



ST NICHOLAS SCHOOL

SEF 2024-2025

SHINING TOGETHER- EMBRACING OUR DIFFERENCES

Katie Goodwin
Head teacher



St Nicholas School - Context	
<p>St Nicholas School is an oversubscribed primary school for pupils aged between 4 and 11 years old with Moderate Learning Needs, ASD and Communication Needs. 42% have a diagnosis of Autism. Having recently expanded, the cohort of need has changed to include Severe Learning Needs and Complex Needs including challenging behaviour. There are 278 on roll (205 boys and 73 girls). The school has recently developed a Pathway Model to accommodate the varying needs of the children. There are 5 pathways: Discovery (Reception), Explore (play based), Adventure (ASD), Investigate (Sensory) and Challenge (Formal). Discovery has 11 children, a teacher + 3 Tas; Explore has 10 children 1 teacher and 2 Tas; Adventure has 10 children with 1 teacher and 4 Tas, Investigate has 9-10 children, 1 teacher and 4 Tas; and Challenge has 1 teacher and 2 Tas. All children who attend the school have an Education, Health and Care Plans. The percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium funding is 41% compared to 24.6% nationally. The school has links with The Magic Breakfast Charity who provide a range of free breakfast items to the school All children are offered a breakfast and fruit during the day. In May 2024, the school had a Section 8 OFSTED inspection and was graded as Require Improvement in all areas.</p>	
Areas of Development from last Inspection	Outcomes from previous data 2023/2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school should ensure that the breadth of curriculum thinking specifically sets out what they want all pupils to know and be able to do. The school should ensure that gaps in pupils component knowledge and skills are robustly identified and addressed. The school should ensure that all staff have the resources and expertise needed to strengthen communication, support behaviour effectively and help pupils' engagement in learning. <p>The school has identified 3 key areas for strategic improvement over the next 3 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementing and Embedding a Whole School Pathway Model and Curriculum Development and Training of all staff and stakeholders Communication and Engagement of all Key Stakeholders <p>From this, the school has identified 6 key objectives to work on over the next academic year to strive to a high standard in Teaching and Learning:</p> <p>KO1: To implement a whole school Pathway Model and curriculum KO2: To improve the passive behaviour of children so all are engaged in their learning KO3: To improve engagement of all Key Stakeholders KO4: To enhance the Training and Development of all staff no matter the stage of their career KO5: To monitor and analyse key data KO6: To further develop the well-being offer for all key stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Professional culture is instilled in the works force so that school improvement is more successful Pathway Model to be implemented across the whole school so that children are engaged in learning that suits their learning styles Leaders and teachers to continue to review and re-wrote the curriculum to adapt to their learning styles of the children HT and DHT to work with teachers to collect data regarding progress towards short term targets linked to EHCP outcomes at each half term point (October/February/March) DHT to monitor Evidence for Learning to ensure teachers are uploading observations linked to clear lesson objectives and assessment framework and sharing weekly with parents. English lead + Little Wandle Lead to collect assessment data for phonics at the end of each term to analyse progress Little Wande Lead to continue to support and monitor the implementation of the Little Wandle SEND scheme. HT, AHT + FLO to monitor and analyse pupil attendance data monthly and support parents with improving attendance for their child Maths, English and PSED lead to review Scheme of Work and plan for ongoing Training and Development to support staff with new curriculum and Pathway approach Teacher Mentor and Development lead to support new staff with on-going training and development Behaviour team to continue to monitor and analyse data from behaviour watch regarding incidences and produce reports for leaders and Governors Communication team to continue to support classes with communication within the classroom such as PECS, GRID, communication boards, Now and Next etc HT to monitor communication between teachers and parents and ensure that parents are fully informed of learning that their child has done and that they are fully aware of any behaviour incidences their child has been involved in.

