

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

St Agatha's Drive, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT2 5TY

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 May 2024

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Cahill. This school is a single academy trust. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Olly Kunc.

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff at St Agatha's put everyone's well-being at the heart of the school. Pupils feel happy and are kept safe because of the warm and welcoming environment. Pupils know that they can rely on caring staff to help them with any problems that may arise.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Pupils are kind to each other, and rare incidents of bullying are dealt with swiftly. This is because expectations are high and consistently applied. Parents and carers are very positive about the education provided for their children.

The school has high ambitions for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well, including in national assessments. This is because, in most subjects, there is a broad and exciting curriculum which typically prepares them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils with SEND are well supported to access the curriculum alongside their peers. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They ask insightful questions confidently, showing curiosity and interest.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of additional activities, including sports competitions and concerts. Many pupils take on positions of responsibility, such as being members of the school council. They are proud of the work they have done to improve the school, which, most recently, includes helping to design the planned outdoor classroom.

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

Leaders, and those responsible for governance, know the school well, working closely together to ensure the curriculum is continuously refined and improved. Staff know they will be well supported to implement necessary changes.

Leaders have ensured that there is an ambitious curriculum in place for all pupils. In most subjects, they have identified and sequenced what pupils should learn so that their knowledge and skills build over time. For example, in history, pupils learn how to use a range of sources to understand the past. The curriculum supports younger pupils to understand the difference between primary and secondary sources when learning about monarchs. Older pupils build on this prior knowledge by comparing and contrasting features of African kingdoms and empires. Similarly, in art, children in Reception learn about primary colours and are encouraged to use the correct terminology when mixing colours. Older pupils use this foundation knowledge to create more sophisticated tints, tones and shades.

In a few subjects, the curriculum does not build as sequentially. This means that some pupils do not consistently secure the knowledge they need before tackling more-complex concepts. As a result, pupils do not secure as deep a knowledge in these subjects. Teachers typically use assessment effectively to find out what pupils know and understand. Any misconceptions are generally identified and addressed. This helps to deepen their understanding and link what they are currently learning to what they have learned before.

There is a high priority given to reading. For example, the weekly book swap run by Year 6 librarians is particularly popular. Children in the nursery are taught to recognise the initial sounds in words in preparation for daily phonics lessons in Reception. While the agreed programme is generally well implemented, some staff do not model sounds consistently. This limits some pupils' phonics knowledge and capacity to tackle more-complex sounds. Staff check pupils' reading and swiftly identify those who are struggling to keep up. Extra support is in place to help these pupils to catch up, including practising reading books that match the sounds they know. This increases pupils' reading fluency and confidence.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is high. Leaders check pupils' attendance carefully. They use a range of effective strategies to support families with low attendance, which is having a positive impact. Pupils are polite, articulate and work well with each other. They learn how to recognise and regulate their different emotions. The school's well-being team ensures pupils who struggle to regulate their emotions have appropriate support, such as spending time with the school therapy dog. Leaders work closely with pupils and parents to ensure pupils get the help they need. As a result, pupils demonstrate the school's 'RESPECT' code consistently and disruptions to classroom learning are rare.

The school has developed a well-considered personal development programme which includes workshops and visits to art galleries and museums. The curriculum helps pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe and have an age-appropriate understanding of ideas such as discrimination. Pupils take an active role in school life through raising money for charity, being sports ambassadors or supporting each other at breaktimes as peer mentors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, the sounds pupils need to read with accuracy and fluency are not modelled with precision. This means that some pupils do not secure the knowledge they need to tackle more-complex sounds and blends later on. The school should provide further training to ensure the agreed phonics programme is implemented with accuracy.
- In a few subjects, the curriculum does not build as sequentially. This means that some pupils do not consistently secure the knowledge they need before tackling more-complex concepts. As a result, pupils do not secure as deep a knowledge in these subjects. The school must ensure each subject is coherently designed and sequenced to build pupils' knowledge and skills over time.

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 June 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 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	137856
Local authority	Kingston upon Thames
Inspection number	10323379
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Oliver Kunc
Headteacher	Elizabeth Cahill
Website	http://www.stagathas.school
Date of previous inspection	17 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character and is part of the Diocese of Southwark. The school had its last section 48 inspection in September 2019.
- The school leadership team was restructured in September 2023.
- The school does not currently make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspector discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with members of the board of governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also held a meeting with the school's improvement partner.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning

and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to staff.

- The inspector also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- 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.
- The inspector took account of a range of other information, including the school's improvement plans, policies and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector took account of the views of pupils, parents and staff through discussions and their responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Sabrina Edwards, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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