

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

Rochester Road, Gravesend, Kent DA12 2SY

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 October 2023

Outcome

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

The co-headteachers of this school are Paula Cooneyhan and Caroline Barron. This school is part of Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Annemarie Whittle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Powis.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy in this caring and inclusive school. The school values shine through daily life, with one pupil remarking 'we show love to each other'. Pupils are polite and courteous. They move around the school site sensibly and maturely, demonstrating their 'Wonderful Walking'. They respectfully allow others to go through doors first. Pupils consider that everyone belongs here. The 'cultural days' are a highlight, where pupils celebrate the diversity of their community. Pupils feel safe. They know that all staff look out for them and are confident to raise any concerns with trusted adults.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, and/or disabilities (SEND), are supported well to learn the broad and balanced curriculum on offer. The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils delight in their learning, finding lessons interesting and stimulating. Reading is embedded in school culture and aides pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Pupils benefit from an exciting variety of trips and experiences. They develop their teamworking skills and build strong relationships with other pupils and staff during the popular residentials. Pupils thrive when taking on leadership roles. The 'eco-warriors', librarians and 'leading lights' are role models to others and contribute significantly to daily school life.

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

The school has established an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND. Across all subjects, the key knowledge and skills that should be learned over time

is precisely identified. Learning is ordered sensibly so that links can be made between what pupils have previously studied and new information. Planning for the curriculum starts in early years so that children are well-prepared when they begin key stage 1.

In many subjects, the curriculum is implemented very well. Where staff have the strongest subject knowledge, they introduce new learning effectively. In early years, teachers model repeating patterns clearly and children apply their mathematical learning well. However, in some subjects, teachers' understanding of the curriculum is not always as strong. Sometimes key knowledge is not presented as clearly and the activities set are less well matched to the intended learning. When this happens, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Teachers routinely check on pupils' learning and address any areas where pupils are not as confident in what they have previously learned. Teachers take time to identify what help pupils need to achieve well. This is especially the case when staff identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Careful support is planned and implemented with precision to assist the individual learning of these pupils who need additional help. Those with the most complex needs, including those who need help managing their behaviour and emotions, have highly bespoke interventions to help them learn well. Overall, this helps to ensure pupils achieve well, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. This is reflected in the positive results in statutory assessments.

There is a strong culture of reading at this school. High-quality texts enrich learning. Many pupils enjoy sharing stories with friends in the Reading Sheds during breaktimes. The 'Books and Biscuits' club is highly regarded. Here, pupils explore new stories that have been carefully selected for them by the school. From the very start of Reception, children learn to read from the school's phonics scheme. Teachers are well-trained and have the resources they need to deliver this effectively. Staff help pupils secure learning by regularly recapping the sounds and words they have learned previously. Those who fall behind get the support they need to catch-up.

Most pupils behave well at this school. Many classroom routines are consistently established. Where staff have the highest expectations, pupils listen attentively and focus on their learning. However, expectations for pupils' behaviour are not always consistently high. This means a small number of pupils do not concentrate or follow instructions as well as they could. This includes during social times. The school is continuing to develop the resources that pupils have access to during social times to engage them in purposeful activities.

The school carefully nurtures pupils' wider development. Pupils build a sense of responsibility within their roles on the school council. They have focused on improving the safety of parking on nearby roads by writing to parents and raising funds to purchase 'parking buddies'. Pupils enjoy trips that enhance their learning. These are carefully linked to the curriculum to develop pupils' understanding beyond the classroom.

There is a considered approach taken by leaders at all levels to manage staff workload. Teachers appreciate the range of resources available to them to support with delivering

the curriculum. Refinements of assessment policies have been well-received, allowing teachers more time to focus on what pupils are learning and what pupils need to achieve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not always have the secure subject and pedagogical knowledge needed to teach the intended curriculum. This means that the learning activities do not always build pupils' knowledge and understanding systematically. The school needs to ensure that teachers have the expertise and skills to maximise pupils' learning across all subjects.
- The schools' high expectations for pupils' behaviour are not always consistently reinforced. This leads to some pupils not always behaving as well as they could. The school needs to ensure that staff have the knowledge and expertise needed to fully implement all aspects of the school's behaviour policy and processes.

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 predecessor school, St John's Catholic Primary School, to be good in July 2014.

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 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	142156
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10288056
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	879
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Powis
CEO of the trust	Annemarie Whittle
Headteacher	Paula Cooneyhan and Caroline Barron (co-headteachers)
Website	www.stjohnsprimary.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been a number of changes in leadership, including the appointment of the co-headteachers.
- The school became an academy in July 2015 and joined Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership.
- The school is a Catholic school. It had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Southwark, in November 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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 lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, the leader responsible for pupils with SEND, many teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of trustees, governors, the CEO and other representatives of the trust. He also had a conversation with a representative of the Diocese of Southwark.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work where appropriate.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils and staff to hear their views.
- The inspectors considered the responses to the confidential Ofsted surveys for staff and pupils, and Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Martin Smith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Oliver Allen

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023