Leadership and Management Current Judgement: OFSTED - Requires Improvement School Judgement - Good
Evidence for Judgement

- Leaders have worked hard to instil a professional culture in its relatively inexperienced workforce and has set high expectations for staff attitude and behaviour. Staff who are more experienced continue to demonstrate and model outstanding and effective proactive in the school. The school leaders and Governing Body share and demonstrate a clear school ethos and vision, created and adopted by all.
- The Head Teacher is supported by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable SLT and Middle Leadership team
- The leadership team are supported by a new but enthusiastic Governing Body.
- Performance Management processes for teachers and non-teaching staff has been improved and implemented and remains a robust process. Process now follows a self-directed learning process whereby staff acknowledge their strengths and areas of development and career aspirations. They use this to set their own objectives which link directly to school improvement actions whilst also developing their own CPD and action plan. The process allows staff to have move accountability around their own growth and development. . This ensures that the quality of teaching across the school is at least good and any areas for development are address promptly through whole school training or targeted support plans.
- All senior leaders are involved in the Performance Management of teachers and trained to observe lessons. Lesson observations are generally carried out jointly with another member of SLT.
- CPD is strong throughout the school, with a new Training and Development plan written to cater for specific pathway work, and ensures that staff are well equipped to contribute to school improvement.
- New staff are supported through a robust induction process. A training and development plan has also been written for those staff whoa re on a pathway to teaching.
- Model of distributed leadership continues to be in place with all experienced teachers undertaking leadership responsibility for a curriculum area and the performance of management of support staff. Curriculum co-ordinators have developed schemes of work to support planning.
- Middle Leaders have been recruited for Maths, English, PSED and Teacher Mentor and Development and have written clear action plans for improvement in their curriculum areas. They have also supported the HT with interventions for the School Development Plan.
- A regular programme of monitoring including focussed learning walks and monitoring of pupil progress ensures that any areas of underperformances are identified quickly with targeted support and greater frequency of monitoring in place to address any emerging issues.
- The Assessment lead has re-developed our Assessment framework so that it encompasses our ever-changing cohort of more complex learners.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is as good as other pupils demonstrating that pupils premium funding is used effectively. Additional funding is used for therapeutic provision such as Music therapy, Drama Therapy and Play Therapy as well as support from a Family Liaison Officer.
- Governors have recently undertaken a Governance Review and are keen to strengthen the working relationship between the Board and SLT; re-structure some of the committees and improve visibility amongst key stakeholders.
- Committed and passionate leadership results in a powerful ethos that places 'Shining Together – Embracing our Differences' at the heart of what the school does. Rigorous systems ensure all pupils make the best possible progress. Pupils are prepared well to move onto Secondary School.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and these are shared through the development plan. Leaders ensure that staff receive focused and highly effective professional development.
- Governors attend training set aside for their own development and skills base. Have opportunities to update their knowledge, skills and understanding in agreed areas relating to the school's work. Governors attended training on OFSTED in March and on Safeguarding in June. Governors have continued their monitoring visits.
- Demand for places is very high: school leaders spend a significant amount of time visiting pupils in settings to determine suitability and prioritise pupils for a limited number of places.
- The school works closely with the LA to support schools with their SEN learners with OUTREACH to individual schools or to the locality model.
- The school has clear and robust safeguarding procedures, acknowledged by OFSTED and by Judicium, that identify when pupils may be at risk form harm. Staff have an understanding of safeguarding issues including radicalisation, extremism and PREVENT. The school works tirelessly with families to ensure that pupils are safe and families feel supported.
- MyConcern is embedded in school practise and is closely monitored by the DSLs ensuring trends and concerns are picked up and actioned quickly and efficiently.

Next steps identified in School Development Plan: KO1, KO3, KO4, KO5, KO6

Quality of Education Current Judgement Ofsted - Requires Improvement School judgement - Good
Evidence for Judgement
Intent

- St Nicholas School motto is 'Shining Together- embracing our differences', which encompasses the collaborative approach to helping our special pupils achieve their full potential, regardless of their ability
- The curriculum offered to pupils is broad and balanced but support children with their individual learning styles. It is ambitious and ensures all pupils reach their full potential regardless of their SEN needs and barriers.
- Lessons are planned well to take account of pupil's differing abilities. Planning also ensures lessons include robust support for the development of pupil's reading, writing, communication, mathematics skills and independence and social skills. Pupils are also given the skills in order to self regulate so that they can successfully access the learning.
- Planning is tailored to support specific needs, ensuring pupils with the greatest needs are making progress.
- Schemes of work are coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning. Curriculum co-coordinators have written their schemes of work ensuring that content is consistent with requirements of the new national Curriculum, including their EYFS curriculum.
- Staff have high but realistic expectation of the children, encouraging them to reach their potential.
- The curriculum allows our children to have daily learning experiences that enables them to be equipped with the skills, resilience and life experiences to become healthy, active and respectful learners. Learning does not just happen in the classroom but also in outdoor spaces and specialist rooms through communication, sensory integration and play.
- Teachers have a firm understanding of the school's curriculum intent. The CPD Training and Development programme supports all staff with the skills and knowledge to use a range of strategies and interventions with pupils in their class.
- A whole school pathway model has been fully implemented across the school. These are: Discovery Pathway (Reception), Explore (play based), Investigate (Sensory), Adventurers (ASD) and Challenge (Formal).

