

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

Kenninghall Road, Clapton, London E5 8BS

Inspection dates:

30–31 October 2019

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and well cared for. They are proud to be part of this happy, inclusive school. Staff have high expectations of pupils' learning. Teachers are focused on helping each pupil to achieve their very best.

Pupils behave well. They know why it is important to show respect and kindness to others. Pupils use the term 'zero tolerance' when it comes to bullying in their school. Even so, when it does happen, staff sort out any problems well.

Staff provide sports activities and lunchtime games and pupils enjoy these very much. Older pupils like Fridays because they get the opportunity to lead playground games for younger pupils.

The school's positive ethos encourages pupils to reflect on their own faith and to learn about others. Pupils enjoy Mass and special assemblies at the church. Having only one class in each year group helps pupils to quickly get to know each other. Pupils look after those who are new to the school and help them to make friends.

Pupils, parents and carers all appreciate the events that the school hosts. The recent 'international day' is an excellent example of what they like about St Scholastica's. Families came together to celebrate each other's cultures. Pupils enjoyed tasting foods from around the world. They liked learning about their friends' backgrounds.

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

Leaders ensure that what pupils learn in each subject is challenging and ambitious. Pupils told me that teachers make learning interesting. They said that their learning is hardly ever disturbed by poor behaviour. Throughout the school, pupils have positive attitudes and want to do well.

Teachers waste no time in helping pupils to know and use phonics for reading and writing.

It starts in the early years and is built on in the other year groups. Staff make the most of opportunities to read to pupils. Teachers choose high-quality fiction, non-fiction and poetry texts that pupils enjoy. Phonics sessions are very well organised. Staff spot any pupils who need extra help, and this enables pupils to catch up with their peers. Pupils of all ages told me they love reading. They are well supported to become fluent and confident readers, and they enjoy discussing their favourite books and authors.

Mathematics is also a strength. Teachers' planning ensures that pupils learn well throughout their time at the school. Pupils develop their confidence and skills in solving problems. Children in the early years had great fun finding the numbered pumpkins hidden in the cauldron. Older pupils remember important things, such as place value. They use what they learned in the past to help them with new learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well too. This is because staff have high expectations and understand pupils' needs. Staff adapt activities to help pupils who need it. For example, in Reception, staff helped individual children take part in a counting activity by using objects that motivate them, such as toy dinosaurs. Picture cards are used to help some pupils understand what is happening at each part of the day. This reduces their anxiety and encourages their independence.

Improvements to reading and mathematics have had a positive effect on pupils' achievement. Leaders have improved the planning for history, geography and science. These plans are new and need to be embedded. Leaders now need to review the plans for some of the other subjects, including Spanish and music, so that these are taught consistently well. Staff are well trained in reading and mathematics. Teachers' subject knowledge is not as strong in some of the other subjects, including Spanish and music.

Teachers assess pupils' achievement well in reading and mathematics. They make changes to their plans to help pupils catch up. However, in some subjects, teachers are not confident in checking what pupils know and can do.

In the early years and beyond, staff provide a range of activities that enrich pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils in Year 6 are excited about their trip to Spain. Pupils like the improvements to the playground. They are enthusiastic about the new after-school clubs, such as cooking, that are being offered. Bullying rarely happens and pupils told me that they trust staff to deal with any issues.

Staff told me that leaders care about the well-being of all members of staff. They said that leaders offer them guidance. Team work among the staff is a strength. New teachers feel valued and are well supported by their colleagues.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that any concerns about pupils' well-being are taken seriously. Leaders set aside time with staff to discuss safeguarding matters. Staff know how to make referrals

about pupils' welfare and understand the school's whistleblowing procedures.

Leaders consider the school's local context and some of the potential risks to pupils when they are outside school. Leaders make sure that assemblies and lessons are used well to help pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe. They work well with other professionals, including counsellors, to support pupils' emotional well-being. An ongoing programme is in place to teach pupils about the dangers associated with gang affiliation and knife crime.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is ambitious. It provides pupils with a broad range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in the different subjects. Throughout last year, leaders made some important changes to history, geography and science. Teachers have recently started to deliver these plans, but they need time to be fully embedded. While the curriculum is in place for the other subjects, the plans are not as well thought out. Leaders need to review the planning of the other foundation subjects, including Spanish and music, so that these are implemented consistently well.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved the curriculums for reading and mathematics. These subjects are taught consistently, and staff are confident in the approaches used. Leaders acknowledge that they now need to provide professional development opportunities for staff in other subjects. For example, staff knowledge and expertise in teaching Spanish and music is variable.
- Teachers use assessment effectively, particularly in reading and mathematics. Leaders are refining the use of assessment in the other subjects. They need to ensure that teachers develop their expertise in assessing what pupils have learned across the wider curriculum. That said, this should not add to teachers' workload.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged St Scholastica's Catholic Primary School to be good on 17 March 2011.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	100274
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10110446
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ann McKenna-Slade
Headteacher	Sandra Brierley
Website	www.st-scholasticas.com
Date of previous inspection	21 January 2016

Information about this school

- St Scholastica's is a primary school with a Catholic ethos.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and other members of the leadership team, including the special educational needs coordinator. I met with five governors, including the chair of governors. I met with two representatives of the local authority.
- I did deep dives in reading, mathematics and Spanish. To do this, I met with the subject leaders, looked at pupils' work and visited lessons in these subjects. I spoke with pupils and met with teachers from these lessons. I considered the curriculum plans for these subjects.
- I looked at other subject plans, including music, history, geography and science. I observed pupils at breaktimes and lunchtimes. I spoke with pupils and staff informally during these times.
- I spoke with parents in the playground. I reviewed the 23 responses to Ofsted Parent

View.

- I considered the 26 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the six responses to the staff questionnaire.
- To inspect safeguarding, I reviewed the school's single central record of staff suitability. I met with the designated safeguarding leader and reviewed documentation related to child protection.

Inspection team

Gary Rawlings, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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