

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

155 Aldershot Road, Guildford, Surrey GU2 8YH

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 February 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming and inclusive school where there are caring relationships. The vision of 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' threads through every part of the school's work. There is a determined focus to 'capture hearts, inspire minds and awaken souls'.

Pupils feel happy, safe and enjoy coming to school. They respect how some people can be different from them. Bullying is rare and pupils rightly trust staff to resolve it quickly if it does occur. Staff model high standards for behaviour and pupils expect each other to behave well. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and at playtimes.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils to achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy learning a range of subjects. Teachers skilfully adapt learning to meet the needs of pupils. The wide range of clubs, such as the 'allotment' and athletics club, help pupils learn new skills. Pupils enjoy extra responsibilities, such as being members of the 'Spiritual Council'. Through the personal, social and health education curriculum and wider experiences, pupils learn to be responsible citizens.

Parents are highly positive about the school. One parent said, 'We love this school. Together, we are a team and a family.'

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious and broad curriculum. They have mapped out the knowledge and skills that pupils will learn in nearly all subjects. However, in a small number of subjects, the curriculum is not as well sequenced as it is in others, including in early years. This means that pupils' knowledge and skills do not build as effectively as they could. An example of this is helping pupils develop their fieldwork skills in geography. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their understanding of these subjects and teachers are less confident in knowing the key knowledge to be taught.

Teachers have high expectations for pupils' learning. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery, where they are absorbed in their learning in a language- and number-rich environment. Positive attitudes to learning continue as pupils move up through the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and regularly check what pupils know and can do. Teachers ensure that adaptations are made or additional catch up is planned for pupils who need extra support. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and well-trained adults ensure that all pupils take part in lessons and understand the learning alongside their peers. Pupils are given opportunities to practise what they learn and recap on prior learning. Overall, pupils achieve well.

Reading is a high priority. Leaders have ensured that the reading curriculum is delivered effectively. Right from Nursery, a love of reading is developed. Nursery children are introduced to rhymes and stories and join in enthusiastically. In Reception, children begin the phonics programme. They learn how to read and write letters and sounds. Teaching is well structured and pupils practise the sounds they are taught. The books that pupils take home are matched well to what they are learning in school. All staff are well trained. Pupils who struggle with reading receive the help they need. Teachers read stories to their pupils enthusiastically and the well-planned reading curriculum beyond phonics ensures that pupils read rich texts. Pupils therefore develop skills to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils behave well in lessons and play cooperatively at well-supervised playtimes. Staff use a fair and consistent approach to dealing with pupils' behaviour if it falls short of leaders' high expectations. A restorative approach helps pupils develop skills to make the right choices. Effective pastoral support is in place when this is needed.

Pupils' wider development is promoted extensively. Enrichment opportunities have been carefully planned and there is an impressive range of clubs on offer. Pupils value the responsibilities that are offered to them, for example taking donations into the community. Pupils have a strong understanding of and respect for diversity and different cultures and faiths. One pupil said, 'Everyone is welcome here and nothing divides us as we are all humans.' Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders, including governors, have an ambitious vision. Governors know the school well, make regular visits and support and challenge leaders well. Leaders are proactive, committed and lead by example. They are mindful of staff workload and well-being when making decisions. Staff speak highly of the support and the professional development opportunities they receive. Parents are very supportive and value the care given from teachers to their children.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a robust safeguarding culture. Leaders, staff and governors understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Staff receive regular, up-to-date training. Leaders are proactive in auditing their practices and have strengthened reporting procedures. They keep detailed records of cases and make timely referrals. When pupils need help, leaders

work closely with families and external agencies to get pupils the support they need. Leaders carry out the necessary checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with pupils.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and offline within the planned curriculum, including learning about healthy relationships.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, it is not clear what pupils should have learned by key points. This includes identifying the key foundational knowledge in the early years. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could and teachers are less confident in the delivery of those subjects. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in every subject sets out the precise knowledge and skills that all pupils should know and by when.

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 May 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	131112
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10256473
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	629
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dave Barrett
Headteacher	Tom Collins
Website	www.stjosephsguildford.com
Date of previous inspection	9 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2019.
- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is part of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2021. The school's next section 48 will be within five school years.

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, deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to staff to discuss workload, well-being and safeguarding.

- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their learning, safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the confidential staff and pupil surveys. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and comments made by those who responded.

Inspection team

Alice Early, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Venessa McInnes

Ofsted Inspector

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