

Inspection of St Mary and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Folly Lane, Wool, Wareham, Dorset BH20 6DS

Inspection dates: 29–30 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Most pupils enjoy school. They particularly like the outdoor learning programme. This provides wonderful opportunities to explore, play and make dens. Pupils love to build fires and work sensibly to make different objects. However, at other times, pupils do not behave well enough, including during play at breaktimes which can get too rough for some. This spoils an otherwise calm and orderly environment.

Teaching is not successfully building pupils' perseverance. Some pupils find it difficult to keep trying and they give up easily, including children in early years. This can prevent them from doing as well as they could.

Pupils feel safe. They know that bullying is harmful and that it is not tolerated. The pupils' colourful anti-bullying posters adorn the school's corridors. These provide useful prompts and reminders to all about the dangers of bullying.

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

Since it became an academy in 2014, the school has had some significant changes, particularly in those leading the school. This led to a decline in the quality of education. However, following the appointment of the headteacher in January 2019, and with the ongoing support of the trust, the school is starting to recover. Leaders have an accurate understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. Nevertheless, this has taken time to achieve and there is much work to do. Some leaders still do not have enough knowledge of their subjects to hold teachers firmly to account, which further impedes improvement.

Subject leaders have plans for what they want pupils to know in each subject, from Years 1 to 6. However, there are too many weaknesses in how these are designed and implemented. For example, in music, teachers do not take enough account of gaps in pupils' knowledge. Pupils cannot recall great composers or basic musical notation. Lessons do not ensure that pupils build knowledge sequentially, starting from what pupils know. At other times, such as in science, teachers attempt to teach difficult concepts, such as fossilisation, without ensuring that pupils build secure knowledge. As a result, pupils do not achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Furthermore, leaders do not ensure that the early years curriculum is well planned or sufficiently ambitious to prepare children well for Year 1.

Since September 2019, leaders have implemented a new approach to reading and phonics. Starting in Reception and continuing to Year 2, pupils are taught phonics every day. However, teachers' knowledge of the order in which letters and sounds should be taught is weak. This leads to poor progress for some pupils, including those who need to catch up quickly. These pupils are not gaining secure knowledge to be confident and fluent readers. The approach to reading in key stage 2 is confused. Teachers do not know clearly enough what pupils need to learn next. This leads to gaps in their knowledge, including their vocabulary. Recent strategies, such

as the 'High-Five' challenge, encourage pupils to read more. Pupils are beginning to show more interest in authors and literature. They all have a reading book and understand the importance of reading.

Pupils enjoy having responsibilities, such as being eco-warriors or class monitors. They understand the school's gospel values and recognise how these make the school a better place. Staff ensure that pupils learn about the world around them. For example, the children in Reception enjoy learning about Chinese New Year celebrations and cultural similarities and differences. Pupils enjoy the various trips and visits, such as to Corfe Castle, where they learn more about their local heritage and the impact of our lives on future generations. These help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are diligent in checking that staff and visitors are safe to work with pupils. All the required safeguarding training is fully in place. Staff understand the school's processes for referring any concerns. Leaders respond swiftly and work well with other professional agencies to keep pupils safe.

Pupils know how to stay safe in different situations. They told us how to avoid danger when working online, as well as how to evacuate the school safely in an emergency. Staff also help pupils to manage their emotional and mental health well.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are weaknesses in the school's reading and phonics programme. These prevent pupils from reading fluently and confidently. Leaders must ensure that a robust reading and phonics programme is implemented, along with accurate assessment, to ensure that all pupils learn to read well, including in Reception.
- The curriculum is not well planned or designed to enable pupils to acquire sufficiently deep knowledge in many subjects, from Reception to Year 6. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge, including vocabulary. Leaders need to ensure that the school's curricular model builds knowledge and skills sequentially and at the right time, so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Some leaders do not have sufficient expertise in their subjects or areas of responsibility. This means that they find it difficult to hold others to account, or evaluate accurately, which weakens the capacity to improve. Leaders need to ensure that there is a comprehensive plan to develop leaders' knowledge and confidence for subject leadership.

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 are the school and you are 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	140770
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10020051
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rt Hon. Lord Burnett
Headteacher	Gerardine Christopher
Website	www.stmaryjosephswool.dorset.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	7–8 November 2011

Information about this school

- St Mary and St Joseph’s Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2014. It is a member of Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust.
- When its predecessor school, St Mary’s Catholic First School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school’s most recent section 48 inspection was in February 2017.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We worked with many leaders during the course of the inspection. These included the headteacher, curriculum leaders for English, mathematics, science, history, music and physical education (PE), and the special educational needs coordinator.
- We also met with an emotional literacy support adviser and the chair of the local governing board. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the chief executive officer and met the school’s link education and standards manager.

- We scrutinised the school’s safeguarding records, including the single central record, and evaluated the effectiveness of the school’s safeguarding procedures. This involved talking to staff and pupils about their understanding of safeguarding, bullying and health and safety.
- We undertook deep dives in these subjects: reading, history, mathematics and science. This involved visiting lessons, talking to pupils, looking at pupils’ work and talking to teachers. On the second day, we also looked at music, PE and outdoor education.
- We checked Parent View, Ofsted’s online survey, and took account of these views during the inspection.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Susan Horsnell

Ofsted Inspector

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