

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

Alverston Gardens, South Norwood, London SE25 6LR

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 January 2024

Outcome

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

The executive headteacher of this school is Isobel Vassallo. This school is part of the St Chad's Catholic Primary School Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Yvonne Ndifor.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this friendly and welcoming school. The school's mission, 'Grow in love, live in peace', is demonstrated by all members of the school community. Staff encourage pupils to be kind and respectful. As a result, working relationships between children and adults are warm and caring. Pupils are safe and happy in school. 'Ask it baskets' in classrooms and worry boxes around the school allow pupils to share any concerns they might have.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum, particularly in English and mathematics. They behave well, including children in the early years. They are enthusiastic and curious learners. Children in Reception focus well in class and listen to their teacher carefully.

Leaders provide pupils with a range of experiences to support their wider development. Pupils adopt positions of responsibility, such as kindness ambassadors, faith leaders or school councillors. They participate in school visits, including to the Royal Observatory. Parents and carers were overwhelmingly positive in their feedback about the school. Many parents praised the school's nurturing ethos.

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

Reading is an important priority for leaders. In the early years, the school promotes the development of children's communication and language skills. This prepares children well for learning the phonics strategies they need to decode unfamiliar words from the start of Reception. Staff are well trained in the school's reading programme. The books that children read match the sounds they are learning. Leaders quickly identify any pupils who

need extra help with reading. They provide targeted support that addresses any specific gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils read a range of stories and are encouraged to think about the themes, characters and wider meanings within them. The school works hard to develop a love of reading in the children. This includes through visits to the local library, well-stocked book corners, daily story time and Year 6 book club.

Overall, the school's curriculum is sequenced well from early years to Year 6. It is ambitious and relevant to the pupils at the school. For example, pupils learn about local history and make meaningful links with the community. Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They encourage pupils' use of technical vocabulary, provide clear explanations and are alert to pupils' misconceptions. In mathematics, teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to recall and reinforce prior learning.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are clearly identified. Pupils receive a range of help to meet their individual needs. In the early years, adults model the correct use of language. For example, Reception children learned about volume using terms such as 'capacity' and 'estimation'. In history, older pupils evaluated what historical sources might tell them about the different social classes in Victorian society.

In a few subjects, curricular thinking has not precisely identified the important content pupils need to learn. This means some pupils do not build knowledge and deepen their understanding as well as they could. In addition, in some subjects, pupils' learning is not securely embedded in their long-term memory.

Attendance is high and leaders have effective systems in place to follow up absences and check pupils' safety. Established classroom routines support pupils to be attentive and focused on their learning. Pupils are quick to attempt new challenges and they do not give up easily. In the early years, children are supported to share, take turns and include others in their play, qualities that pupils demonstrate throughout the school.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their character. For instance, it works with a charity to promote kindness in the community. Many pupils participate in CAFOD club, raising funds for overseas development and protecting the environment. Pupils also engage in wider charitable work, raising money for Animal Aid, the Tree Society and the Royal British Legion. They can also attend the Go Green club, cooking and coding clubs.

Leaders, including the governing body, are ambitious for all pupils to flourish, thrive and achieve well here. Staff value the support leaders give to their professional development, workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, the school does not identify the key knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which they learn it. As a result, pupils' learning in these subjects does not build up progressively to more complex knowledge as they move through the school. The school must ensure that all foundation subjects have a clearly outlined curriculum that is taught and checked consistently.
- In some foundation subjects, important content that pupils need to know is not secured in their long-term memory. This limits pupils' readiness for future learning. The school must ensure that the intended curriculum is implemented in such a way as to support pupils to know more and remember more in each subject 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 predecessor school, St Chad's Catholic Primary School, to be good in May 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	142731
Local authority	Croydon
Inspection number	10296743
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	332
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Ndifor
Headteacher	Isobel Vassallo (Executive headteacher)
Website	www.stchadsprimaryschool.com
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Roman Catholic school in the Archdiocese of Southwark. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in December 2022.
- The school is part of the Croydon Catholic Primary Schools Umbrella Trust, consisting of seven local Catholic primary schools.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher, who also currently leads another primary school in a neighbouring local authority. She was appointed in September 2023.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision for any of its pupils.

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 any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with members of the school senior leadership team, a selection of subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their 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 met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of governors, and spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.
- The views of pupils, parents and staff were considered through discussions and looking at information collected from Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Christian Hicks, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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