

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

Howard Road, East Ham, London E6 6EE

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are friendly, happy and safe in this school. Leaders strive to make the school a place where everyone can succeed. They are ambitious for all pupils to do well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The school is a calm and orderly place. Pupils know to speak to adults should they have any concerns. They trust staff to listen to them if they have any worries. If any incidents of bullying occur, adults deal with these quickly.

Leaders provide high-quality care. They identify pupils who may need extra well-being and emotional support swiftly. Teachers encourage pupils to learn about their own and others' beliefs and cultures. Pupils interact respectfully towards each other. They are very clear that everyone is welcome at their school and that they 'are all one'.

Parents and carers are typically positive about the school. They feel that their children are doing well under the care of the leadership team and staff.

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

Leaders and the governing body are highly focused on providing a strong quality of education. The senior leadership team has brought about significant improvements after a period of turbulence within the school. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be better. They have established a carefully sequenced and ambitious curriculum in almost all subjects. For example, in mathematics in early years, staff use a range of strategies to help children grasp new concepts. Teachers explain new ideas clearly in lessons, and make sure that pupils use the correct mathematical vocabulary. For example, pupils in Year 6 solved complex algebraic equations using methods with confidence. Teachers check pupils' recall of key concepts.

Most subjects are well sequenced to build on pupils' prior learning. For instance, in geography, pupils in Year 1 learn mapping skills and about their local area using aerial photos. By Year 3, pupils learn about volcanoes and how to measure the impact of earthquakes using the Mercalli scale. However, in some subjects, teaching does not ensure that curriculum plans are implemented as routinely well.

Leaders prioritise reading. Teachers and support staff are well trained in delivering phonics lessons from the Reception Year. In early years, staff focus on ensuring children learn to read right from the start. Children enjoy familiar stories, songs and rhymes in Nursery and Reception. Pupils in Year 1 build on the phonics they learn in Reception confidently. Most pupils read well and use phonics accurately to help them sound out words. Pupils who need help get it quickly so that they are supported to catch up. The well-chosen books in the school's library help to broaden pupils' reading. Older pupils read widely and often, with fluency and comprehension.

Leaders make sure that they identify the needs of pupils with SEND accurately. Teachers make adaptations to pupils' learning so that most pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their classmates. Sometimes, staff do not provide consistently effective support for some pupils with SEND who have more complex needs.

Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They establish effective routines for managing pupils' behaviour right from the start in early years. As a result, pupils behave well. They show consideration for each other, and are polite to adults. Pupils concentrate well in lessons so that learning continues without disruption. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils play happily together.

Pupils enjoy learning from a wide range of guest speakers and visitors to the school. For example, recent speakers helped pupils to think about 'sustainability'. Older pupils are proud to serve as 'reading ambassadors' around the school. Leaders are working to organise a greater variety of visits and extra-curricular clubs for pupils.

Staff have a positive relationship with leaders, who are mindful of their workload. Leaders' actions to provide staff training in developing the curriculum are well considered. The governing body provides challenge and support to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have up-to-date training in safeguarding. This helps staff to understand and follow the school's safeguarding procedures. Staff know the importance of accurately recording any concerns. This helps leaders identify risks to pupils. Leaders follow up any concerns with appropriate and timely action. They work effectively with external agencies to ensure pupils and their families get the right support. Leaders offer a range of counselling and pastoral services to help pupils.

Pupils are taught about keeping themselves safe, including online. A range of workshops and visiting speakers alert pupils to the dangers of gangs and knife crime.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, teaching does not implement the intended curriculum consistently well. This leaves to gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders should ensure that all subject leaders, particularly those newer to their roles, and teachers are well trained to deliver the intended curriculum securely.
- Adaptions made to support pupils with SEND with complex needs are not routinely precise enough to meet their specific needs. This means that these pupils do not build up and secure their knowledge as well as they could. Leaders should provide additional training and support for teachers so that they can meet the specific needs of all pupils consistently well.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

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 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	102773
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10240232
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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Martin Stanley
Headteacher	Natasha Scott (acting executive headteacher)
Website	www.st-michaels.newham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The acting executive headteacher was appointed in September 2020. She is currently the substantive headteacher of another Catholic primary school in the same local education authority.
- The most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in March 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders. The inspector held discussions with members of the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair. He spoke with a representative of the local authority and also spoke with a representative from the Brentwood Diocesan Board.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, considered the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation related to safeguarding. This included the record of pre-employment checks.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Sean Flood, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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