

Inspection of a good school: St Bernadette Catholic Junior School

1 - 4 Atkins Road, Clapham Park, London, SW12 0AB

Inspection dates:

25 and 26 April 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. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be members of this community. They thrive in the culture of care, tolerance and respect and so show a strong moral compass. They value giving to charity, supporting each other, celebrating differences and making everyone feel welcome. Pupils are kept safe and feel safe because there are strong systems in place to support them if any problems arise. Incidents of bullying are rare. Leaders deal with any incidents of bullying effectively.

Pupils enjoy school. They particularly value the opportunities for learning outside the classroom when they go on educational visits. For example, pupils visited the Ragged School Museum to learn about life in Victorian Britain. They told inspectors that these experiences help them to make sense of their learning.

Teachers expect pupils to do well. However, the curriculum is inconsistently designed and implemented. This means pupils do not consistently gain the knowledge and skills they should in different subjects.

Pupils are happy, polite, and caring. They conduct themselves well in class and at breaktimes. They enjoy learning and try hard in lessons. Pupils appreciate opportunities to take on leadership roles within the school, such as being ambassadors or members of the school council. Pupils feel these make a difference to the school because leaders listen to their ideas and implement some of them.

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

Most pupils can read well. However, those who are at the early stages of reading are not sufficiently supported to develop confidence and fluency. Leaders have put a phonics programme in place, but there is still much work to do. For example, the programme is

not sequenced to ensure pupils secure the sounds they need in a logical order. The books pupils read are not well matched to the sounds they are learning. This means that pupils who need additional help to read well, do not have sufficient opportunity to practise and embed new sounds. This means they are not learning to read quickly enough.

Leaders have made sure that the subjects pupils study match the breadth of the national curriculum. In some subjects, such as mathematics and physical education (PE), leaders have considered the important knowledge pupils need to learn. The curriculum is well sequenced, and pupils are given opportunities to review topics that they have learned before. For example, in PE, younger pupils are given support to develop their technical ability, so that they have the skills required for competitive invasion games in the older years.

However, the quality of the curriculum is variable. There are subjects that are less well implemented. In these cases, the activities and tasks teachers design do not reflect the ambition of the planned curriculum. In other subjects, leaders have not identified the important ideas pupils need to learn and remember. This means pupils do not develop a consistent body of knowledge across the subjects they study.

There have been recent changes to the leadership of the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) department. Most pupils with SEND thrive. This is because leaders, teachers and support staff know them well and understand what helps them to make progress. Teachers acknowledge that, sometimes, pupils cannot focus in lessons as they do not feel ready to learn. Support is provided to help pupils understand and name and address their emotions. This helps them to regulate their behaviour and return to learning. Even so, leaders recognise that there is some work to do to make certain that all pupils are receiving the support they need.

There is a strong focus on pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to respect and value other faiths and cultures. Pupils conduct themselves well and in lessons and are focused and keen to do their best. They are rarely disrupted from their work because everyone is engaged in their learning.

Senior leaders and governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses; they have begun to develop plans to secure improvements. Most staff feel well supported by leaders and feel they are given support with their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained to identify the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Any concerns are reported promptly to leaders, who make swift and detailed referrals to appropriate agencies.

Leaders have worked closely with pupils and their parents about issues which may affect them directly. The curriculum helps pupils understand how to stay safe online and the dangers of gang culture. As a result, pupils are knowledgeable about these issues and

know how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Weaker readers are not sufficiently supported to read with accuracy, fluency and confidence. As a result, these pupils do not learn to read quickly enough, which impacts on their ability to access the wider curriculum. Leaders need to ensure pupils learn the sounds they need in a logical order. They should also ensure that the books used to practise reading are well matched to the sounds they have learned.
- In a few subjects, leaders have not identified the key concepts they want pupils to learn and remember. In other subjects, the curriculum is not well implemented. Leaders are not always aware of this. As a result, pupils do not develop a consistently secure body of knowledge across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure the curriculum makes explicit what pupils should learn. Leaders should also check the curriculum is implemented consistently, so that pupils are better supported to learn and remember more.

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 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	100628
Local authority	Lambeth
Inspection number	10268772
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Meabh Quoirin and Marcia Marshall
Headteacher	Ewa Ostrynska
Website	www.fedstbb.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a small Catholic voluntary aided school.
- The number of pupils on roll has reduced since the last inspection.
- The school is within the Diocese of Southwark. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher, acting assistant headteachers, the school business manager, the special educational needs coordinator and curriculum leaders. The inspector also met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors, a school improvement partner from the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, PE and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector 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 their work.

- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the safeguarding leader and spoke with pupils and staff. The inspector examined a range of safeguarding documents and records, including the school's record of checks made before staff are recruited.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including school development plans and behaviour and attendance records.
- The inspector gathered the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and by considering their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Amy Jackson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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