

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bracknell

Gipsy Lane, Bracknell Forest, Berkshire, RG12 9AP

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 January 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected 14 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's religious values provide a firm framework for its friendly, welcoming and inclusive atmosphere. Pupils are interested in visitors and speak enthusiastically about their school. 'Welcome monitors' greet visitors to the classrooms warmly, politely and with a smile. Pupils say that everyone gets on very well together. They happily recited the school motto to inspectors: 'We are growing on our journey of achievement with Jesus in our hearts, heads and hands.'

Pupils are understandably proud of their school. One pupil said, 'there is something special about this school'. Pupils say that they enjoy school because their teachers make learning interesting and fun. They treat adults and each other with respect. Pupils usually listen closely to their teachers during lessons and work carefully in their books. Adults expect all pupils to work hard, and most do.

Pupils behave sensibly and responsibly during breaktimes and when moving around the school. They are confident that they can rely on adults to keep them safe. Pupils say that any incidents of bullying are taken seriously and sorted out properly. School records confirm that this is the case.

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

The headteacher and her leadership team have paid particularly close attention to the needs of pupils, families and staff alike since the start of the pandemic. Subject leaders and teachers have worked hard to ensure a suitable curriculum for those pupils learning at home during the lockdowns. A focus on pupils' well-being, with sensitive support for those who are feeling anxious, continues to help pupils to settle back into school life. One parent's comment reflected the views of others: 'The care and love the teachers provide is exceptional.' Most pupils are settled, happy and pleased to be back. Parents appreciate the lengths taken by staff to support their children during the lockdowns. One said, 'The school has done incredibly well in its response to the pandemic and the extra pressure this has caused.'

Leaders have made thoughtful adjustments to the curriculum during the pandemic. The school assesses pupils' progress regularly to gauge how well they are catching up with learning missed during the lockdowns. Assessments at the end of the autumn term indicate promising signs of recovery in pupils' learning. However, leaders recognise that further work is needed if pupils are to be fully prepared for the next stage of their education. They are confident that pupils will have covered the full curriculum by the end of the summer term.

The school's broad, balanced and well-established curriculum ensures that most pupils achieve well. However, sometimes pupils who find learning more difficult, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make less progress than they should. This is because the curriculum is not always adapted to

their needs fully enough. When this is the case, some pupils struggle to maintain focus in lessons, although this rarely disturbs others.

Most pupils become accomplished readers. A new phonics programme is securely established. The pandemic means that some pupils have fallen behind in reading. Extra support for these pupils is helping them to catch up quickly. Teachers read from a carefully selected range of books which introduce pupils to a broad range of literature. The school library provides a wide range of high-quality texts for pupils to enjoy.

Leaders give pupils' personal development a high priority. Pupils study a range of world religions and learn to respect the views and beliefs of others. An impressive range of trips, visitors and activities make a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. Special arrangements during the pandemic, such as virtual museum visits, helped to keep pupils' interest alight when in-person trips were not possible.

Staff morale is strong. Leaders work constructively with staff and recognise their hard work and commitment. Members of staff who spoke with inspectors said that they appreciate leaders' support and advice. All those who completed Ofsted's survey said that they are proud to be a member of staff.

Subject leaders are passionate about their subjects of responsibility. They are keen to play their part in the school's development and provide helpful guidance for their colleagues. However, their checks on how well the curriculum is being taught, and its impact on pupils' learning, are not sufficiently well established. As a result, subject leaders are not always clear enough about where improvements in teaching are needed, or how these will be addressed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils' safety underpins school life at St Joseph's. Staff pay close attention to pupils' safety and welfare. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum contributes well to pupils' understanding of what they can do to keep safe. Leaders make sure that staff feel confident and comfortable about reporting any concerns. Key safeguarding documents are maintained centrally so that they can be accessed easily. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding matters and act swiftly if they are worried about a pupil. The school's well-maintained safeguarding records indicate the careful attention given to pupils' safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not always adapted well enough to support all pupils' needs. This is particularly so for pupils who find learning more difficult, including those with SEND. Staff want to make sure that every pupil learns well. However,

they do not always have the subject knowledge or expertise needed to adapt the curriculum to ensure that this is the case. This means that pupils are sometimes given work which is unsuitable because it is too hard for them to complete. Some lose focus during lessons as a result. Leaders should provide training and guidance for staff so that they know how to make suitable adaptations to the curriculum and all pupils are able to get on well with the work set in lessons.

- Subject leaders' roles in monitoring their subjects of responsibility are underdeveloped. This means that they are not always clear enough about how well some aspects of the curriculum are being taught, how well pupils are learning, or about improvements needed. Leaders have suitable plans in place to develop subject leaders' roles. They should make sure that subject leaders receive the support needed to improve this aspect of their work.

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

Unique reference number	110027
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10211792
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided/Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Paul Sutton
Headteacher	Juanita Dunlop
Website	http://www.stjosephsbracknell.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2007, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Roman Catholic school with a Catholic faith. The school is subject to section 48 inspections of the school's religious character. The last section 48 inspection took place in 2018.
- The headteacher is currently supporting another primary school. She is in St Joseph's Catholic Primary School for two and a half days a week.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. They spoke with a range of staff at different times during the inspection. They also held an online meeting with four governors, including the chair of

governors. Inspectors also met with a local authority representative and had a telephone discussion with a representative from the diocese.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, history and Spanish. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, held a discussion with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of safeguarding records and documents, including the single central record. They also met with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL, reviewed the school's safeguarding records, and spoke with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors considered 86 responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered 30 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their views of the school, as well as speaking with pupils informally during playtimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Julie Sackett, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kirstine Boon

Ofsted Inspector

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