

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

Davey Drive, Hollingdean, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 7BF

Inspection date: 13 December 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have high expectations. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Pupils are happy and safe. They go out of their way to give everyone a helping hand. Pupils are proud of their welcoming community. As a Year 1 pupil said, 'It does not matter who you are or who you like. We are all equal in our unique individual ways.'

Pupils look forward to the after-school clubs. They enjoy learning new skills, such as karate, street dancing and gymnastics. Pupils care deeply about the environment. They are keen to play their part to raise awareness of conservation in the area. Pupils are proud to give others the recycled festive cards they have made, bringing joy in the process. They plant trees in the school to support the local eco system. Pupils also grow flowers to attract bees and bugs to the area.

Pupils behave well. They trust staff and know that any incidents of bullying will be dealt with quickly. Pupils know about the importance of exercise and healthy eating. For instance, they participate enthusiastically in the 'active advent' by carrying out daily challenges to keep fit. Pupils know how to look after their mental and emotional well-being.

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

Leaders have created a school that truly sits at the heart of the community it serves. They ensure that pupils learn a broad and engaging curriculum. Pupils look forward to learning. They like the wide range of trips and experiences that bring their learning to life. This includes visits to the museum, art galleries, Brighton Pavilion, local parks and the railway station. Leaders and staff are ambitious for all pupils to overcome any challenges so that they fulfil their potential. They provide opportunities for pupils to work with a range of professionals and learn about different careers they may wish to pursue. Leaders take every opportunity to promote good attendance. However, there is a small proportion of pupils who do not attend regularly and do not benefit fully from all that the school has to offer. Leaders are taking firm and decisive action to address this.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They appreciate the support and care leaders provide. The governing body is knowledgeable. They bring a useful range of skills and expertise to support and challenge leaders in equal measure. As a result, governors know well what needs to improve further in the quality of education.

Reading is a high priority. Across the school, the love of reading is well established. Children in early years are avid readers. They cannot wait to listen to the stories staff read and share. Staff successfully make sure that the youngest pupils read books that help them practise their phonics sounds and strategies. However, this is not the case for the small number of older pupils who are still at the early stages of learning to read. This means that these pupils are not being supported sufficiently well to become confident readers.

Leaders make sure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) are identified accurately. In most subjects, the curriculum is well structured and organised so that all pupils learn the important knowledge in a logical order. Leaders have identified that in some subjects, such as design technology and history, teachers do not have clear information on what pupils should learn step by step. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. This starts in the early years, where children successfully learn and play together. Pupils show respect and empathy for others. They value people from religions and cultures that are different to their own. Pupils discuss topics such as immigration, gender identity and disability with consideration and maturity. They regularly organise collections for the charities they support as well as the local food bank. Pupils enjoy taking part in the local church celebrations, such as the recent carol service. During the inspection, pupils in the younger years, proudly showcased their acting and singing talents by taking part in the nativity play.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have regular and appropriate safeguarding training. The procedures for identifying and reporting concerns are clear. Leaders make sure that all staff are suitable to work with children. They work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families receive the support that they need. Pupils know how to keep safe, including when online. They confidently share their slightest concerns with staff via the 'worry box' in their classes and on the school's website.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not made sure that the curriculum in some of the foundation subjects is well sequenced and coherent. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum so that it clearly sets out the order in which pupils should learn the essential knowledge.

- Some pupils do not attend school regularly. They miss out on important learning and school experiences. Leaders need to ensure that the strategies they have introduced are implemented consistently to improve the attendance of pupils, particularly those who are persistently absent.
- For a minority of older pupils, the books they read are too hard. This risks these pupils not catching up quickly enough. Leaders need to make sure that the books these pupils read, help them practise their phonics knowledge so that they become fluent and confident readers.

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 November 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

Unique reference number	114542
Local authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	10256465
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	155
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Tad Matus
Headteacher	Gillian Foan
Website	www.st-josephs.brighton-hove.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is a voluntary-aided Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. As a school with a religious character, the school was last inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in February 2022.
- The school is not currently using 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and pupils. The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair. She spoke on the telephone with an officer from Brighton and Hove local authority. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone with the director of education from the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with

subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and looked at a sample of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.

- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. Inspectors also talked to a range of staff and some pupils informally, including during social times.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey. They also met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and spoke to a range of staff about their views of the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and the additional free-text responses.

Inspection team

Shazia Akram, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Carl McCarthy

His Majesty's Inspector

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