

# Inspection of a good school: St James the Great Roman Catholic Primary School

Peckham Road, Peckham, London, SE15 5LP

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Inspection dates:

11 and 12 October 2022

## **Outcome**

St James the Great Roman Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are well looked after. Leaders have created a caring, nurturing environment for pupils and their families. Together with staff, they focus on making sure that all pupils achieve well. They also provide pupils with plenty of experiences that are beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils are happy in this school.

Leaders and staff know their pupils and families well. Parents and carers are confident that their children are safe at school. Pupils know that they can speak to a trusted adult in school if they have any concerns or worries.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. They appreciate how pupils rise to these expectations. Pupils are kind, polite, and helpful. Premises, office, and kitchen staff all spoke fondly about how pupils are ready to lend them a helping hand. On the rare occasions when bullying occurs, staff deal with it promptly and effectively.

Pupils take part in a wide range of activities to enrich their experience of primary school. Year 6 pupils are especially looking forward to their journey to the Isle of Wight where they get to experience sailing. They received training on sailing at London's Docklands to prepare them for this. Pupils across the school also appreciate the opportunities to perform in venues, like the Southbank Centre.

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

Leaders are committed to making sure that all their pupils learn how to read. They have put in place a well-planned phonics programme and trained all classroom staff to deliver it. Children start to learn how to read as soon as they join the early years. The Nursery environment exposes children to a variety of sounds. They learn to recognise and distinguish between the sounds that they hear. This prepares them well for identifying letter sounds when they begin to learn phonics. By the time they finish Year 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can read fluently.

Staff regularly assess how well pupils are learning phonics. They identify those who are falling behind at the earliest opportunity. These pupils receive timely and effective support and catch up quickly. All pupils get to practice their reading as they get books which match the sounds that they already know. Pupils show a genuine love of reading. They regularly access the reading areas in their classrooms. They enjoy listening to their teachers read to them daily.

Leaders have designed a well-thought-out curriculum. They make sure that pupils learn the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful in the next stage of their education. For example, in the early years, children develop a strong understanding of numbers. They practice counting objects and begin to recognise how many objects there are without needing to count. These strong foundations help children to be ready to tackle more complex number work in Year 1. In a few subjects, however, teachers do not focus on the important knowledge that pupils need for future learning. This affects how well pupils are able to remember and know more in these subjects.

In most instances, teachers introduce new learning very clearly. They assess what pupils already know and can do and build on this. They also provide opportunities for pupils to practice the knowledge and skills that they have learned. In many subjects, pupils use subject-specific vocabulary well. In geography, for example, pupils define and use the words 'climate' and 'weather' accurately. This helps them understand physical features of the places that they are studying. However, the sharp focus on vocabulary development is not fully in place in some other subjects.

Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are identified and well supported. Teachers help pupils to access the curriculum by adapting the way they teach. They deploy additional adults effectively to support pupils' learning. Teachers regularly check that this support helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils behave well, in and out of lessons. They take part actively in discussions. They work well with each other and disruptions in lessons are rare.

Leaders and governors are committed to developing pupils as productive members of the community. Pupils are encouraged to understand the needs of others in wider society. For example, pupils visit a home for older people to hear about their experiences. Pupils also get a first-hand experience of democracy as they elect their school council representatives and the members of the Catholic Life committee. Pupils take pride in leading prayers, helping younger children in the lunch hall, and assisting adults in preparing for assemblies.

Staff at all levels are happy to be a part of this school. Some have been working here for more than thirty years. Teachers appreciate the support that they receive from leaders to make their workload more manageable. They said that initiatives, such as shorter meetings and streamlined planning, ease their workload.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have created an environment where pupils' health, safety, and welfare are at the forefront. They ensure that training for staff on safeguarding is comprehensive and clear. Staff are quick to identify pupils who are at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation. They know their pupils and families well. Leaders work well with external agencies to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. They learn about the risks of sharing their personal information and what to do if something makes them uncomfortable online. Through the relationships and sex education curriculum, pupils also learn about respecting privacy.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some instances, teaching does not focus on the most important content that pupils need to know and remember. As a result, pupils are not remembering the key knowledge that they need for their future learning. Leaders should continue to support teachers in identifying exactly what knowledge should be emphasised when delivering the curriculum.
- In a few subjects, pupils are not learning new concepts as well as they do in other subjects. This is because their knowledge of subject-specific terminology is not as well developed as it should be. Leaders should continue to ensure that pupils learn and understand subject-specific vocabulary in all curriculum subjects.

## 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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

## How can I feedback 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	100825
<b>Local authority</b>	Southwark
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240438
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jane McManus
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janice Babb (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjamesthegreat.southwark.sch.uk">www.stjamesthegreat.southwark.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	30 and 31 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provider.
- The school is part of a federation with another primary school in the local authority.

## 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the executive 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, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum 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 as well as 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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