

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

Plaistow Lane, Bromley, Kent BR1 3JQ

Inspection dates:

28 February and 1 March 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' thoughtful and kind attitudes at St Joseph's School reflect its positive ethos. They do their best to live out the school's value of treating each other the way they would like to be treated. Pupils are safe and very happy at school. They know that if they have any worries or concerns, they can go to a trusted adult to help them. Pupils feel that their views are heard and considered by adults in school. On rare occasions when bullying occurs, staff deal with it promptly and effectively. Pupils behave well.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. They want every pupil to be gentle and fair, and to always do their best in their learning. The curriculum is ambitious, and pupils learn well in a wide range of subjects, especially English and mathematics.

Pupils often refer to themselves as being a part of a community. Leaders and teachers encourage pupils to work collaboratively with each other, in and out of lessons, which they do sensibly. In addition, pupils get many opportunities to work with the local community. For example, