective systems in place so that pupils with SEND are identified early and accurately. Teachers skilfully ensure that work for pupils with SEND is well matched to help them achieve in line with their peers. Governors keep a close eye on the needs and outcomes of this group. Ambition is not lowered for any pupil with SEND.

Pupils behave extremely well. Leaders involve pupils in the development of behaviour expectations. As a result, pupils are eager to behave in a way that reflects the school's mission. They follow the 'STAR' rules, both in class and around the school. Children in the Reception Year already know how to sit and listen when in school. Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and each other. This extends to visitors to the school and when out in the community.

Leaders are keen to provide a wide range of opportunities and extra activities to help pupils develop new interests and talents. Pupils who are members of the liturgy team lead prayers in class and undertake readings during school celebrations. Teachers run a variety of after-school clubs. These include, for example, sporting activities, art and choir. Pupils in Year 4 go on an overnight retreat to Arundel. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to have a week's residential where they undertake a range of challenging, character-building activities. The school ensures that pupils have opportunities to explore the diversity of cultures.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Training enables staff to recognise any safeguarding concerns. Staff are aware of the local issues, particularly the dangers of online child-on-child abuse, and record any concerns. Leaders are tenacious in ensuring that every pupil has the confidence to raise concerns. Records show that leaders are thorough. This ensures that actions taken are appropriate and outcomes are recorded. Families are cared for and receive the support they need. Governors carefully check that safeguarding policies are put into action to support pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have only just introduced procedures to enable teachers to check what pupils understand, away from the point of learning, in the wider curriculum.

Therefore, teachers are not clear enough about what pupils have learned and remembered and what gaps there may be in their learning. Leaders should ensure that systems are in place so teachers start new learning knowing what the next step is for every pupil.

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.

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	126040
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10238339
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Madden
Headteacher	Derek Croghan
Website	www.st-catherines.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 and 12 December 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up the post in September 2021.
- The school's last section 48 inspection of its distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Roman Catholic school took place in December 2021.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the SENCo, subject leaders and governors. The lead inspector held telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and a representative from the Diocese of Arundel.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and geography. Inspectors reviewed curriculum documents for the history curriculum. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, talked to pupils and looked in their books.
- Pupils were observed reading to a familiar adult, in the playground and moving around the school. Inspectors spoke informally to different groups of pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and his deputy and looked at safeguarding records, as well as records of recruitment checks.
- Inspectors considered the views of 51 parents who responded to the confidential parental questionnaire and 28 parents who provided free-text responses. They also took account of 43 responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Becky Greenhalgh, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Justin Bartlett	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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