

Inspection of a good school: St Bede's Catholic Infant School

Thornton Road, Clapham Park, London SW12 0LF

Inspection date:

1 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at this small and caring infant school. They like the lunchtime activities available, such as the net and ball games, and enjoy attending after-school clubs. Pupils are typically learning to read well. They like listening to stories and choosing books in the school library. Leaders promote reading further through national events such as World Book Day and National Poetry Day.

The curriculum in some subjects is less developed than reading and not implemented consistently well. This, together with varying expectations of behaviour, means that pupils are not engaging in their learning as well as they could be. In turn, this limits how well they develop knowledge across the curriculum.

Leaders aim for pupils to realise the school motto of being respectful, responsible, resilient, reflective and recognising that everyone matters. For example, when developing pupils' leadership, even the youngest children in the Nursery Year are represented on the school council. Leaders make sure that pupils have a voice when reviewing systems that directly impact them. This includes the behaviour policy. Pupils understand what bullying is and are confident to report any incidences when they occur. Staff deal with any concerns that pupils may have swiftly.

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

Pupils study a broad range of subjects. Where curriculum design is stronger, leaders' ambition is clear and they have identified the important knowledge that pupils need to learn and remember. This is sequenced carefully so that pupils understand and embed key ideas before moving on. For example, in physical education (PE), leaders have revised the curriculum to ensure that pupils develop knowledge and skills which they missed out on as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders make sure that pupils have additional

opportunities to practise their learning in PE through specially chosen activities at lunchtime.

Other areas of the curriculum are not as well designed and developed. In these subjects, leaders have not clearly defined or sequenced the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that teachers do not routinely focus on building pupils' understanding of the most important concepts in a subject. While pupils are able to recall facts that they have learned in isolation, they do not build a body of connected knowledge in these subjects.

In mathematics, leaders intend for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to learn and remember core mathematical ideas and vocabulary. In the early years, children practise and secure their number bonds to 10. However, this is not built on cumulatively throughout the school. This results in pupils struggling to apply their basic number knowledge in different contexts. Furthermore, teachers do not have helpful routines in place to check pupils' understanding. As a result, misconceptions are not consistently identified or addressed meaning that for some pupils, they persist over time.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils learn the sounds that letters make in a systematic way. They practise and remember these sounds and use them to read and write words accurately. Leaders have put in place a range of extra help to help weaker readers to catch up. These are beginning to have a positive impact.

Most pupils with SEND are supported well in their learning. Teachers and support staff understand pupils' needs. They have been well trained to break down instructions and tasks into smaller steps to support pupils' needs.

Lessons are sometimes disrupted by pupils not engaging with their learning. This is because staff have variable expectations of behaviour. In some instances, teaching activities are not focused on helping pupils to learn the most important aspects of the curriculum. Typically, these instances are when pupils become distracted and do not follow instructions.

Staff feel well supported by leaders to manage their workload and well-being. Governors recognise that developing and training staff are crucial to achieving greater consistency in how effectively the curriculum is implemented. However, some curriculum leaders have not checked how well their subject is being taught. As a result, they do not have a fully accurate view of the quality of pupils' education and what needs to be improved.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have suitable systems in place to manage any concerns over the safety of pupils. They provide staff with up-to-date training and make sure that everyone knows the signs a pupil may display if they are at risk of harm. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies to secure help for pupils when needed.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe. For example, in the early years, the very youngest children learn not to open their own front doors without an adult present and how to cross the road safely. The curriculum also helps pupils to understand the importance of staying safe when online.

Leaders and governors manage safer recruitment effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, leaders have not clearly defined the essential knowledge that pupils should learn. This means that teachers lack clarity over what should be taught. As a result, the curriculum does not enable pupils to build a deep understanding in these subjects over time. Leaders need to ensure that the core concepts are identified and sequenced in each subject. They should make sure that teaching focuses on these concepts so that pupils learn and remember more.
- Teachers sometimes choose tasks and activities which are not focused on the important ideas that pupils need to learn. This prevents pupils from developing a deep body of knowledge in different subjects. Leaders should ensure that staff are sufficiently trained to understand and implement the planned curriculum. This includes making sure that pupils have sufficient opportunity to practise and embed component knowledge before moving on to new ideas.
- Some curriculum leaders have not had the opportunity to check how well their subject is implemented. This means leaders do not have an accurate view of the quality of education. Leaders should ensure that once essential subject knowledge is defined and sequenced, subject leaders check that it is being delivered as intended.
- Expectations of behaviour are not consistently high. Some pupils do not follow teachers' instructions and disrupt learning in the classroom. Leaders should ensure that all staff implement the agreed behaviour policy consistently.

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 July 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 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	100631
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10255494
Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	102
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Meabh Quoirin and Marcia Marshall (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Ewa Ostrynska
Website	www.st-bedes.lambeth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since 2017, the school has been in a hard federation with St Bernadette Catholic Junior School.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Southwark. The last section 48 inspection of the school took place in April 2015.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team. The lead inspector also met with the two co-chairs of the governing body and held telephone conversations with representatives from the Diocese of Southwark and the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PE.

For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspectors viewed the single central record of pre-employment checks and met with the designated safeguarding lead. They reviewed documentation related to safeguarding, including records of concerns.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff through both discussions and their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Alison Colenso, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Christian Hicks

Ofsted Inspector

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