

Inspection of St James the Great RC Primary and Nursery School

Windsor Road, Thornton Heath, Surrey CR7 8HJ

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2023

| Overall effectiveness | Outstanding |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| The quality of education | Outstanding |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Outstanding |
| Leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Previous inspection grade | Outstanding |

The headteacher of this school is Christopher Andrew. This school is an academy, which means other people also have responsibility for running the school. The school is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Edwin Abreo.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2012.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is ambitious in its expectations for all pupils to achieve well. Leaders make informed curriculum choices to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. Leaders provide a curriculum which prepares pupils for the next steps in their education. Pupils have a positive attitude to their learning and are keen to share their learning. They are excited about school life and proud of their school.

Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour throughout the school. Pupils receive a strong start in the early years. They quickly understand the routines and expectations. The school values thread through school life. Pupils show their respect for each other; they understand and value their differences. They feel safe at school, and know that all adults would help them if they had any worries.

The school provides exceptional opportunities for pupils' personal development. Through the curriculum and wider activities, the school supports pupils' preparation for life skills. Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of other people's beliefs and choices. A wealth of pupil leadership roles enable pupils to develop confidence and resilience. The school council works with leaders to ensure that pupils' ideas are heard. Pupils are proud to make a positive impact on their school and local community.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum which considers the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary they want pupils to know. Leaders sequence learning into small steps so pupils can build on prior knowledge. Leaders are responsive to pupils' learning needs. They adapt the curriculum to support all pupils to access subject content successfully. This includes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The early years provides strong foundation knowledge and skills to prepare children for future learning. Carefully planned activities enable children to practise their learning independently. For instance, children in Reception class used provided props to enact their class story.

Well-planned professional development ensures that all staff deliver the curriculum consistently highly. Strong subject knowledge enables teachers to support and challenge pupils and address misconceptions. Teachers continually check pupils' understanding and provide the right support. Pupils with SEND receive expert support to access the curriculum because staff identify their needs closely. Teachers adapt the learning through targeted support or adapted resources. For example, in Year 3, pupils used practical equipment to help them compare fractions.

Pupils' outcomes for writing have been low. Leaders have moved quickly to identify barriers to pupils' writing skills. This includes greater clarity in how writing is taught. Leaders identify the small steps required in pupils' writing development. As a result, pupils produce writing of a high quality. This includes in early years, where children

have strong handwriting skills. Pupils, including those with SEND, take pride in their work and write to a high standard across the school.

Language and communication are a high priority and develop very strongly in the early years. Teachers ensure that they practise the use of key vocabulary in all lessons. For example, in Year 1, pupils used subject-specific words to explain colour mixing. All pupils learn to read through a consistently delivered phonics programme. They practise reading with books matched to their level of phonics knowledge. A love of reading develops throughout the school. Ambitious texts support pupils' curriculum understanding and writing skills. Pupil librarians present the Book of the Month in assembly, encouraging everyone to read.

Behaviour is calm and positive throughout the school. Clear systems are in place to support positive behaviour and pupils know the school rules. Pupils focus on their learning because they want to learn and are excited by the lessons. The school knows its families and pupils well and provides support to ensure high levels of attendance. Pupils learn about the importance of positive mental and physical health. They are taught to understand and regulate their emotions.

The school plans a wide range of trips and speakers to enhance pupils' curriculum learning. For instance, pupils experience a programme to develop financial understanding. Gender workplace stereotypes are challenged during Careers Week and future aspirations given to pupils. A wide variety of clubs are available to all pupils and leaders ensure that pupils experience many opportunities. Pupils are proud to represent their school in sporting tournaments.

Leaders and trustees are reflective and continually strive to enhance pupils' education. Decisions are informed by robust research and then considered in relation to the school's context and needs. There is a clear strategic vision and leaders ensure that staff receive the training and support to fulfil this. Staff value the support and the collaborative team approach. They are proud of their school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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| Unique reference number | 137959 |
| Local authority | Croydon |
| Inspection number | 10293275 |
| 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 | 445 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Edwin Abreo |
| Headteacher | Christopher Andrew |
| Website | www.stjamesthegreat.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 24 October 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. |

Information about this school

- The school is a Roman Catholic faith school. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in June 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders and a range of staff. They also met with the governing body and a representative from the local authority and diocese.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art, music and history. Activities included discussions with leaders and teachers about the curriculum, visiting lessons, speaking with groups of pupils about their learning, and a scrutiny of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors checked the school's policies and records, including those related to behaviour and pupils' wider development.
- Inspectors considered responses of parents, carers and staff to Ofsted's online surveys.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff and spoke with pupils during social times. They observed pupils' behaviour across the school, including as they arrived and left school.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sacha Husnu-Beresford, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Martyn Patterson | Ofsted Inspector |
| Lisa Farrow | Ofsted Inspector |

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