

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Northfleet

Springhead Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent DA11 9QZ

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Northfleet under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Northfleet to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this school. Friendships are important here. There is a genuine warmth about the welcome everyone receives. Pupils see the school as a safe place. Levels of attendance are high, as are levels of respect for others and for the multitude of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds that make up the family of St Joseph's. Pupils who struggle in any way are supported with kindness and understanding by their peers and by staff alike.

Pupils 'own' their own list of expectations for 'positive behaviour' and 'playing a part'. Written and agreed by the school council, these guidelines underpin all aspects of school life. Crucially, they build on the high aspirations of staff, making for purposeful classrooms and a determined yet caring community spirit across all phases of the school.

Pupils know they come here to learn. They enjoy acquiring new knowledge, but also understand the importance of supporting each other to achieve their best. A group of older boys unexpectedly revealed after a music lesson that they love playing the recorder. It was not necessarily the instrument that they liked, but the 'teamwork' required to produce the impressively harmonious whole-class performance the inspector had enjoyed earlier that afternoon.

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

New leaders have injected fresh purpose and energy into this already excellent school. The senior leadership team members, not all of whom are new to the school, have quickly settled to their work of seeking continuous improvement in all aspects of provision. Middle leaders are also talented and hard-working. Their contribution to ensuring that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils is particularly worthy of note. This includes in the school's early years phase, where the curriculum is well thought through and closely linked to what will follow when children progress to Year 1.

This is an outward-looking school. Despite its seemingly small stature, much of the work that goes on here is of a very high quality. Teaching and support staff are dedicated. They are not afraid to look further afield to identify good practice, and use the expertise available through partnership schools or external experts to improve their work. This impacts particularly positively on the achievements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Recent adaptations to the science and art curriculum are also good examples of staff constantly looking to improve. The result of this is a rich curriculum that takes every pupil on a journey of discovery, from day one in Reception through to their transition to secondary school.

A striking characteristic of the curriculum is its breadth and quality of learning in subjects such as music and French. Pupils love to sing, and play a variety of instruments. Often, this is in whole-class groups, where pupils learn to evaluate and improve their own performances. Pupils learn French from the beginning of Year 1,

because leaders want them to achieve well before they move to secondary school. Some subjects are planned and delivered by subject specialists. Others are taught by class teachers, who benefit from a wide range of professional development to ensure that they are well equipped to teach the key knowledge pupils need to know.

The school's programme to teach reading is well established. Pupils love books, many of which are chosen to celebrate the rich heritage of the many different backgrounds they come from. Pupils also love to reason and solve mathematical problems. Strong leadership of English and mathematics ensures that these core subjects are taught well. This means that pupils enjoy high degrees of success as they move through the school.

Pupils' personal development is another strength of this outstanding school. Consequently, pupils are kind, caring, resilient and thoughtful. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds are supported well. Expectations of their success are equally high. A bespoke personal, social and health education programme is in place. Pupils learn about relationships, diversity and difference in an age-appropriate way. Parents who replied to Ofsted Parent View through free text were also positive about the care their children receive. The large majority would recommend the school, although a few would like communication to be better.

Governance of the school is multilayered, and effective in providing the support and challenge leaders need as they strive for excellence. The chair of the local governing committee and the chief executive officer of the partnership know the school equally well. Their work together with the archdiocese to appoint new executive and academy principals last year has been instrumental in the school's ongoing success.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff at all levels take their responsibilities to safeguard children seriously. They understand that the smallest piece of information could be useful in identifying potential risks to children. Training is up to date, rigorous and ongoing. Staff know what to do if they have concerns. Leaders act when they need to. Relationships with outside agencies are positive. Appropriate recruitment processes and checks on adults in the school are in place. Pupils know whom to talk to if they have worries or concerns. They particularly appreciate the 'stay safe team', who act quickly to address any concerns, large or small.

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	141580
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10256316
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Powis
Principal	Patrina Begley (Executive Principal) Andrew Baldock (Principal)
Website	www.st-josephs-northfleet.kent.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy in December 2014, when it joined the Kent Catholic Schools' Partnership. There are currently 25 schools in the partnership, all of which are part of the Archdiocese of Southwark.
- The executive principal and the school principal took up their substantive posts in April 2022 and September 2022 respectively.
- As a Catholic school, the school's last denominational inspection took place in January 2020.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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.

- Inspectors held a wide range of meetings with both the executive and school principals, members of the school’s wider leadership team, curriculum leaders and teaching and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the local governing committee. He also met with the chief executive officer and the school’s improvement adviser, both representing the Kent Catholic Schools’ Partnership.
- The lead inspector held an online meeting with a representative of the Archdiocese of Southwark.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and music. Deep dives included visiting lessons, looking at pupils’ work and talking to leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors also considered elements of other curriculum subjects in making their judgement on the quality of education the school provides.
- The lead inspector heard pupils from Years 1 and 3 read to a member of staff.
- Inspectors checked a range of policies and documents, including the school’s single central record. They also reviewed the school’s website and other records regarding the welfare, health and safety of pupils and staff.
- Inspectors gathered evidence to explore the impact of pupils’ behaviour, the school’s wider curriculum offer and how leaders support staff with their workload.
- Pupils were talked to throughout the inspection to gain their views about the school. The lead inspector also met formally with representatives of the school council.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were also considered through Ofsted’s confidential staff survey.

Inspection team

Clive Close, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Catherine Hylands

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 2023