

Inspection of St Peter-in-Chains RC Infant School

Elm Grove, 3 Elm Grove, London N8 9AJ

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a small and happy school where all get to know each other well. For example, Year 2 buddies look out for Reception children in the playground and dining hall. Staff build up strong and trustful working relationships with children from the start. They also build strong connections with parents and carers. Pupils thus feel safe and parents are assured that their children are well cared for.

The new senior leadership team has set high ambitions for all pupils' achievement and their social development. They have secured many improvements, at pace, both to the curriculum and pupils' behaviour. Pupils are taught a broad curriculum and achieve well, overall. This includes the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff make effective tailored adaptations, without compromise of ambition, to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND. In class and around the school, leaders and staff ensure that there is a calm purposeful environment.

Pupils relish attending the weekly rewards assembly with their peers at the nearby junior school site. With their successful learning and strong social skills, pupils are well prepared for their transition into Year 3.

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

New senior leadership was quick to identify several weaknesses in the school's work that needed addressing. Leaders have made significant improvements at speed, despite some highly challenging circumstances. They welcome guidance and feedback from external education professionals and act on recommendations with alacrity. The school's leadership knows what more needs to be done to develop the quality of education further and has plausible plans in place to bring this about.

The school prioritises the teaching of reading, right from the start of Reception. Children are surrounded by books, whether in the large library, the corridors or in classrooms. Pupils love listening to their teachers read to them. They enjoy attending reading workshops, sometimes with authors, at the local library. All staff have been trained to teach the new phonics programme effectively. They make sure that pupils practise reading using books matched to the sounds that they know. Staff give pupils who fall behind and those with SEND extra bespoke help. As a result, pupils become confident, keen and fluent readers.

In many subjects, including for example mathematics, science, history and geography, the school has given careful thought to the curriculum and ensures that pupils achieve well. The quality of pupils' learning also benefits from the school's specialist expertise in the teaching of music and physical education. Overall, staff have gained from much quality training. This has assured their subject-specific knowledge and teaching expertise in most subjects. Teachers use assessment well. They check on pupils' knowledge and identify gaps and misconceptions and address these. The early years curriculum is also rich and is taught well. Indoors, staff

provide particularly well-chosen resources. These resources are set out to support children's learning across all the areas of the early years curriculum. Outdoor provision, however, is sometimes not as strong and effective at extending children's understanding.

Support staff work in clear collaboration with teachers. Together, they make well-considered adaptations to teaching and resources to give extra help to pupils with SEND. This enables these pupils to access the same knowledge as their classmates. The school gives pupils with very complex needs a bespoke and ambitious curriculum, as well as carefully tailored extra support. This ensures that they learn with success and confidence.

In some wider curriculum subjects, although taught regularly, curriculum thinking is underdeveloped. The school does not routinely have the subject-specific knowledge and subject teaching expertise to ensure that pupils learn as well in these subject as they do in others. As a result, in these subjects, pupils do not meet their full potential with their learning. Leaders have identified this as a priority to be addressed in the next academic year.

The school introduced a new behaviour policy this year. It was underpinned by staff training on autism and de-escalation strategies. The revised policy has been consistently implemented by all. This has had a markedly positive impact. From the time children arrive in Reception, staff set them clear routines and expectations for behaviour. Children are attentive, share resources and collaborate with staff and each other. Across the school, pupils are eager learners. Pupils who may get anxious, including those with SEND, are helped to calm down. Lessons and social times are thus composed and purposeful. The school does all it can be reasonably expected to do to encourage regular attendance.

The school teaches pupils a range of topics that promote their personal development. These include learning about the importance of rules, building resilience, looking after money and autism awareness. Pupils are also taught about a range of faiths and are encouraged to take part in charitable fund-raising events, such as for people who are homeless. Pupils can choose to attend clubs, such as gymnastics and drama. All are taken on local outings as well as some educational visits further afield, such as to London Zoo.

Staff very much value the training opportunities that they have had this academic year. These have developed their skills in carrying out their teaching and support rolls. Staff are consulted on changes. Most welcome them. They can see the benefits to pupils and to their own professional development. They said that they are working 'smarter' and not harder. Nevertheless, a small minority of staff are less convinced about the changes.

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, there remains work to be done to ensure that the curriculum is ambitious, well sequenced and resourced, and well taught. This means that in those subjects, pupils are not achieving as well as they could. The school should ensure that it implements its stated intention to develop the subject leadership, teaching expertise and resources needed to enable pupils to gain deep knowledge across all subjects.

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	102148
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	10339128
Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Frances Booker
Headteacher	Peter O'Shannessy
Website	stpetersandstgildas.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2022.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, chair and vice chair of the governing body, and the special educational needs coordinator all took up their posts in September 2023.
- The school is federated with St Gildas' Roman Catholic Junior school. Both schools have the same headteacher, deputy headteacher and governing body. Some subject leaders work across both schools.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has dropped significantly. From April 2024, the Reception and Year 1 classes were amalgamated. The governing body is planning to move this infant school to the federation's junior school site in September 2024.
- School leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered other subjects as part of the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, and other senior leaders. They spoke with the chair and other governors. They also spoke with several representatives of the local authority and of the Archdiocese of Westminster.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including looking at records of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors also had formal meetings with staff and with pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey. They also spoke with parents in the playground. They considered the responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

David Radomsky, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

David Bryant

Ofsted Inspector

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