Implementation

- Teachers work well as a year group to plan their medium-term planning. Teachers also complete weekly plans adapting activities appropriate to their class, drawing on a wide range of expertise and ideas.
- Teaching Assistants contribute well to learning. Teachers provide a clear picture of what their role is and what they want them to do. Ongoing training and strong partnerships with teachers have enabled some more experienced teaching assistants to lead learning activities. TAs use their initiative and use questions really well to check how much the pupils have learnt.
- Methods of teaching are creative, adaptable and flexible. Contexts for learning are well considered so that they are meaningful to pupils and are linked to pupil interests.
- Alternative teaching approaches such as TEACCH, Sensory Learning or Attention Autism have proved successful in allowing some of our sensory and non-verbal learners to access the curriculum. Individual strategies have been further developed for the most challenging pupils e.g. Zones of Regulation or sensory integration strategies to reduce level of stimulation.
- The curriculum is adapted so that activities suit the learning style of the children. A focus on independent living skills, communication skills and social skills is a key part of the curriculum. There are also regular movement breaks through the day to encourage self-regulation.
- Discovery, Investigate and Adventurer classes have a higher level of support so that teachers can also plan individual tasks that work on individual needs.
- The school has adopted a new phonics scheme, Little Wandle, which is aimed specifically at children with SEND and will support staff with early reading skills.
- Teachers support Reading through identifying early reading behaviours and then progress on to reading through phonics and sight word reading schemes and then progression onto the Accelerated Reading Scheme.
- Communication strategies such as signing, PECS, Colourful Semantics and visual or session timetables are used to support the teaching in lessons throughout the school allowing for commonality. Classes also use PowerPoints with links to transition songs so that any staff member in class can use with the children. The teaching of Mathematics is supported with the use of Numicon and tactile objects. PECS is more widely used across curriculum subjects.

- Specialist communication work is provided to targeted groups of children, delivered by teachers and TAs trained in a range of specialist approaches with the support of trained in-house therapists to enhance social skills, as well as functional skills such as sharing and turn taking.
- Teachers have developed creative ways to help pupils understand their Pupil Passport targets in class, and take responsibility for their own learning.
- Placement of increasingly complex children has required development of more sensory approaches in some classes, and development of a more systematic approach to behaviour plans including risk assessments.
- The school also adopts a Rights Respecting ethos, having achieved its Gold status, where every child is valued and their views are heard.
- Parents coffee mornings have also been carefully planned so that families gain the knowledge and skills to support their child to consolidate and generalise skills. Pathway specific coffee mornings have also been implemented so that parents have a better understanding of how these work.
- Pupil progress is closely tracked – small steps in learning are recorded and used towards termly tracking of pupils against ELGs in Reception, and a tailored tracking system from Year 1 using Evidence for Learning. This is backed up by moderation in school and with other schools in core subjects. The school has also developed its own Assessment system for Personal, Social and Emotional Development, which is where some of our learners make the best progress.

Impact

- Teachers create an environment where, not only the pupils learn, but are also allowed to challenge and explore their learning in a safe and supportive environment. Pupils demonstrate their resilience and often strive to improve on what they can and cannot do.
- The school holds a number of curriculum weeks throughout the year which enhances the educational experiences and enjoyment of the curriculum for staff and pupils.
- Pupils enjoy lessons and are keen to share their work with their peers, staff and visitors. It is obvious during monitoring that children are engaged in their learning.
- Parents inform us that their children are happy and the vast majority are pleased with their progress, according to our latest parent survey.
- Pupils are positive about their achievements and those of their peers. This is evident at our weekly 'Star of the week' assemblies, House Point Assemblies and from our Wow Boards.
- Evidence from teacher assessment shows that each child makes good progress from their relatively low baselines.
- Progress in core subjects varies across Key Stages – this is related to the development profile of pupils particularly communication and social needs.
- Pupils make good progress towards or achieve personalised targets agreed with parents termly and at the Annual Review of the EHCP. These are often linked to core subjects, communication and independent skills to support readiness for the next phase of education.
- Strategies implemented in classes by the behaviour team, communication team and OT help pupils to overcome barriers to their learning and complements the innovative, holistic and pupil-centred work of the school staff.

Next steps identified in our School Development Plan: KO1, KO2, KO3, KO4, KO5, KO6

Behaviour and Attitudes Current Judgement Ofsted - Requires Improvement School judgement - Good
Evidence for Judgement

- Pupils are enthusiastic, engaged in lessons and display attitudes to learning because of high expectations, a clear approach to behaviour management, a very well-matched curriculum and a caring ethos.
- Staff know the pupils' individual needs and abilities very well and use this knowledge to adopt and refine daily teaching to support good progress.
- Parents and other visitors to the school comment on the calm, happy environment.
- The school runs successful Parent Coffee Mornings which includes workshops and outside speakers. These groups are generally well attended and provide additional support mechanisms between parents. Coffee mornings on Behaviour, How we Learn, Reading and a chill and chat session are some of workshops offered.
- Behaviour of children is mostly good or outstanding despite their individual challenges. Where challenging behaviour does occur, staff expertly manage it using interventions taught in our behaviour approach. All pupils have a support plan with a majority on our basic support plan demonstrating positive approaches to use and some of our full support plan that includes support and interventions for proactive, active and reactive interventions.
- Two members of staff have been trained in delivering training in the PROCAT SCIPr approach and have delivered training to new staff and refresher training to current staff over the coming year. This approach aims to focus on analysing behaviour through functional assessments to understand the purpose of the behaviour and then implement proactive approaches to avoid Behaviours of Concern and improve quality of life. The new approach and feedback from training of staff have been supportive. Behaviour plans following the new approach are now being written by teachers and the Behaviour Policy has been finalised to reflect this approach. Two further behaviour support assistants have also been recruited.
- The behaviour team has also been expanded to allow for 2 behaviour support assistants who are on hand to support classes with proactive and positive strategies to support children to fully engage in their learning.
- Some members of staff are also trained Mental First Aiders and the DHT is the Mental Health Lead. Mental First Aiders hold weekly clinics for staff.
- Leaders have instilled an expectation of professional culture in its relatively new and inexperienced work force. Staff worked together to write a staff charter to hold each other accountable too and thus improve staff morale.
- Attendance of pupils is monitored and discussed with parents and the Family Liaison Officer will make home visits if necessary.
- From a recent parent survey, parents reported that pupils are keen to come to school. Overall, the responses from parents in the survey was positive with most answers having over 90% agree/strongly agree.
- St Nicholas works closely in partnership with other schools and organisations to enhance and enrich learning opportunities. This includes Croydon Drop in, CAHMs, Nordoff Robins and music and theatre groups.
- The school works closely with local services to identify and meet wider needs of pupils and their families.
- Speech and Language and Occupational Therapists are effectively integrated into the provision at the school and have also provided training for staff in specific areas e.g. sensory processing, emotional regulation, communication strategies as well as individual support. However, provision has been reduced as the school has expanded and a departing therapist was not replaced recently.
- The SaLt and OT team has also been increased to allow for 2 further SaLt assistants and an OT assistant who can support with the delivery of directed time and support in classes.
- The Zones of Regulation were introduced into each class last year and these have been successful in allowing children and staff to discuss their emotions and ways to regulate them.
- Weekly Star of the week assemblies and House Point Assemblies celebrate the achievements of pupils. Through these, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning and take pride in their work.
- Through playtimes and social times, pupils are supported to interact positively together. Pupils do not understand the concept of bullying. However, staff are trained in recognising child on child abuse and support children with a personalised approach.
- Staff council meet half termly to discuss topics such as school rules, outings, events and resources wanted by their peers.
- Children contribute to their EHCP either by staff observing what engages them; by completing a Talking mat; or by writing their answers.
- Children also take part in the Croydon Wellbeing survey by answering carefully selected questions

Next steps identified in our School Development Plan: KO2, KO3, KO5, KO6

Personal Development Current Judgement Ofsted - Requires Improvement School judgement - Good
Evidence for Judgement

- Teachers teach PSHE and RSE and adapt learning for the children in their class. PSHE is taught both has a discreet lesson and through a range of activities in the week e.g. social skills, expectations of behaviour, communication etc
- Leaders have a shared vision and motivation to support the pupils with their holistic development, enabling them to develop and discover their interests and talents. Data is also tracked for PSED and Life Skills as well as English and Maths
- There is a strong emphasis on teaching the children independence skills including being able to communicate and emotional regulate themselves.
- The school has 7 members of staff on the Safeguarding team as DSLs and 5 members of staff on the Attendance Team to support families and ensure the wellbeing of all pupils. The school Family Liaison officer is part of both teams.
- Pupils learn to keep themselves safe when using the Internet, when using the road or transport and when moving around the school.
- The school has themes weeks across the school year that introduce and expose children to different cultures such as International Week
- Staff use specialist rooms such as the Sensory Room and Sensory Integration Room to support the children with their comination and emotional regulation. Children are learning to regulate their own emotions and communicate around this.
- The calm and positive approaches demonstrated by the Behaviour, Communication and OT team are used across the school and allow the children to access their education in their own unique ways.
- External visitors such as Magpie Dance, M&M Productions and Savvy Theatre work with the children on a range of topics and themes.
- The school council voice the views of their peers and have also contributed to the Croydon SEND strategy.
- The school has an effective link to professionals in the wider disciplinary team such as social care and health to support families in a holistic way
- The school runs a number of parent coffee mornings including ones run by the SaLT team, those linked to how children learn and some with external visitors such as the Sleep Clinic and Will Writing Service.
- A newly formed Friends of St Nicks group work to establish a sense of community and belonging with our parents and wider community. Events such as Mother's Day Wrap, Father's Day raffle and Christmas fayre are some of the events organised.
- The LPPA working group also work well together to better support engagement with parents and other key stakeholders.
- The school provides opportunities for the children to meet with their peers socially such as Social Time with other classes, clubs such as Football and Multi Skills and the school choir.
- A strong transition programme takes place for children moving to year 7 so that they are fully prepared for the next stage of their education
- The school runs a community cupboard to support those families most in need with the cost-of-living crisis.
- Magic breakfast has been introduced in all classes for all children to ensure children are in the best mood to start their learning. Children use their preferred method of communication to request breakfast options.
- Those children who are able to transition around the school and complete a range of jobs in the school independently such as whole school fruit monitor; library monitor, magic breakfast monitor etc
- In classes, children are also given jobs within the classroom such as chair stacker, fruit and drink monitor etc
- Some children in year 5 @ 6 are also PE buddies and support younger children in PE sessions and on Sports Day
- The school celebrates all achievement through Star of the Week Assembly and House Points.

Next steps identified in our School Development Plan: KO1, KO2, KO4, KO6

EYFS Current Judgement Ofsted - Requires Improvement School judgement - Good
Evidence for Judgement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils enter Reception with a varied experience of a nursery setting and with varied paperwork. • School has its own Pathway for reception children (Discovery) so that it can identify the preferred learning style of each child over the year. • Reception teachers and TAs are experienced at setting routines and expectations for the children so they are aware of what is expected from the school day. Pupils settle quickly and flourish in a well-organised environment. • Staff use a multi-sensory approach to setting routines of the day such as music cues, objects of reference and sensory learning. • Pupils enter Reception with varied levels of development and most are well below that of their peers, particularly in communication and self help. • The transition process for Reception starters is thorough. Teachers make contact with nurseries in the summer term to share pen portraits. There are stay and play events for children and their families as well as individual meetings with the teacher. • An early Parents evening is held in the Autumn term so that parents and staff can agree on short term targets. • Teaching is highly personalised and focuses on developing pupils early play and learning skills in both a free flow and structured classroom environment. There is a strong focus on social and communication skills. • Pupils technology and gross motor skills are mostly in line with their peers. • Children are baselined on Evidence for learning within the Autumn term. Staff use carefully planned observation and assessments of the children to support them with this. • Some children complete the Reception baseline Assessment within their first 6 weeks of schooling. • The staff ratio in Reception allows for staff to ensure pupils are safe and ensures their well-being. Children are taught to develop good behaviour and social skills. • Children are encouraged to express their emotions through the introduction of Zones of regulation. Staff work hard to support the children regulate their emotions. • Staff also closely observe the child to discover their motivators. • Classrooms use a combination of free flow and continuous provision which allows the children to follow their own interests and be ready to learn in a calm manner. A range of learning styles are in classes so that children experience a diversity of peers to learn through play and socialise. • Staff introduce the pupils to attention building activities such as Attention Autism, Drama Games and People games to increase their ability to focus on adult led activities.
<p>Next steps identified in our School Development Plan: KO1, KO2, KO4</p>