

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

Blackbridge Lane, Horsham, West Sussex RH12 1RR

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 September 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this friendly school. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils form very positive relationships with one another. They welcome pupils who are new to the school into play activities. Pupils appointed as 'young interpreters' support those who are new to the country and help them to understand the school's routines. Pupils feel safe in this school. They trust that the staff will look after their emotional needs well. Older pupils show a genuine care for younger pupils. As one parent states, 'The school has a lovely, family feel and my child feels safe and happy.'

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Children in the early years settle quickly into well-established routines. Pupils enjoy their time in class and develop their knowledge well in most subjects. One pupil said, 'Teachers help me to learn in a fun way.' Pupils develop their cultural awareness well. For example, the school twins with a school in Kenya and Year 6 pupils write to pen pals in a French primary school. Pupils have a voice and are involved in the running of their school. For example, 'eco councillors' develop school-wide initiatives to raise the profile of environmental issues.

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

The school provides a curriculum that inspires pupils to learn. Subject leaders have refined the curriculum during the past two years. Teachers are clear about what to teach and how to deliver this in class. They receive training that helps them to identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, teachers make adaptations in class that enable pupils with SEND to succeed.

The school supports teachers to continually refine their teaching. Leaders at all levels check that teachers are delivering the curriculum well. They guide teachers effectively, working alongside teachers to develop their practice. The school provides helpful resources to enhance learning for pupils with SEND. Teachers are appreciative of this and say that this helps them to manage their workload. Pupils behave well in class. This is because teachers are alert to the needs and interests of all pupils.

Staff ensure that pupils develop the knowledge and skills needed to succeed across most subjects well. For example, in art and design, pupils learn about a range of artists from diverse backgrounds and apply this to guide their own artwork. Through the school's 'respect' curriculum, pupils develop their understanding of citizenship. This helps pupils to connect and apply learning across subjects.

Teachers use questioning to help pupils to draw on what they have learned before. This helps pupils to make sense of new learning. In most subjects, teachers check what pupils know and remember over time carefully. However, this is not embedded in some subjects that have been recently reviewed. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and teachers do not routinely pick this up quickly enough.

Pupils develop their reading and mathematical knowledge and skills needed to succeed. Staff in the early years enable children to settle into life in school and to listen attentively. They develop children's knowledge of the basics of reading swiftly. As pupils move into key stage 2, they develop the skills needed to read confidently. Teachers check what pupils know. This ensures that teachers help pupils who have fallen behind with their reading to catch up quickly. As a result, pupils develop a love of reading and become competent and fluent readers. Pupils develop their mathematical knowledge well. They apply what they learn across a range of subjects. For example, pupils apply their knowledge of coordinates when learning about maps in geography and interpret graphs in science investigations. However, too many older pupils struggle to recall multiplication facts. This means that some pupils struggle to answer more complex mathematical questions.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils' wider development. Staff give pupils a range of responsibilities across the school. Pupils vote for those nominated as 'house captains', teaching them about the democratic process. 'School librarians' help to promote a love of reading. These roles give pupils a genuine ownership in the school. Teachers enhance learning through visitors to the school and specialist events. Trips beyond the school enhance the curriculum. For example, pupils visit local sites including a museum, church and mosque. This helps pupils to connect their learning in class to the world beyond the school. Pupils attend a broad range of clubs on offer. Staff ensure that clubs are accessible to all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not provide pupils with enough opportunities to rehearse their mathematical knowledge of multiplication. As a result, too many pupils in key stage 2 do not know their multiplication tables and struggle to independently tackle problems

that depend on this knowledge. Teachers need to provide a structured approach to developing pupils' retention of multiplication facts.

- Teachers are not always clear about the knowledge that pupils need to remember in some subjects. As a result, some pupils do not embed and use what they know fluently. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are clear about what pupils need to remember and use this to inform their teaching so that pupils develop cumulatively sufficient knowledge in all subjects.

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 on 7 and 8 March 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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	126039
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10287972
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	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lorraine Vinall
Headteacher	Finula Farr
Website	www.stjohnshorsham.school
Date(s) of previous inspection	7 and 8 March 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a Voluntary Aided school in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.
- The school was inspected for its religious character under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in July 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school uses an Ofsted registered provider for wraparound care on site.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other leaders, governors and a range of staff at the school. The inspector met with representatives from the local authority and diocese.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and design and technology. 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 pupils' work. The inspector also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents including those related to the governance of the school.
- The inspector considered the views of parents and carers through their responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspectors spoke to staff and pupils during the inspection and took account of their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector 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. The inspector also talked to pupils, staff, trust staff and parents.

Inspection team

Graham Chisnell, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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