

Inspection of a good school: St Pancras Catholic Primary School

De Montfort Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1SR

Inspection date: 14 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 enjoy their time in school. They take pride in being part of the school 'family'. For example, older pupils 'buddy' children in the early years foundation stage. Pupils have a strong understanding of right and wrong. They use the school values outlined in the 'rainbow posters' to reflect on their approach to learning. As a result, most pupils develop a positive and effective attitude to life in school. Parents speak about the school positively. A parent exemplified this when they said, 'The school helps children to become independent, caring and responsible individuals.'

The school has high expectations for pupils. However, these are not always met in all subjects. Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences beyond the classroom. For example, 'school councillors' recently led a review of play equipment to enhance playtimes for pupils. Pupils raise money for charitable causes. They have opportunities to learn to play musical instruments.

Leaders prioritise the safety and care of pupils. Pupils are polite when speaking to adults and respectful of difference in others. One pupil expressed the views of many and said, 'The grown-ups are really kind.' When bullying happens, staff tackle this quickly.

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

In some subjects, the curriculum does not precisely identify the knowledge and skills pupils should learn. This means that pupils too often learn about isolated facts and struggle to connect what they learn to what they already know. As a result, pupils have too many gaps in their knowledge in some subjects. Leaders have begun to make the necessary changes to strengthen the quality of the curriculum but these are relatively recent. The curriculum thinking is clearer in subjects such as mathematics, science and

art. For example, pupils produce a range of sculptures, textiles and drawings that help them to develop a love of art.

While many pupils who are starting to learn to read gain the knowledge and skills needed, some do not. Leaders have not fully embedded their plans for phonics delivery effectively. The books that pupils read do not always match the sounds being learned in class. This means that too many of the younger pupils struggle to become fluent and confident readers. The teaching of reading in key stage 2 is structured well. Pupils experience a range of texts that build their interest and vocabulary. Teachers use questioning to help pupils to explore these texts.

Teachers develop pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge well. Children in the early years learn to count and use their understanding of number effectively. Older pupils use their mathematical skills in science and art purposefully. For example, pupils draw accurate graphs in science work and use mathematical patterns in their artwork.

Teachers review the skills and knowledge that pupils acquire in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers use questioning in class to assert what pupils know and remember well in these subjects. They use this information to enable pupils to build on what they have learned in previous lessons. Staff in the early years make regular observations of children to ensure they develop the skills and knowledge needed to succeed. Leaders make sure that teachers are not overburdened with unnecessary tasks when gathering and sharing this information. This helps teachers to manage their workload.

Pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not learn as well as their peers in some subjects. Teachers receive training from the special educational needs coordinator that helps them to identify the needs of pupils with SEND well. However, the support provided in class does not always help pupils to succeed. This is because teachers do not think carefully enough about the adaptations needed to support these pupils.

Most pupils behave well in class. Leaders have reviewed their approach to behaviour in the past year and as a result, pupils are keen to learn and to behave well. When pupils become distracted in class, teachers are quick to re-engage them.

Pupils' wider development is well considered. Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND have full access to wider activities. Pupils learn about how to stay safe and manage their emotions efficiently. They can articulate the importance of diversity and are respectful of the views of others. Pupils visit the South Downs as an inspiration for art and attend the forest school to develop their problem-solving skills. Clubs such as Lego, sewing and 'Zigzag' art club are well attended by pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors receive training that helps them to identify swiftly pupils who may be at risk of harm. When a concern is raised, leaders act on this decisively. They work well

with agencies beyond the school to provide support for families to help to keep children safe.

Leaders ensure pupils learn about keeping safe. Visiting speakers help pupils to recognise the dangers they may face online. Pupils reflect on personal safety and mental health through the personal, social and health programme. As a result, there is a culture of safeguarding that pervades the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in how phonics is taught. At times, books do not match the sounds that pupils learn in lessons. This means some pupils are not learning to read as quickly as they could. Leaders should continue to provide staff with phonics training to further strengthen staff expertise. This will help to ensure that the school's phonics curriculum is implemented consistently well in all classes.
- The learning of pupils with SEND is not adapted carefully enough to ensure they can succeed in every subject. This means that they struggle to access learning alongside their peers. Leaders need to ensure teachers have the training needed to provide pupils with SEND with the adaptations required to help them succeed.
- Leaders have not identified the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn in some subjects. This means that pupils have too many gaps in their knowledge. Leaders need to clarify their curriculum sequencing and make sure that teachers are secure in how this is taught.

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 January 2018.

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	114568
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10256521
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	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Barbara Scalvini
Headteacher	Hilary Nawrocka
Website	www.st-pancras.e-sussex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary-aided Catholic primary school within the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The school's last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, for schools of a religious character, was in June 2018. The next inspection will be within eight years of that last inspection.
- The school is supported by a consultant leader from a local primary school.
- The school currently uses alternative provision at Cuckmere House, which is part of The Sabden Multi Academy Trust.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The 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, other leaders and a range of staff at the school. The inspectors met with the chair of governors and four members of the governing body. The inspectors spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors also

spoke with a representative from the alternative provision currently being used by the school.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including those related to the governance of the school.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents and carers through responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors spoke to staff, parents and pupils during the inspection and took account of the staff confidential online surveys.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and considered safeguarding documents and records. This included the school's records and plans for supporting pupils who have been referred to outside agencies.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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