

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School B/S

Great Hadham Road, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire CM23 2NL

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 December 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Joseph's are happy and safe. They show pride in their school. They act out the Christian values of respect and tolerance, which supports everyone to feel included. Pupils enjoy learning about the world around them. They compare other people's experiences to their own to understand and learn about difference.

Pupils behave well in lessons and during playtimes. Bullying rarely happens, but if it does, adults sort it out. Pupils overwhelmingly say that their peers at the school are kind. They know the expectations in place and gently remind each other of the rules.

Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities linked to the curriculum and the Catholic faith. Pupils take on responsibilities to help shape the future of their school and community. These include the chaplaincy committee and sports captain roles.

Addressing issues of sustainability is a golden thread running through the school. Pupils are reflective and mature when considering how their actions affect the world.

Pupils benefit from celebrations and awards that recognise their qualities and achievements. These include the 'Jack Fielder achievement award' for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and the 'Franciscan value award'.

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

Leaders have planned a curriculum with high expectations. The curriculum has a sharp focus on pupils learning new vocabulary and putting this into practice through their speaking and writing. The majority of the curriculum is planned in detail, highlighting the order of skills and knowledge to be taught. Teachers revisit this knowledge to check pupils are remembering what they have learned. In a few subjects, leaders have not provided as much detail. This can lead to some teachers missing out key knowledge that pupils need. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their understanding of these subjects.

Leaders' reading curriculum introduces pupils to a wide range of texts. Pupils are taught specific skills to improve their understanding of what they are reading. Staff have received training in how to teach phonics and reading. As a result, they teach reading consistently well in alignment with leaders' plans. Leaders have correctly identified a small but significant number of pupils, including pupils with SEND, who are struggling to learn to read. The extra sessions that are in place for these pupils do not follow a structured or organised approach. Consequently, these pupils are not catching up quickly enough.

Leaders have implemented some positive changes across the school for pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND have specialist equipment to support their learning when needed. Pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs are well supported.

These pupils are making excellent progress because of the well-planned pastoral support. However, as with other pupils in key stage 1 who find reading and writing difficult, these pupils are not given the correct help they need to catch up. This is having an impact on their ability to learn some aspects of the wider curriculum.

Children in the early years benefit from the recent changes to the curriculum. Children in the Nursery are taught to listen to sounds in words they hear. This skill is further built upon during the Reception Year. Children use their knowledge of phonics and words to independently write messages to each other. Adults model new vocabulary and sentences well to the children. Adults creatively link these activities directly to the planned curriculum and the children's interests.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are very positive. Staff know pupils well and relationships are strong. Leaders place an overarching focus on pupils' personal development. There are a wealth of opportunities and meaningful enrichment activities linked to the catholic faith and the wider world. Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND or who are disadvantaged benefit equally well from these. This includes enterprise and STEM week, outdoor learning club and chaplaincy work. Music tuition, art club and roles on the school council help develop all pupils' character for the future.

The governing board is mindful of the well-being and workload of staff. It routinely ensures that any additional expectations from the trustees are necessary and of benefit to pupils, staff and leaders. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive from leaders.

The recently formed multi-academy trust has begun to hold leaders to account more systematically than previously. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this additional rigour. Trustees, governors and the local authority know the strengths in the quality of education. They have an accurate understanding of how the school can improve but have not monitored leaders' progress in these areas to date.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that keeping pupils safe is a priority for all staff. Staff use reporting procedures well and leaders are quick to respond to concerns. Leaders ensure appropriate support is in place for the families and pupils that need it.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, both in their community and when online. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions if they are unsure about something. Staff answer pupils with sensitivity. Pupils can also use the worry box as a form of communication.

All suitability checks during and after recruitment for staff are in place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils in key stage 1 who are struggling at the early stages of reading, including some with SEND, do not have the appropriate interventions and support to catch up. This means these pupils are not achieving as well as they could in reading or writing. Leaders must ensure staff have the training to know how to plan and deliver appropriate interventions and support so that pupils who fall behind in reading catch up quickly.
- Leaders of some curriculum subjects do not clearly identify all the skills and knowledge pupils need to learn. This means that less experienced staff do not always know what knowledge has been taught already or needs to come next. Leaders must ensure that they outline precisely what should be taught across the whole curriculum.

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

Unique reference number	148491
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10242274
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	398
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Fr Peter Harris
Headteacher	Peter Coldwell
Website	www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has a Christian character. The religious aspects of the school's provision were last inspected in July 2019 under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.
- The school converted to become an academy in September 2021.
- The school has been part of the St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust since it was formed in September 2021.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and the chief executive officer.

Inspectors met with the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.

- Meetings were held with three members of the local governing board and the school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and science. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with leaders and pupils about personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education and health education.
- The team inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors spoke to pupils in the playground and the lunch hall.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors checked the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks, considered the safeguarding policy and spoke to staff and pupils. The lead inspector looked at case files and discussed a range of safeguarding records with the designated safeguarding leads.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation relating to behaviour, attendance and SEND. Minutes of the local governor body and trustee minutes were also scrutinised.
- The lead inspector considered the views of parents, including 116 responses from parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 116 free-text responses submitted during the inspection. The lead inspector reviewed 34 responses to the online staff survey. There were no responses to the online pupil survey to consider.

Inspection team

Isabel Davis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Crane

Ofsted Inspector

Michele Geddes

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022