

Inspection of a good school: Saint Cecilia's Church of England School

Sutherland Grove, London SW18 5JR

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 June 2023

Outcome

Saint Cecilia's Church of England School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have established a culture of high expectations. They are ambitious for pupils to achieve well through, for example, the high proportion of pupils who study all three science subjects at GCSE. In addition, students in the sixth form receive lots of effective guidance in preparation for life after school.

Leaders celebrate the school's Christian ethos while also promoting high levels of respect and tolerance for the faiths and beliefs of others. This helps to create a sense of community at the school where pupils get along well with each other. Pupils recognise the importance of being 'upstanders not bystanders' by, for example, reporting any instance of bullying should it occur. Pupils are kept safe at school. They feel well supported and know that adults are there for them.

Staff provide a kind and welcoming environment. They develop positive relationships with their pupils. Classrooms are calm. Pupils work hard; they are enthusiastic learners and take responsibility for their learning. Staff have high expectations for pupils' conduct. Pupils respond to these expectations and behave well.

Leaders provide a rich and varied offer of clubs and activities, such as backgammon, astronomy and softball. They also provide opportunities for pupils to nurture their musical talents and interests through instrumental lessons and opportunities to perform.

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

Leaders have established a curriculum that enables pupils to achieve well in most subjects, including students in the sixth form. Leaders are currently developing the rigour of some subject curriculums, such as that for design and technology. They are also making changes to modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9. This is to further promote pupils love of languages, and it also recognises the need to increase the proportion of pupils studying the English Baccalaureate.

Where subjects are well established, pupils have rich opportunities to master subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers provide supportive and critical feedback to help pupils advance their subject understanding. For example, in music, pupils confidently read notation and are able to act on teachers' advice to improve their compositions.

Teachers' subject expertise is strong. In most subjects, they successfully adapt their teaching, when required, to meet the needs of their pupils. This means that, in subjects which have been well thought through, pupils go on to produce high-quality work. Most teachers check how well pupils are doing in each subject. They use this information to close any gaps in pupils' understanding. However, in some subjects, teachers' checking of pupils' understanding is not as effective as it could be. When this happens, pupils can develop misconceptions.

Leaders make sure that they identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They also support pupils through a range of interventions, including reading comprehension, to help them access the curriculum. However, there is a minority of pupils, including those with SEND, who are not as well supported as they should be to develop their reading fluency. This is because leaders do not systematically check for gaps in pupils' fluency. Leaders also recognise the need for further expertise to support those pupils who need to learn to read.

Leaders provide a wide range of enriching extra-curricular experiences for pupils. This includes a wide range of clubs, as well as the popular Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme. Sixth-form students feel well supported. They develop a range of positive study habits, which helps them to recall and make sense of important subject concepts.

Teachers manage behaviour well, and low-level disruption is rarely a problem. Leaders make sure that pupils are taught how to look after their mental health and well-being. Topics such as consent and relationships are well embedded in the curriculum. Pupils have opportunities to learn about apprenticeships and to meet with employers. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme is popular at the school.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They say that they are treated with respect, and that their well-being and workload are taken seriously by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders use a range of information to identify any potential welfare and/or safety concerns in relation to pupils. Staff have been trained effectively to identify potential risks, to which they respond appropriately, using the school's reporting systems well. Leaders have ensured that pupils are confident in raising concerns. Leaders respond quickly to these concerns, including working with a range of external agencies.

Leaders provide a dedicated space for pupils who might need support, such as a place to talk. Pupils are taught through the school's curriculum how to stay safe. For example, they are taught about the risks of online addiction and safety around the use of artificial intelligence.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking lacks rigour, and they are currently reviewing the curriculum rationale. Sometimes, teachers do not systematically check that pupils have understood important subject concepts. As a result, pupils have not built up the depth of subject knowledge that they should have. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking, making sure that staff consistently have the expertise required to deliver the curriculum and to check pupils' understanding effectively.
- Leaders' strategies to identify and support pupils who need additional help with reading fluency are not as well developed as they should be. This means that these pupils do not become confident and fluent readers. Leaders should review strategies to identify weaker readers, ensuring that staff have the expertise needed to support these pupils to become fluent readers.

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, Saint Cecilia's, Wandsworth Church of England School, to be good in October 2011.

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	141808
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10287217
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,004
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	200
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	James Ewins
Principal	Renata Joseph
Website	www.saintcecilias.london
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2018 under Section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school principal was appointed in April 2019.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provider for in-home tuition.
- This is a Church of England school. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in November 2016.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and senior leaders. They also spoke to the alternative education provider.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, languages, mathematics and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 some other subjects as part of the inspection.
- To check the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding arrangements, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. He reviewed documentation, including the school's policy, records of support provided for pupils and the checks undertaken when recruiting staff.

Inspection team

Karim Ismail, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sam Hainey

His Majesty's Inspector

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