

Inspection of a good school: Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

68 Georges Road, Holloway, London N7 8JN

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 October 2022

Outcome

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have developed a curriculum that encourages pupils to be curious and develop a thirst for learning. Pupils achieve well because all staff are ambitious for what they should learn and remember.

The school is a calm and welcoming place. Pupils feel happy and safe. They learn and play well with others. While some pupils said that they occasionally do fall out with friends, they know that adults are there to help them find a solution. Any issues, including potential bullying, are nipped in the bud and stopped quickly by staff. Pupils like that there are staff who will listen to them if they are worried. This includes, for example, support offered through the school's counselling service.

Leaders, staff and governors live and work by the school's ethos, which encourages all to be respectful and give their best. They ensure that pupils learn about other faiths and are taught to be respectful of people who have different beliefs. Staff also teach pupils about the richness of their community and that each of them is a valued part of it.

Pupils behave well and are very polite and welcoming. Through the '3-5-7' approach, pupils and staff are all clear about the school rules of being 'ready, respectful and safe'.

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

Leaders have carefully considered the reading curriculum, especially early reading. All staff have received training in how to deliver the new phonics programme. The books that pupils read are matched to the sounds that they have been taught and know. Leaders regularly check what pupils have learned. This means that teachers can accurately pinpoint if pupils have gaps in their knowledge and, in turn, which sounds need further teaching. Parents and carers are given lots of information about how to help their children learn to read. This includes regular updates about the sounds that are taught in school and the books that their children are reading.

Older pupils enjoy reading regularly in school, including in the welcoming library space. Pupils readily discuss what they like about their favourite authors. They are also very enthusiastic about the 'reading road map', which sets them a goal of reading 40 books over the year. In classrooms, teachers have developed attractive spaces for reading. They suggest books with the aim of broadening pupils' experience of authors and genres.

Leaders have carefully considered how best to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They work with parents and outside agencies to identify pupils' barriers to learning and provide any help that pupils need. Leaders regularly check that any adaptations are effective in supporting pupils with SEND to learn well.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects. These match the ambition and scope of the national curriculum. Leaders have designed a curriculum that sets out the most important knowledge pupils must know and remember in different subjects. In most cases, they have also considered how this learning needs to be sequenced from the early years to Year 6. An example of this is the clear and well-organised mathematics curriculum. New knowledge is introduced step by step and pupils revisit important ideas frequently. This helps pupils to remember what they have previously been taught. Pupils spoke about how much they enjoy learning because of this. They described how their lessons helped them to build on what had been taught previously and deepen their understanding. Teachers use assessment effectively to ensure that learning is adapted, where necessary, to cater for pupils' needs and prior knowledge.

Some subject leaders have been appointed recently. Their understanding of their subject curriculum, including how they can strengthen learning further in each year group, is at an early stage. Leaders are supporting these subject leaders to develop their subject knowledge and expertise. For example, in history, leaders and subject leaders are in the process of fine-tuning and embedding expectations for how pupils' learning should develop year on year.

Children in the early years are eager to join in activities. Staff and leaders skilfully identify what children know and what they need to learn next. They use the newly extended outdoor space to broaden opportunities for children to learn and practise important knowledge and skills. Through clear expectations, staff support children to settle well into the early years.

Leaders have thought carefully about how the curriculum supports pupils' wider development. As well as after-school clubs, such as science and dance, pupils visit local places of interest, for instance Gillespie Park and Ecology Centre, and the Union Chapel. Pupils in Year 6 are especially excited about their residential visit to Cardfields, which happens each year.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders prioritise staff well-being and workload. Many staff commit to staying at the school long term.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors have a firm understanding of the potential safeguarding risks that pupils in the school might face. Leaders carefully weave activities into the curriculum with the aim of building pupils' awareness of, and resilience to, the potential dangers around them. Pupils appreciate the need to follow school rules for everyone's safety.

All staff are vigilant and ensure that pupils are kept safe. They report any concerns swiftly. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' welfare and act effectively when concerns are spotted. Leaders and staff are well trained to identify and manage safeguarding risks for all pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject leaders are new to their roles. They do not have a firm understanding of how their subject develops from the early years to the end of Year 6. Because of this, guidance and support for staff has not focused fully on aspects of curriculum implementation that could be strengthened further. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders continue to develop their expertise and bring about further improvements in how the curriculum is delivered.

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 school to be good in March 2013.

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](#)' 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	100437
Local authority	Islington
Inspection number	10211102
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	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Teresa Nunn
Headteacher	John Lane
Website	www.sacredheart.islington.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Catholic ethos and is part of the Diocese of Westminster. The last section 48 inspection took place in January 2020.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and members of staff. The inspector also met with a representative of the local authority and with members of the governing body.
- The inspector did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each of these subjects, the inspector held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with staff and pupils, and looked at pupils' work. The inspector also considered pupils' learning in some other subjects.

- The inspector spoke with pupils and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. He considered safeguarding records, documentation and the school's single central record of staff suitability checks.
- The inspector spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. He also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including written responses and responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Adam Vincent, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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