

Inspection of St John's Roman Catholic Primary School

St Elmo's Road, London SE16 6SD

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 April 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school with high expectations and one in which pupils are treated with kindness and care. Pupils live out the school's vision to 'love and serve one another'. This helps to ensure that the school is a compassionate and supportive environment that enables pupils to thrive academically and as citizens of modern Britain.

The school has developed a very ambitious and broad academic curriculum for its pupils. They learn the curriculum very well. This is clearly shown by the very high quality of work that pupils produce in different subjects, which reflects the depth of their understanding. It is also demonstrated by pupils' results in national tests. Disadvantaged pupils achieve equally highly.

The school provides many excellent opportunities and experiences that develop the character of pupils. For example, through their charitable work, pupils learn the importance of helping others. Various roles of responsibility, such as reading buddies and membership of the school council, help pupils to learn how to support each other and improve the lives of their community.

Pupils are kept safe and have staff who they can talk to if things are worrying them. The behaviour of pupils is incredibly positive. It supports both their learning of the curriculum and helps to foster the school's family feel.

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

The school curriculum is based upon the aims of the national curriculum and often goes beyond its expectations. From the beginning of the early years and through to the end of Year 6, pupils benefit from learning a deep, broad and well-sequenced curriculum.

Starting in the Nursery class, the curriculum includes a clear focus on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development, communication and language and physical development. This supports children to excel in this learning. It also builds an excellent foundation for their studies further up the school. Pupils learn and remember knowledge exceptionally well over time and achieve highly.

Through regular and comprehensive staff training and support, staff expertly guide pupils through their learning of curriculum content. Staff's skilful checks on pupils' learning enable them to quickly identify and fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This prevents pupils from developing misconceptions and supports them to successfully master the intended curriculum knowledge securely and in depth.

Pupils love reading. The school uses a carefully designed and sequenced early reading and phonics curriculum that helps pupils to quickly and confidently learn to read. Expert teaching of this curriculum starts immediately at the beginning of the Reception Year. Through a variety of purposeful checks on learning, the school knows how well pupils are reading. If required, the school puts in place carefully identified and designed extra help that ensures that pupils quickly catch up.

The school provides well-targeted support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This help means that pupils with SEND successfully learn the intended curriculum. If pupils need additional support, their needs are speedily identified when they join the school. Staff are experts at adapting the teaching of the curriculum for pupils with SEND. This means these pupils are supported to achieve highly across subjects.

The school has a carefully thought-through and consistently implemented behaviour policy. Children learn how to behave and support one another from the very beginning of early years. This leads to behaviour being highly positive, both inside lessons and around the school. Pupils also attend very well. This is because the school has well-established systems in place to support this. The school works closely with families and external agencies to help pupils to come to school every day.

The school has thought astutely about how to develop pupils beyond what is offered by the academic curriculum. It offers an extensive range of experiences which allow pupils to develop skills and knowledge that they might not otherwise be exposed to or gain. These range, for example, from playing chess to learning to play golf. The programme of educational visits is thoughtfully designed to support pupils in learning the curriculum and the development of their character. These include residential visits, outings to museums and learning to sail. The school ensures that these opportunities are available to all pupils.

The personal, social, health and economic curriculum helps pupils to know how to keep themselves healthy and well, both mentally and physically. They learn how to keep themselves safe, including online and in their local environment. Pupils learn to understand their community and the wider world and develop a mature understanding of fundamental British values. This includes, for example, showing appreciation of the differences between themselves and others, and respecting and celebrating these differences.

The governors know and support the school well. They work closely with leaders to support the continued success of the school.

Staff benefit from high levels of support for their well-being. They especially appreciate the carefully planned continual professional development that they receive.

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

Unique reference number	100841
Local authority	Southwark
Inspection number	10345693
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chairs of governing body	Deborah Duke and Edward Toman
Headteachers	Janice Babb and Emily Phipps
Website	www.stjohnsrotherhithe.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has appointed a new headteacher since the last inspection.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school has a Roman Catholic ethos. The school's last Section 48 inspection was in June 2016.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteachers, other senior members of staff, governors, representatives from the diocese and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: art and design, early reading, mathematics 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.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some 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 inspectors considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted’s online pupil and staff surveys, as well as through discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Luke Stubbles, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Stephen O'Brien

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 children looked after, 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 2025