

# Inspection of a good school: Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School

Wades Place, Poplar, London E14 0DE

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Inspection dates:

28 and 29 September 2022

## **Outcome**

Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a welcoming and thoroughly inclusive place to learn. Pupils are proud to belong to the school community.

Pupils are happy and enjoy learning. They work well together. Leaders use many well-planned strategies to support pupils' wider development. The arts are at the heart of school life. Leaders organise many opportunities for pupils to come together and reflect, including through music assemblies and singing.

Leaders have prioritised developing pupils' ability to express themselves clearly and with confidence. This is evident across the school. For example, leaders and staff expect pupils to answer questions using subject vocabulary and in full sentences. This approach also helps pupils when they come to record their thinking and ideas in writing. Overall, pupils achieve well and are successfully prepared for their next steps at secondary school.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils in all areas of their learning. Pupils work hard and want to do well. They behave sensibly and show mature attitudes towards their learning. Pupils understand their responsibility to behave with kindness and respect. They said that bullying is not tolerated. On the rare occasions that bullying does happen, staff deal with it quickly. Pupils are kept safe and feel safe in school.

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

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), study a curriculum that matches the breadth and scope of the national curriculum. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified well and staff make adjustments to help these pupils to learn successfully.

Leaders have considered the knowledge that they want pupils to learn, including in the early years. The curriculum in most subjects is well designed. It builds in carefully planned opportunities for pupils to revisit and remember important knowledge and skills.

In mathematics, for example, pupils regularly recap prior learning. As a result, all pupils, including those with SEND, have the required knowledge to tackle more complex ideas.

However, leaders' curriculum thinking is more established in some subjects, for instance mathematics and reading, than it is in others. In a few curriculum areas, such as music, leaders have not clearly defined the building blocks of knowledge that pupils need to make progress through the curriculum. Leaders are in the process of completing this work. They have also drawn up clear plans to check how well the changes they make are working in practice.

Leaders prioritise reading right from the moment children start school. The early reading curriculum is well structured and ambitious. As a result, pupils develop the phonics knowledge they need to read confidently and accurately. Leaders make sure that books and other reading materials are carefully matched to the sounds that pupils learn. Teachers are quick to spot and support any pupils who are falling behind.

Pupils enjoy reading and by the end of Year 6, they have read a wide range of books and texts. Pupils are keen to talk about the books that they enjoy. Staff use a range of ways to support parents with helping their children to read at home.

Leaders provide teachers with helpful and regular training to support them to deliver the curriculum. This enables teachers to have secure subject knowledge. Leaders have also carefully considered how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected pupils' learning. They make sure that teachers tackle any gaps or misconceptions in pupils' knowledge. Sometimes, however, teachers do not use what they know from checks on learning to build and extend pupils' knowledge layer by layer. When this happens, it can make it harder for pupils to deepen their understanding successfully.

Staff expect pupils to behave well and to concentrate on their work. They deal with any off-task behaviour quickly and effectively. This ensures classrooms are calm and positive places in which to learn.

Leaders provide a range of cultural experiences to support pupils' wider development. These experiences often link to the curriculum. For instance, in the early years, children visit the seaside as part of their topic on travel. Staff offer a range of after-school activities, including sports and creative clubs. Pupils enjoy attending these, and commented that they help them to explore their different talents and interests. Pupils know that staff care about their well-being. For example, leaders have invested in a team of on-site therapists as part of the school's work to support pupils' positive mental health.

Leaders and governors help staff to manage their workload effectively. They promote staff well-being with great thought and care. Staff said that they appreciate the wealth of support provided by school leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors ensure that the safety and well-being of pupils are a priority. Staff receive appropriate information and training on safeguarding. They use the school's systems to raise and follow up on concerns. Pupils who may be vulnerable are identified and supported promptly. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to further understand and support pupils' needs.

Pupils learn about staying safe in their day-to-day lives, including safe behaviour online. They know who they can speak to if they feel worried or have concerns.

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

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

- In a few of the foundation subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking is at an earlier stage of development. While leaders are clear about the intended end points for pupils' learning, they have not set out precisely how pupils need to develop their knowledge in order to achieve these long-term aims. Leaders should continue to refine and adapt their curriculum thinking so that pupils acquire the necessary knowledge to work towards the clearly defined curriculum goals in all subjects.
- Occasionally, teachers do not support pupils to build on what they have learned previously. This can reduce how well pupils deepen their knowledge over time. Leaders need to provide additional training and support for teachers in knowing when and how to adapt their teaching for all pupils.

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

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2017.

## 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.

## 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>	139423
<b>Local authority</b>	Tower Hamlets
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240777
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	454
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jo Faulkner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Patrick Devereux
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.olsj.towerhamlets.sch.uk">www.olsj.towerhamlets.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Our Lady and St Joseph Catholic Primary School is an above average-sized primary school.
- The school opened in September 2014, following the amalgamation of two single-form entry schools, Holy Family Catholic Primary School, Poplar and Our Lady Catholic Primary School, Limehouse.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. He also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and music. These involved discussions with curriculum leaders and teachers, visits to

lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Other subjects were also considered.

- The inspector analysed safeguarding documentation, including the single central record of pre-employment checks. He also reviewed a range of documents, including leaders' development plans and school policies.
- The inspector considered the replies to Ofsted Parent View and the online surveys for pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

David Boyle, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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