

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

East End Road, Finchley, London N3 2TD

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 July 2024

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in this nurturing and welcoming school where everyone matters and is treated equally. Pupils are safe and happy, knowing that trusted adults will help them if they have any concerns. Staff have very high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). A sense of belonging and pride is fostered across the school. Pupils work hard and achieve highly, including in national assessments. They are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Teachers build strong relationships with pupils, which allows them to thrive. This begins in early years, where children learn to cooperate and take turns, enjoying the range of activities available to them. Staff use consistent routines and procedures to support pupils to behave well. Pupils show kindness and respect for each other, both during lessons and at playtimes.

The development of pupils' character is a strong feature of school life. The school provides a range of leadership opportunities for pupils. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about their roles. They know their voice is listened to and valued. The school provides a broad set of experiences outside of the classroom to enrich the curriculum, such as educational visits and fundraising activities.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that is broad and ambitious. Leaders have identified the important skills and knowledge pupils need to secure. This is well sequenced, ensuring that new learning builds on what has been taught previously. For example, in mathematics, children in early years learn to recognise and count whole numbers. Older pupils use this knowledge to complete mental calculations, including with larger numbers.

Teachers have the skills to implement the curriculum well. They present information clearly and use well-chosen activities to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have learned before. In most subjects, assessment is used well to check on what pupils have remembered. Staff use this information to fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge and to address their misconceptions. The

subject content in some foundation subjects has recently been reviewed to ensure that pupils gain the essential knowledge they need. In these instances, assessment is sometimes used less precisely to check what pupils know and remember. For some pupils, this means that misconceptions are not as swiftly identified or addressed.

Leaders have placed a high priority on ensuring that pupils learn to read fluently and with understanding. All pupils start the school's chosen phonics programme as soon as they begin their Reception year. Staff are well trained to teach phonics with confidence. The books pupils read are well matched to the sounds they know. Leaders ensure that pupils who fall behind with their reading are given extra support to keep up with their peers. Pupils have access to a diverse range of books in the well-stocked library. They enjoy reading widely and regularly, demonstrating a high level of understanding.

The school has high expectations for all pupils to develop as confident, successful learners. Pupils with SEND are accurately identified, and staff are well trained to make suitable adaptations to tasks and activities where necessary. This supports these pupils to fully access the ambitious curriculum that is in place.

Leaders and class teachers have high expectations regarding behaviour and conduct. Clear systems are in place that are well understood by pupils. As a result, learning is not disrupted. Conduct in class and around the school, including in the canteen and playground, is strong. Pupils are polite and respectful in discussion with adults and each other. Pupils say that bullying is very rare but always dealt with swiftly should it occur. Pupils attend school regularly. This is because the school works closely with families to overcome any barriers to attending that may arise.

Pupils' personal development is well considered. The curriculum is designed to help pupils to develop a mature understanding of issues. These include diversity and equality and the importance of treating everyone with respect, regardless of their differences. Pupils value the many opportunities they have to demonstrate their leadership skills, for example through the school council, acting as 'mini-vinnies' or prefects. School visits are carefully planned to further enhance the ambitious curriculum. There is an extensive programme of enrichment activities to support pupils' wider development. These include a range of after-school clubs such as dance, art and mathematics.

Governors are highly committed to the school. They have an accurate view of the quality of education provided and have identified appropriate priorities for further improvement. Staff, including those at the start of their careers, receive excellent support and high-quality training. Staff feel that their workload and well-being have been carefully considered by leaders.

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 small number of foundation subjects, the curriculum has been revised and is still becoming embedded. On occasion, gaps in pupils' prior knowledge in these areas are not as swiftly identified or addressed. As a result, the depth of some pupils' knowledge and understanding in these subjects is not as secure. The school should continue its work to fully implement and embed recent curriculum changes and ensure that any gaps in pupils' prior knowledge are identified and addressed.

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 March 2019.

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 | 101335 |
| Local authority | Barnet |
| Inspection number | 10345728 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 177 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Fiona Kerin |
| Headteacher | Barbara Costa (Executive headteacher) |
| Website | www.st-theresas.barnet.sch.uk |
| Dates of previous inspection | 6 and 7 March 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- St Theresa's is a one-form entry Catholic voluntary-aided primary school.
- The school had its last section 48 inspection on 3 March 2022.
- The executive headteacher leads another local Catholic primary school.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

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 held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. Discussions were held with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. The inspector also held a meeting with a representative from the local authority.

- Deep dives were carried out in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and Art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The inspector listened to some pupils read to staff.
- The curriculum in other subjects was also considered.
- 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 took account of a range of other information, including the school's improvement plans, policies and minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through their responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Robert Grice

His Majesty's Inspector

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