

# Inspection of a good school: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Aylesham

Ackholt Road, Aylesham, Canterbury, Kent CT3 3AS

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Inspection date:

2 November 2021

## Outcome

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Aylesham continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Joseph's receive a warm welcome to school every day. For them, school is a place where they make friends, feel safe and enjoy learning. Pupils know what bullying is and the different forms it can take. They rarely fall out with each other and trust adults to help them if they need it.

Pupils enjoy the rewards they earn for behaving well. They like the house point system and say that it helps to create a strong sense of teamwork. Teachers expect pupils to behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils who find it hard to consistently follow the school's behaviour rules are supported well. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive.

Leaders ensure that pupils from all backgrounds are welcomed. There is a strong sense of community, and the school plays an important role in the life of the village. Staff are proud to work at the school and care deeply about the pupils they teach.

Pupils love the excitement of travelling on the train during school visits to places further afield. These include visits to the beach, Canterbury and beyond. Pupils are eager to take on leadership responsibilities, such as house captains, well-being champions and learning mentors.

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

Leaders have made sure that learning to read is a high priority in the school. Children in the early years get off to a strong start learning phonics, and this continues into key stage 1. The books that pupils read at home match the sounds that they learn in school. Pupils enjoy reading and listening to stories, rhymes and poems. Regular visits to the local library and a good choice of books in school help inspire pupils to read. Staff keep a close eye on how well pupils are learning to read and spot anyone who is falling behind. Well-trained staff help these pupils to catch up.

The mathematics curriculum is well planned and sequenced from the early years through to Year 6. Across the school, teachers explain new learning clearly. They use their good subject knowledge to present information in simple ways that pupils can understand. Teachers also use assessment well to check that pupils remember the curriculum. When needed, they make adjustments to what they teach. Over time, pupils are achieving well and building their knowledge securely.

Leaders and staff work together to ensure that the wider curriculum is broad and interesting for pupils. The school motto 'to love learning' underpins and guides curriculum planning. Leaders design opportunities for pupils to learn in interesting ways. For example, when learning about fossils, pupils in Year 1 took part in a live lesson with experts from the Natural History Museum.

Leaders are continuing to make improvements to subjects in the wider curriculum. They know that the knowledge pupils need to learn is not yet identified well enough. Teachers are not always clear about what pupils should learn in different subjects. This means that some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and, over time, they do not build their knowledge securely.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) makes sure that any additional needs are quickly identified. Teachers help pupils with SEND to be successful with their learning. Extra support is provided for pupils who need it. However, some parents of children who have SEND expressed some concern about the school's communication. They feel that they do not know enough about the support their children receive in school.

Pupils enjoy learning, behave well and try their best. Leaders provide well for and consider carefully pupils' personal development. Pupils learn to be respectful and tolerant. Children in the early years explore similarities and differences between themselves and their peers. As they grow older, pupils learn about different beliefs and faiths. They learn how to contribute to their community and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders, governors and directors of the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership are committed to taking care of the staff. Careful consideration is given to staff's workload and well-being. Staff are grateful for leaders' support and frequently refer to being part of a 'family' at St Joseph's.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Systems for identifying and reporting safeguarding issues are robust. Staff are well trained and know how to spot any signs of abuse. Leaders take quick and effective action to support pupils who may be at risk. They work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils and families get the help that they need.

The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of how to be safe online. They also know where to go to get help if they need it. Pupils understand about road safety, 'stranger danger' and fire safety.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have not yet fully identified the key knowledge they want pupils to learn in many foundation subjects. This means that teachers are not clear enough about the precise knowledge that pupils should learn and remember. Leaders need to make sure that subject-specific knowledge is clearly identified in the school's curriculum so that teachers have clearer guidance about what pupils should learn and remember. It is clear that leaders are already working to address this issue. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- Some parents of children who have SEND are unclear about how the school supports their children. As a result, they are worried that their children are not getting the help that they need. Leaders need to make sure they strengthen their communication with these parents and gain their trust.

## **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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, to be good in October 2010.

## **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.

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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140520
<b>Local authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211075
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	116
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Michael Powis
<b>Principal</b>	Hester Seager-Fleming (Principal) Karen Riddell (Executive principal)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjosephs-aylesham.co.uk">www.stjosephs-aylesham.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 December 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is one of 24 schools in the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership (multi-academy trust). The trust has delegated some responsibilities to a local governing body and an executive governing body. This is set out in the trust's scheme of delegation.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased and the school has grown in size from four to five classes. Due to the increase in the number of pupils on roll, plans are underway for the school to become a one-form entry primary school.
- The principal and executive principal took up their positions in September 2019.
- The SENCo joined the school in September 2021.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, the SENCo and other school staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the academy trust, members of the local governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors considered 15 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with some parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff during meetings with them. Inspectors also took into account pupils' views through meetings with them.

### **Inspection team**

James Freeston, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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