

Inspection of a good school: St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School

Horseshoe Lane, Garston, Watford, Hertfordshire WD25 7HP

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

Outcome

St Catherine of Siena Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of the school is Nicola Kane. This school is part of the Diocese of Westminster Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Patrick Murden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Patrick Leeson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils happily attend St Catherine's. They are friendly and show compassion for others. Pupils learn in an encouraging environment, where they can grow and develop. Pupils like to celebrate others' successes and are proud of each other.

Pupils learn a curriculum that develops their breadth of knowledge effectively. There have been some recent changes to some subject plans, which are now providing more opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge.

Pupils respond well to staff's high expectations. They work hard and are keen to try their best. Pupils explain that bullying does happen, sometimes, but that teachers are very good at stopping it quickly. Pupils are well behaved and considerate to each other. Pupils feel safe and are safe.

Pupils learn about a range of people, cultures and historical figures. These represent both the make-up of the local community and wider society in modern Britain.

Pupils develop into well-rounded citizens. They enjoy their extra experiences, including the visitors to the school. Pupils have responsibilities and they take these seriously. For instance, the older pupils who are 'farm rangers' take the younger pupils to visit the school farm.

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

The school has constructed a well-sequenced curriculum that develops pupils' skills and knowledge over time. Leaders carry out checks to make sure that pupils are learning this

curriculum effectively. Pupils learn a rich and broad curriculum. Generally, teachers have good subject knowledge. This helps pupils to achieve well in a range of subjects.

Pupils have developed some gaps in knowledge that the school wants to fill. To this aim, the school has developed a more consistent approach to how more complex content and subject-specific language are taught. Where this is already taught well, pupils carry out learning tasks with clarity and can explain their thinking more deeply. This further improves pupils' subject knowledge. However, in a small number of subjects, this is less well developed. In these subjects, teachers do not always explain the learning tasks clearly in a way that pupils can understand. They do not use the subject-specific language that leaders intend. This means that pupils do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects.

Reading is a high priority across the school. The school ensures pupils learn about our diverse world through developing a love of books, authors and poetry. Pupils learn to read as soon as they start at school. Children in the early years have daily phonics lessons. They develop positive attitudes to reading by enjoying rhymes and songs and re-reading engaging and fun stories. Older pupils who struggle with reading have extra sessions that help them to catch up quickly. They read books that match their phonics knowledge and staff help them with reminders about how to use this to read new words. This precise help means pupils become confident and independent readers.

In the early years, staff have created imaginative and exciting activities for children to carry out. Well-trained staff make sure children's communication skills are well developed. Children engage well with these activities and each other. Children in the early years are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the same curriculum as their peers. Staff know pupils' individual strengths and interests. They adapt learning to cater for pupils' needs effectively. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils behave well. In class, they listen to the teacher and each other. In the playground, younger pupils happily play with older pupils, who try to be positive role models. Pupils develop a sense of right and wrong. They understand, and have been taught, how to be kind to all others. Pupils develop effective independent study habits.

The school prioritises opportunities for pupils to learn about diversity and fundamental British values. Pupils learn about other cultures, including some countries' national days, their national dress and the food they eat when celebrating. They learn about differences and disabilities. Pupils enjoy sharing their views and opinions. They like to celebrate their differences and what makes them unique. All members of the school community feel welcomed and equally valued.

Leaders at all levels work well together. The trust provides guidance for the governors and support for the headteacher. Staff appreciate the opportunities the trust provides them to partner with other schools to develop their practice. Teachers know that leaders consider their well-being and their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils are not taught using consistent and clear teacher exposition and subject-specific language. Pupils are then not able to carry out the learning tasks succinctly and they find it harder to explain their thinking and understanding. This means pupils do not learn the curriculum with the clarity and depth leaders intend. The school must ensure that teachers implement the planned curriculum in all subjects effectively.

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 school to be good in November 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

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| Unique reference number | 138288 |
| Local authority | Hertfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10295051 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 269 |
| Chair of trust | Patrick Leeson |
| CEO of trust | Patrick Murden |
| Headteacher | Nicola Kane |
| Website | www.stcatherinescatholicprimaryschool.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 22 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school has a Catholic religious character. The school's most recent inspection of its religious character under section 48 of the Education Act took place in May 2022. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions with the curriculum lead, visited

a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, both assistant headteachers and the senior leader for phonics and SEND, middle leaders and class teachers.
- The inspector met with the trust CEO, the trust primary education director and several school governors, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector examined a range of documents provided by the school, including leaders' school development plans and the school self-evaluation document.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and in lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of staff, leaders 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 considered the 41 responses and 71 free-text responses made by parents to the survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also considered the 24 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and the 20 pupil responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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