

Inspection of St Joseph's RC Primary School, Halliwell, Bolton

Shepherd Cross Street, Halliwell, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 3EJ

Inspection dates: 11–12 September 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's is a school where pupils feel welcome and included. Everyone follows the school's vision: 'Together with God we develop a life-long love of learning where St Joseph's community flourishes'.

Staff and pupils refer to themselves as 'the St Joseph's family'. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for. They play and work together happily and do their best to look after each other. They say that teachers act swiftly if there is any unacceptable behaviour or bullying, and that this does not happen often. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is much improved.

Staff focus on helping pupils to achieve the best they can. Leaders support pupils and give them lots of opportunities to develop personally. Pupils are helped to become confident and resilient. They are taught how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Leaders expect pupils to behave well. Pupils typically concentrate well in lessons and talk enthusiastically about their learning. Older pupils set a good example for younger ones around the school. When individual pupils struggle with their behaviour, they are supported well so that they do not stop other pupils from learning.

Teachers prepare pupils well for secondary school. They are taught how to make a positive difference within their local community and wider society.

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

Staff feel valued by senior leaders. All staff are ambitious for pupils. The whole staff have worked together to improve the quality of education since the previous inspection. Good-quality training has enhanced staff's knowledge and skills. Leaders are supported and challenged effectively by governors.

Leaders have substantially improved the plans which show what pupils will be taught and when in a range of subjects. Most subjects are taught in a logical order to help pupils to build on their knowledge and skills successfully. This does not work as well in history and geography. Leaders are aware that there is more to do to ensure that pupils' knowledge in these subjects is as strong as in others. The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers help pupils to make links in their learning between subjects, which helps pupils to remember their learning.

Pupils' personal development is enriched with interesting activities such as sports weeks, 'musical extravaganza', multi-faith weeks and after-school clubs. The school's exciting outdoors environment is used to support learning in all subjects, including in the early years.

Teachers explain new learning well and teaching assistants help pupils in all classes to understand their work. Teachers focus on developing pupils' language, communication and thinking skills in all subjects. Their strong subject knowledge in mathematics and science means that these subjects are taught very well.

Subject leaders who have been in post for some time have made improvements in their subject. Some leaders are new to their role. Although new subject leaders are knowledgeable and are passionate about their subjects, they have not yet been able to check on teaching and support improvement.

In the early years, children settle in quickly and feel safe. They behave well and play and learn together happily. The curriculum provides children with interesting experiences that enthuse them. For example, children had fun searching for spiders and snails during a phonics session. Children make good progress in all areas of learning, especially in their communication, early reading and mathematical skills. The strong emphasis on personal development helps children to grow in confidence and begin to love their learning.

The teaching of phonics is imaginative and well matched to pupils' learning needs across the whole of the early years and key stage 1. The teaching of early reading is effective. It enables pupils to develop their reading skills well across key stage 1. However, teachers' planning does not take enough account of children's learning needs in early reading, as they move from the Reception class into Year 1. Also, some early reading books do not link with the sounds that pupils are being taught in phonics.

Pupils' behaviour, attendance and achievement have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils who are at the school for all or most of their primary school education make strong progress in all subjects and most achieve well. A high proportion of pupils join the school throughout the year. These pupils make strong progress during the time they attend the school.

Leaders and staff are working hard to engage positively with parents. The majority of parents are very positive about the work of the school. They say, for example, 'The dedication of staff is incredible' and 'This school can't do enough for my children.' A small minority of parents feel that communication with parents is not good enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff understand the school's procedures for safeguarding and are vigilant and swift to act if they have any concerns. Vulnerable pupils are well supported. The school engages effectively with a range of agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and to provide families with support. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe from risk, including those associated with radicalisation and exploitation. They have a good understanding of

how to keep themselves safe when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is planned and delivered effectively overall. However, in history and geography, topics are sequenced less well. Leaders should ensure that topics are sequenced effectively to maximise pupils' opportunities to build on their prior learning effectively.
- Although early reading is generally taught well, teachers need to ensure that reading activities at the start of Year 1 build on pupils' prior learning and take account of their learning needs. Leaders also need to ensure that early reading books link with the sounds that pupils are being taught in phonics.
- Senior leaders should continue to develop the leadership skills of subject leaders who are new to their posts.
- Leaders and staff are working hard to engage positively with parents. Most parents are positive about the school. However, a small minority say that communication is not good enough. They feel that pupils are not rewarded fairly for good behaviour. Inspectors did not find any issues relating to this during the inspection, but it would benefit leaders to clarify and resolve these perceptions.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	105223
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10087814
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	213
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sally Smith
Headteacher	Nicola Rabbett
Website	www.st-josephrcp.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	29–30 March 2017

Information about this school

- The school is a Roman Catholic voluntary-aided school and is part of the Diocese of Salford. A section 48 inspection took place in November 2015.
- Early years provision includes Nursery and Reception classes for children aged three to five years.
- The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school at times other than at the start of the Nursery and Reception years is much higher than usual. This includes some international new arrivals and some pupils who attend the school for a limited period of time.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with governors, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, pastoral leaders and all subject leaders. We spoke with representatives from Salford Diocese and Bolton local authority.
- We considered the following subjects in depth as part of the inspection: early reading and phonics, mathematics, science and history. Inspection activity

included: evaluation of curriculum planning; visits to lessons; scrutiny of pupils' work; listening to pupils read; discussion with subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants; and discussions with pupils about their learning in these subjects.

- We also looked at a range of policies and documentation related to school improvement planning, at the quality of provision in the early years and planning for the wider curriculum across the whole school.
- We looked at safeguarding procedures and records of safeguarding and behaviour. We checked pupils' attendance and teachers' training records. We spoke to staff and pupils to evaluate their understanding of safeguarding procedures.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and spoke to them about school life and their views on personal development and behaviour.
- We spoke to parents at the school gate and took account of 16 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jean Olsson-Law, lead inspector Ofsted Inspector

Jean Tarry Ofsted Inspector

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