

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

Beaconsfield Road, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 1JP

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are happy and feel safe. Pupils know what bullying is. It does sometimes happen, but, when it does, pupils trust staff to deal with it quickly and effectively.

In lessons, most pupils are ready to learn. They listen respectfully to the adults and each other. They aim to do their best. Most achieve well.

Pupils understand the school values of being 'responsible, ready and respectful'. They show responsibility through roles such as being on the school council or being a house captain. This helps pupils to gain confidence when speaking in front of others. Pupils work together to raise money for charities and to visit and support their local community, for example singing at the local care home. They are proud to help others.

Pupils learn to be resilient and motivated through exploring the characteristics of learning, which they call 'learning bricks'. Pupils value the rewards that they receive such as house points and 'hands of success'.

Pupils attend a wide range of lunchtime clubs including gardening and 'Mini Vinnies', which help them develop their wider interests. Pupils take part in outside sporting competitions, which help them develop teamwork and resilience.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum that sets out clearly what pupils need to learn. This helps teachers to plan what they are going to teach and when. Teachers regularly check what pupils have learned during a topic. For example, pupils in Year 5 were able to remember some of the reasons that the Mayan empire ended. Teachers use these checks to make sure that pupils are secure in their learning. They spot where pupils have misunderstandings and usually address these quickly.

In some subjects, leaders have yet to agree what the key knowledge is that pupils will learn more about over time. In these subjects, teachers occasionally do not plan a series of lessons that build on what pupils already know and can do. This means that pupils, in these subjects, find it difficult to know how what they have learned before links to what they are learning now.

Leaders ensure that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified. Teachers carefully adapt the curriculum so that it meets the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND. Effective use is made of additional adults and other resources where required. This means that pupils with SEND access the same learning as other pupils and achieve well.

Leaders have recently introduced a new phonics programme to help pupils to learn to read and spell across the school. Staff have received training, which helps most teachers to deliver the programme well. Children in early years learn to blend words successfully and develop their communication skills. The books given to pupils in Years 1 and 2 match the sounds they are learning. As a result, most pupils learn to read with increasing fluency and confidence. However, some teachers are not yet implementing the scheme consistently. This means that some pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise their phonic skills, and therefore they are less fluent readers.

Children in the early years enjoy their carefully planned learning. They can talk confidently about what they have learned. They learn new skills, such as printing shapes to make a rocket or developing pattern through making fruit kebabs. They learn to take turns and to work together. By the end of Reception, they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

Pupils have positive attitudes toward learning. They mostly concentrate and work well in lessons. This means that time for learning is used effectively.

Leaders carefully consider pupils' personal development. A well-planned programme successfully weaves together assemblies with opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding about other faiths and cultures, as well as a focus on preparing pupils for the future. For example, pupils recently took part in a workshop about debt and how to manage their money. Pupils are respectful and kind to each other. Pupils have strong links to the local church. Leaders prioritise the well-being of pupils and staff.

Staff feel proud to work at the school. They appreciate that leaders carefully consider staff's workload. This includes those new to teaching.

Leaders and governors know the school well. Governors and the local authority provide appropriate challenge to support continued school improvement. Curriculum leaders benefit from working with staff in the schools in the federation.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training to help them understand the different risks that

pupils might face. If any of the staff have a concern about a child, they share this with leaders, using an online system. Leaders talk together about the support that pupils and their families need. They use staff in school and from outside agencies to help them get this support quickly.

Leaders make sure that all the necessary pre-appointment checks are made on staff before they work with children.

As a result of carefully planned learning, pupils know how to keep themselves safe online and in the community.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have introduced a new programme for the systematic teaching of synthetic phonics and spelling from early years to Year 6. Staff have received training, but not all teachers are implementing the scheme consistently. This means that not all pupils have sufficient opportunities to reinforce their learning during lessons, and as a result, are not developing their fluency as quickly as they could. Leaders need to ensure that the programme is fully and consistently implemented.
- In some subjects, leaders have yet to identify the key knowledge and concepts that they want pupils to know and remember over time. This limits the ability of teachers to make links to prior and future learning when planning sequences of lessons. As a result, pupils are unable to make important connections between key concepts and deepen their understanding as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that these key concepts and knowledge are identified in all subjects and that teachers plan sequences of lessons that build effectively on pupils' previous learning.

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 June 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	124763
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10255188
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	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ian Cameron and Christopher Oldroyd (Co-chairs)
Headteacher	Maria Kemble (Executive Headteacher) and Anne-Marie Price (Head of School)
Website	www.st-josephs.suffolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	7 and 8 June 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is federated with another local school.
- Leaders provide a daily breakfast and after-school club.
- Leaders currently use a registered alternative provision.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in June 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, staff, including subject leaders, and representatives from the local authority and the governing body.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector scrutinised the school's single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and met with the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector scrutinised the school's safeguarding records and spoke with pupils and staff.
- The inspector observed pupils at breaktime and lunchtime.
- The inspector considered the views of pupils, staff and parents. There were 13 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were 56 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. There were 35 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector considered 20 free-text responses from parents.

Inspection team

Heather Hann, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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