

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Agnes' Catholic Primary School

Thorverton Road, Cricklewood, London NW2 1RG

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 March 2025

Outcome

St Agnes' Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy and thrive at school. They are guided to respect others, be honest and try hard. They behave exceptionally well in class and around the school. Many parents and carers commented that the school is 'supportive and nurturing'. Pupils are very enthusiastic about learning across all subjects. They meet the school's very high academic expectations.

The school organises many pupil leadership opportunities to give pupils responsibility and develop their thinking skills. For example, the student council makes decisions and manages its own budget. Play leaders in older year groups set up and organise sports equipment for younger pupils during break times.

There are many educational outings and experiences deliberately planned into the curriculum to deepen pupils' knowledge. For example, Reception children visit a local shop to purchase ingredients for a tea party which they then held in class. During 'Victorian Day', Year 1 pupils learn what life was like for school children in Victorian times. Pupils in Year 4 visit the opera to experience a professional music performance.

Pupils from Years 2 to 6 value greatly the 'pathway' days. These provide unique opportunities each term for pupils to explore in detail subjects that interest them. Pupils try out new activities, including graphic design, debating and henna drawing.

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

The curriculum at the school is highly ambitious. The school has refined the curriculum over time across all subjects so that pupils build their knowledge very securely over time. In mathematics, for example, new concepts are gradually introduced. Children in the early years learn and consolidate their understanding of capacity, addition, and subtraction. By Year 6, pupils practise different calculations daily and build their numerical fluency. This prepares them well to solve challenging mathematical problems.

Teachers explain new information in ways that pupils find helpful. This is because it builds on what pupils already know. Teaching revisits important knowledge so that pupils remember it. Teachers check that pupils understand and remember the knowledge. They give pupils regular and helpful feedback on how to improve their work.

Pupils are taught systematically how to read. They have plenty of time each day to practise learning new sounds and to revise familiar ones. Any pupils who fall behind their peers are quickly identified and provided with regular, targeted support so that they can improve their reading confidence and accuracy. During writing lessons, pupils learn how to write accurately and fluently. Pupils also learn how to shape and expand their thoughts verbally before they write them down. This enables pupils to write, draft and edit fiction and non-fiction for different occasions and audiences.

Pupils with SEND are well-supported to learn. The school quickly identifies their emerging needs and works closely with professional agencies to provide pupils with the support that they need. Teachers have the expertise to ensure that pupils with SEND achieve highly. Pupils with SEND play a full part in the life of the school.

The curriculum is implemented well by staff, including specialist teachers in music, languages and physical education. Pupils' work across subjects is of high quality. Pupils retain key knowledge and learn new skills securely so that they are fully prepared for the next stage in their education. This is reflected in the high published academic outcomes for pupils in Year 6 in mathematics, reading and writing over many years. In science, pupils understand what makes an experiment 'fair'. Pupils in Year 5 understand democracy in ancient Athens and how Greek society functioned.

All pupils know and follow the school's 'golden rules'. Pupils listen carefully in class and focus hard. They are taught to respect others and value difference. They share and discuss different ideas thoughtfully. In the Nursery, children practise sharing and speaking by role-playing. For example, they act out working together as postal workers.

Pupils' attendance at the school remains high. This is because it is a top priority for the school. Attendance expectations are made very clear by the school and pupils who attend regularly receive praise during rewards assemblies.

The school organises many clubs for pupils to develop their interests. Popular clubs include cooking, football and quizzing. Pupils play competitive sports and many pupils sing in the school choir. Pupils support the local community too. For example, they sing in a local care home and write cards to local residents during festive periods.

Those responsible for governance know the school well. Leaders organise highly effective professional development. They prepare staff successfully for leadership roles within and beyond the school. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. They take account of staff well-being when they make decisions. The school keeps parents informed, for example through weekly newsletters.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 outstanding for overall effectiveness in October 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

Unique reference number	101332
Local authority	Barnet
Inspection number	10345726
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	434
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Gill Abbott
Headteacher	Susan O'Reilly
Website	www.stagnesnw2.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school has a Catholic religious character and is in the Diocese of Westminster. The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was carried out in February 2022. It is due for its next section 48 inspection in 2027.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 his evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour, safeguarding, the early years, attendance and pupils' wider development.

- The inspector met with representatives from the governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of work.
- 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 considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Guy Forbat, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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