

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

Ballance Road, London E9 5SR

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and welcoming school. School staff and pupils treat each other with respect and kindness. Pupils understand what is special about their school and work hard 'to love, learn, hope, trust and care'.

Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. This is because staff have high expectations of them. Lessons are not interrupted by poor behaviour. Staff regularly praise pupils and award them green points for demonstrating positive behaviour and values.

Bullying rarely happens here. If it does, adults act swiftly so that it stops. Pupils feel happy and safe here because they know that adults will listen to them if they have any worries.

Pupils are taught about democracy. They vote for their classmates to take on positions of responsibility. For example, pupils have opportunities to be members of the school council. Pupils can also apply to become 'Doves'. Doves are pupils who promote the spiritual life of the school by leading prayers and assemblies.

Pupils are taught about different faiths and cultures. Pupils visit different places of worship, and visiting speakers share their knowledge of other faiths. Pupils are encouraged to understand and respect different beliefs and customs.

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

Pupils are taught to read right from the start of Reception. This is because leaders want every pupil to learn to read fluently and without delay. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained in the school's phonics programme. They are consistent in their teaching

of early reading. Staff check the sounds that pupils know regularly and systematically. This means that pupils who find reading difficult or who start to fall behind are given help to catch up. Pupils are given books that are matched to the sounds they know. This means that they read with developing fluency and enthusiasm.

Leaders have designed a well-structured curriculum that meets the requirements of the national curriculum. They have identified what they want pupils to learn and broken this down into logical steps. For example, in Year 2, pupils can work out money problems involving change because they have previously been taught place value and subtraction. In the early years, children complete rangoli patterns with understanding. This is because they have previously been taught about patterns and symmetry. This supports children's readiness for Year 1.

Leaders make sure that staff have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum. As a result, teachers deliver curriculum content clearly. However, sometimes, the curriculum is not delivered in the order that leaders intend. In some cases, the activities teachers choose do not link closely to the important knowledge and skills that leaders want pupils to know and remember. This means that, sometimes, pupils develop gaps in their learning.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively so that they can access learning alongside their peers. Leaders, teachers and other adults work together to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Leaders seek advice and support from a range of external professionals, such as therapists and psychologists. These experts provide training and support for teachers and teaching assistants. Therefore, leaders and teachers adapt teaching and resources appropriately so that pupils with SEND develop independence and learn well.

Pupils behave well in lessons. This is because expectations and routines are firmly established. This means learning is not interrupted. Leaders and staff help pupils to understand and regulate their feelings. Personal, social, health and economic education is well structured. Leaders aim for pupils to become responsible and respectful citizens. Pupils are taught about the importance of respect and the rule of law. They value and explore the views of others. For example, in Year 4, pupils debate and discuss the impact of climate change on the planet. Lessons across the curriculum help pupils to understand how to identify risks and how to recognise healthy and unhealthy relationships.

Leaders have created a nurturing environment for both pupils and staff. Governors are committed to and ambitious for the school. They understand what the school does well and what it needs to do to be even better. Governors work with leaders to check on the well-being of staff. Staff value the care and assistance they receive from senior leaders to support their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a key priority. Staff are well trained. Leaders provide regular and relevant training, which helps staff to identify and report concerns quickly. Regular updates ensure staff are aware of the risks pupils may face in the local community. Leaders respond quickly to concerns raised. Leaders work closely with outside agencies to secure the necessary support for pupils and families. Leaders carry out robust checks on staff before they are appointed.

Pupils have a good awareness of staying safe in different ways, including online safety. They know they should report concerns to an adult and know they should not share personal information with strangers online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the curriculum is not delivered in the order that leaders intend. In some cases, the activities teachers choose do not make explicit important knowledge and skills that leaders want pupils to know and remember. This means that pupils do not routinely apply their knowledge to their current learning and develop gaps in their knowledge. Teachers need to ensure that activities clearly align with the knowledge and skills they want pupils to know and remember. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is taught as intended so that pupils build the knowledge they need 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2017.

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	133669
Local authority	Hackney
Inspection number	10255485
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	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Eileen Bryant
Headteacher	Deirdre Finan
Website	www.stdominics.hackney.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic school under the Diocese of Westminster.
- The school received a section 48 inspection under the Education Act for schools of a religious character in May 2022.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with members of the senior leadership team to discuss school development, pupils' personal development and behaviour.

- The inspector met with members of the governing body and the Diocese of Westminster. She also met with representatives of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work in history and science.
- The views of parents/carers and staff were also considered, including through Ofsted's surveys.
- The inspector reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising records and through discussions with pupils and staff.
- The inspector reviewed a wide variety of documentation provided by the school. This included leaders' self-evaluation, curriculum information and school policies.

Inspection team

Deborah Walters, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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