

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

Springfield Road, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire ST14 7JX

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 January 2023

Outcome

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve exceptionally well and thrive at St Joseph's. This is because leaders and staff want the best of the best for all pupils. Parents said that their children grow into kind, well-rounded young people, who care about their friends and community.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) respond exceptionally well to the high expectations of leaders and staff for their academic achievement and behaviour. Behaviour in classes and around school is exemplary.

The curriculum is well planned and taught with consistency. Pupils remember important information because teachers make sure they regularly practise recalling it. Pupils enjoy school; they flourish as inquisitive and knowledgeable learners.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of after-school clubs, including 'Mini Vinnies', choir, gardening club, history and arts and crafts.

Pupils are polite and respectful. Older pupils buddy with younger pupils as prayer partners and buddy readers. Pupils care for each other exceptionally well. The school motto of 'Love and Serve' shines through the school. Pupils are confident they can go to any staff member to talk about anything that is worrying them. If bullying does happen, staff are quick to resolve it.

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

Leaders at St Joseph's have designed a very ambitious and aspirational curriculum for pupils. Pupils gain from the rich opportunities in the curriculum. Pupils are excited to talk about learning. They brim with positivity about the books they read and how practical learning is.

Subject leaders have identified the most important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember over time. Teachers know the curriculum well. Pupils develop a confident grasp of curriculum knowledge and skills, achieving well across the curriculum.

Teachers build expertly on what pupils know when they share new learning. Children use resources to help them learn right from the start in early years. For example, in Reception, when children were confident reciting numbers up to 10, they counted spots on dice to reinforce their learning. Pupils are keen and eager to share their knowledge, they listen when others speak.

Leaders prioritise the teaching of subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils acquire new vocabulary across the curriculum quickly. Teachers check that pupils understand and can use new words in context. For example, pupils in Year 5 explain time periods in history and confidently use words associated with different eras in history. Good use is made of Staffordshire history when studying the Victorians. Pupils are knowledgeable about the impact Josiah Wedgwood had in supporting the abolition of slavery. Pupils debate issues with maturity.

Leaders focus on reading as a gateway to learning. They have made sure that St Joseph's is a community where staff and pupils share a love of reading. Leaders regularly update staff to ensure that staff have expertise needed to teaching reading exceptionally well. In the early years, staff are highly skilled in getting children off to a rapid start in reading. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know. Leaders make sure that readers who need extra help are quickly identified and get effective support so that they can quickly catch up with their peers.

Reading is made exciting through dynamic daily phonics and reading-for-pleasure sessions across the school. Pupils access high-quality reading materials in every classroom. Year 5 and 6 librarians help younger pupils choose a book for pleasure to share with an adult at home. As a result, all pupils swiftly learn to read.

Leaders and staff know the pupils well. Pupils with SEND are quickly identified. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND are well supported so that they can access the same curriculum as other pupils. Leaders make sure that these pupils are fully included in all aspects of life at St Joseph's. Along with other pupils, they benefit from the wide range of opportunities available, including visits, workshops, residential experiences and inter-school events.

Pupils in lessons are enthusiastic learners. They listen attentively to teachers and low-level disruption is very rare. Friendships and warm relationships are actively encouraged. Pupils say teachers help them to learn about looking after their mental health.

Staff are proud to work at St Joseph's. They value the training and coaching they receive within the school and across the multi-academy trust. They apply this learning effectively. Staff say leaders take account of their workload and support their mental well-being. Staff are extremely positive about the culture and ethos of the school.

The multi-academy trust consists of highly effective 'critical friends' who carefully monitor the priorities of the school. The trust brings expertise across the schools together, to ensure strategic and focused improvement. The best interests of the pupils are central to the work of the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure there is a strong culture of safeguarding in all aspects of school life.

Staff receive regular training, including weekly updates on safeguarding. Staff know the pupils well. They are observant to signs of neglect or harm. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about pupils. Leaders act quickly to help get the right support for pupils and their families.

Pupils and parents receive regular updates on how to keep safe online, both in school and out of school.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2013.

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	138727
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10256976
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	187
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ken Wilson
Principal	Louise Sassi
Website	www.st-josephs-uttoxeter.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of a multi-academy trust, The Painsley Catholic Academy.
- This Catholic school is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The most recent s48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in June 2019. The school manages a before- and after-school provision.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the principal, vice principal, subject leaders, early years leader, and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector met with the chair, vice chair and chief executive officer of the trust and the chair of the local governing board.

- During the inspection, the inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and history. The inspector visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, talked to pupils, talked to staff about the way the subjects were planned and taught and observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector met with subject leaders in other foundation subjects, including geography, art, design and technology and music.
- The inspector looked at school documents, including information about the school curriculum, behaviour, attendance and governors' minutes.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the school's policies and procedures. She met with safeguarding leaders and spoke to pupils and staff.
- The inspector reviewed information published on the school's website.
- Pupils' behaviour was observed around school, in classes and at playtime and lunchtime.
- The inspector reviewed and discussed records of pupils' attendance.
- The inspector spoke with a representative for the Diocese of Birmingham.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the first day of the inspection. She reviewed responses to Ofsted Parent View and also considered the free-text comments. The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and the responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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