

Inspection of a good school: Saint John Bosco College

Parkham Street, Battersea, London SW11 3DQ

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 October 2022

Outcome

Saint John Bosco College continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St John Bosco College is a welcoming school community. Pupils are polite and courteous. They are proud of their school. Pupils and staff described the school as a family. School staff provide high-quality care, which makes pupils feel safe and thrive. Pupils work hard and generally behave sensibly. They said bullying is rare. Staff deal with it when it does happen. Pupils are safe here.

Leaders have high expectations of all pupils' behaviour and learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils aim to live up to these expectations and achieve well across a wide range of subjects. Leaders have re-established sound routines after the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some pupils need extra help to control their behaviour and the way they interact with their peers.

There are many varied clubs and activities that pupils attend, including sports, computer coding, chess club and debating society. All pupils have equal access to these opportunities. Pupils are keen to contribute to their local community, for instance by donating produce to the local food bank. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and how it has supported their children to become more confident and develop their character while at the school.

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

Experienced senior leaders know the school community extremely well. They work effectively in order to provide specialist provision for pupils with SEND. The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. However, few pupils study modern foreign languages at key stage 4, which limits the proportion of pupils who achieve the EBacc by the end of Year 11. In the sixth-form, students can choose from a wide range of qualifications. This includes both academic and vocational courses. Students are taught to practise independent research, which prepares them well for higher education. Careers advice and guidance is very strong across the whole school.

Subject leaders plan what pupils will learn carefully. Each new piece of learning builds on what has come before. For example, in history, pupils learn about the topic of 'empire', which helps them to gain a wide understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world. In English, pupils' subject knowledge develops strongly through studying different texts. Pupils are encouraged to link together and build on what they have learned from the different literature texts that they have studied at different times. Teachers typically ask demanding questions that make pupils think hard about what they know. Learning typically proceeds uninterrupted.

In a few other subjects, the curriculum is less strong. Pupils are not routinely able to remember what they have learned previously. This sometimes results in pupils becoming confused, and their learning is less secure. Leaders are aware of this and planning is in place to address any inconsistency between different subjects.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subjects. They use a variety of methods to help pupils remember what they have learned. Teachers identify misconceptions and discuss with pupils how to correct them. They regularly challenge pupils to develop their thinking and to extend their answers.

Pupils with SEND are supported to access an ambitious curriculum from Year 7 through to the sixth form. However, in a few subjects, leaders have not adapted the curriculum to be as ambitious or take account of the needs of all pupils with SEND. This results in some pupils becoming distracted in class because their needs are not as routinely well met.

Leaders and teachers support pupils' literacy very well. Teachers make sure that new subject-specific vocabulary is taught and used in class. Pupils are taught how to write accurately by using paragraphs and a range of different sentences in a way which makes their work clear. Pupils are encouraged to deepen their learning independently by doing extra reading on topics that interest them. Pupils' reading is promoted in tutor time.

The governing body and leaders support pupils' wider development. They are committed to making sure pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They provide a broad programme of personal, social and health education. Topics covered include how to keep safe online, healthy eating and healthy relationships. Leaders listen to what pupils say and take appropriate actions based on their suggestions, which pupils appreciate.

Staff are proud to work in their school and said that leaders take appropriate steps to reduce unnecessary workload and support staff well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high profile in the school. Leaders, including the governing body, are routinely alert to the risks facing young people in the local area. Staff are well trained and take their responsibilities seriously. Leaders have established a strong culture of vigilance across the school. Staff report any concerns promptly.

Everyone in the school community feels responsible for safeguarding. This extends to the pupils themselves. Through the vertical tutor-group system, older pupils 'keep an eye' on younger pupils. This has empowered pupils and helped to make them feel safe. Leaders work tenaciously with external agencies to secure the best outcomes for any pupils who are vulnerable. Partnership working is strong. Pre-employment checks are thorough.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Planning is not equally ambitious in all subjects. In a few subjects in key stage 3, planning does not enable pupils to build on their prior learning as effectively as in other subjects. Leaders must ensure that across all subjects the curriculum in Years 7 to 9 helps pupils to know and remember more.
- In a few subjects, curriculum adaptations are not routinely used in order to support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. This leads to a minority of pupils with SEND losing focus, which interrupts their learning. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum in every subject is successfully adapted to be ambitious and meet the needs of all pupils with SEND.

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 school to be good in February 2013.

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	135762
Local authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	10240204
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
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	872
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jane Hargrave
Headteacher	Paul Dunne
Website	www.sjbc.wandsworth.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- On occasions, the school makes use of the following registered alternative providers for a small number of pupils: The Frances Barber Pupil Referral Unit, Westside School, and Future Skills Training.
- The school has specially resourced provision for up to 46 pupils with SEND who have autism spectrum disorder
- The school has a Catholic religious character. The school's most recent Section 48 inspection took place in June 2019.

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 carried out deep dives in English, history, geography and computer science. For each deep dive, they 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 held meetings with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, and with members of staff, as well as a range of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' welfare and well-being. This included reviewing the school's record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour before school, as well as during breaktimes.
- The leader inspector looked at documents and information available on the school website.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, pupils' wider development and the curriculum.
- Inspectors looked at responses from parents, pupils and staff to Ofsted's online surveys.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body, and with a representative from the local authority.

Inspection team

Susan Maguire, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Christian Hicks

Ofsted Inspector

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