

Inspection of a good school: St Francis' Catholic Primary School

Maryland Park, Stratford, Main Entrance in Bow Street, London E15 1HD

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 2024

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 be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Natasha Scott. This school is part of Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the catholic senior executive lead, Nuala Cashell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mick Coleman.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that has very high expectations for all. Pupils' attitudes show that they are motivated to learn and have a keen thirst for knowledge.

Behaviour, both inside and outside of lessons, supports the learning and safety of pupils well. Pupils are kept safe.

The school has a mantra of 'peace, love, knowledge'. Staff and pupils live by this every day. This can be seen throughout the school, both in the kindness that all members of the school community show to each other and through the careful and deliberate planning of learning.

The robust design of the curriculum results in pupils achieving highly, including in national assessments. Those pupils who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) also get the support that they need to learn well. Leaders support teachers' professional development so that they can skilfully put adaptations in place to ensure that these pupils thrive.

Leaders have thought carefully about how the curriculum is enriched through extra-curricular activities. Pupils enjoy the wide range of clubs and educational visits, and these are well attended. The careful planning of these experiences helps pupils to learn about the wider world.

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

The school's curriculum is highly ambitious for all pupils. It meets, and in some subjects exceeds, the expectations of the national curriculum. Subject-specific training ensures that staff are able to successfully deliver the whole curriculum. Learning is carefully sequenced so that pupils build their knowledge, skills and vocabulary exceptionally well over time. Often this is done by ensuring that pupils revisit prior learning and then build on their knowledge. This effective approach is used consistently across the curriculum.

Leaders know the importance of children receiving a strong start to their learning in early years. Children develop the strong foundations in knowledge that allow them to be successful in learning the curriculum in Year 1 and beyond. For example, curriculum thinking makes sure that what is learned and practised in the Nursery class prepares children well for what comes next in the Reception Year. This step-by-step approach to developing pupils' learning continues in each year group all the way through to Year 6. Pupils achieve highly and this is well demonstrated by pupils' outcomes in the Year 6 national assessments.

The school wants all pupils to be successful readers who love books. Early reading has been carefully planned to allow this aspiration to be realised. Staff receive regular training and this ensures a consistent high-quality approach to the teaching of the phonics programme. Regular checks of pupils' learning identify if there are any gaps in their understanding. Where this is the case, successful catch-up support is put in place to fill those gaps. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with SEND, make strong progress through the reading curriculum. Pupils enjoy reading and talking about their favourite books and characters.

Pupils with SEND are quickly identified. Staff receive training to help them successfully adapt their lessons to meet pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with SEND are supported effectively to access the same knowledge-rich curriculum as their peers. The school collaborates and shares practice with other local schools to strengthen the quality of support for pupils with SEND.

Pupils' behaviour is very positive. They are kind and polite. In lessons, they support each other with their learning. Leaders have high standards when it comes to attendance. They work with parents and carers to support the school's expectations to be met successfully.

Leaders have designed the wider curriculum to make sure that clubs and educational visits build on the learning that pupils experience through the academic curriculum. These clubs and visits provide a broad range of experiences for pupils. The school takes a range of steps, for example providing financial support, to ensure that all pupils, including those that are vulnerable, can take part in the wider curriculum offer. Encouraging pupils to be reflective, be responsible and work well with others are threads that run through all of what the school does. This is well demonstrated by the volunteering and charitable works that pupils complete. Leaders also place high value in the work that they do to build the moral character of pupils. This includes pupils' learning about fundamental British values.

Staff are incredibly proud to work at the school. They are highly motivated to help pupils to succeed in their learning. The trust works effectively to foster a learning community within the school to improve the experiences of all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 predecessor school, St Francis' Catholic Primary School, to be good in November 2016.

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	147336
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10323446
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mick Coleman
CEO	Nuala Cashell (Catholic Senior Executive Lead)
Headteacher	Natasha Scott
Website	www.st-francis.newham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Our Lady of Grace Catholic Academy Trust.
- St Francis' Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2019. When its predecessor school, St Francis' Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school has a Catholic religious character. Its last section 48 inspection took place in June 2022.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 8 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and members of the school leadership team. They also met with the chair of governors, other members of the governing body and representatives from the trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: computing, early reading and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors 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 some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 spoke to pupils during lesson visits. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. The inspector also spoke to staff about behaviour and about their workload in the school.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Luke Stubbles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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