

Inspection of a good school: St John Fisher RC Primary School

Grand Drive, London SW20 9NA

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

Outcome

St John Fisher RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be a part of this school. They say that everyone gets along well. It is a warm, friendly place where everyone is welcome regardless of their differences. Pupils feel happy and safe here. They trust adults to help them if they have any worries.

Leaders and staff expect every pupil to uphold the school values of 'to love, to learn, and to achieve'. Positive working relationships among pupils and adults abound. Being confident, courteous and polite is the norm for pupils here. This is clear in the way that pupils collaborate when carrying out the tasks assigned to them in class. Pupils work hard in lessons, and their attitudes help them to learn the curriculum well. In rare instances when bullying occurs, staff deal with it effectively.

Leaders value pupils' views. Pupils get to vote for their 'Voice of Tomorrow' (VOT) representatives, who act as school council leaders. VOTs are proud that they have influenced leaders' decisions, for example by contributing to the design of the school's wildlife areas. They have also played a role in the selection of some of the school's senior leaders.

Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to engage with the local community. For example, pupils prepare 'boxes of love', a collection of goodies which they gift to older people in the community as well as to the local food bank.

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

Leaders have put in place an ambitious curriculum, which they review regularly. It is well considered and carefully ordered. Leaders ensure that pupils reach the end-points needed to be prepared for their next stage of education.

In most subjects, leaders have identified the knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn and master. In Year 6, for instance, pupils confidently use their mastery of several

areas of mathematics to support them to learn more, such as how to work out missing angles in complex shapes.

Teachers deliver the curriculum effectively. They break down concepts into small, manageable chunks. This allows pupils to develop a secure understanding of what they are learning. Teachers encourage pupils to participate actively in discussions about what they know and remember. Disruptions to learning are rare. In most cases, teachers provide effective and well-chosen models and resources to help pupils to grasp new ideas. In the early years, for example, children used a variety of pictures and objects to help them understand repeating patterns. In a few subjects, approaches to supporting and embedding pupils' understanding are less well engrained. When this happens, teaching does not ensure that pupils have the right foundations to understand the new concepts and ideas being taught.

Leaders and staff work well together to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have sought guidance from experts on how to make effective adaptations to meet the needs of these pupils. Pupils with SEND learn the curriculum well.

Reading and books are at the heart of the school's curriculum. Leaders have invested in a phonics programme which is fully resourced and well delivered. They have trained all classroom staff to deliver this. The ambitious early reading curriculum starts in the Nursery, where staff prepare children to distinguish sounds, for example those they hear around their environment. This helps children to be ready to start learning their letter sounds in Reception. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, they are typically reading fluently and with confidence.

Leaders and staff use assessment information well. In phonics, for example, they identify those who are falling behind at the earliest opportunity. These pupils receive 'keep-up' sessions, and they catch up quickly. Similarly, leaders found that pupils' motivation and stamina for reading had decreased during the pandemic. Leaders have addressed this with urgency, raising the profile of reading across the school. They equipped the school library with a wider range of texts, and trained parents as volunteer readers to hear pupils read regularly. Pupils also like hearing their teachers read to them daily. Across the school, pupils express a genuine love of reading and of books.

Leaders and governors work well together to support pupils' wider development. Pupils get to learn how to play instruments in addition to their regular music lessons. Many perform in festival halls and arenas. Those who like sports are excited by the many competitive events that they take part in. Take-up of the wide range of after-school clubs is high.

Staff appreciate the way that leaders are approachable. Leaders have streamlined some of the processes in school to reduce staff's workload. Governors have also specifically funded access to counselling and physiotherapy to help with staff's well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are vigilant. They know the signs that indicate a pupil may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation. They ensure that their knowledge of safeguarding issues and procedures is up to date. New staff undergo suitably rigorous checks, and must complete a full induction, which includes safeguarding, before they can start work.

Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure the best outcomes for pupils who are at risk. Leaders' referrals are prompt and effective.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe at home, at school or when online. They are taught information about internet safety, stranger danger, privacy and dignity.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers do not check that pupils have acquired the essential knowledge that they need to understand new concepts. This means some pupils struggle with these ideas. Leaders should ensure that teachers routinely make sure to check that pupils have secured the component knowledge they need to have mastered before moving on to new learning.

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 September 2012.

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	102671
Local authority	Merton
Inspection number	10255505
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	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Blom
Headteacher	Janine Kenna
Website	www.st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not use any alternative provisions.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in January 2017.

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 headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the vice-chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. 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 inspectors 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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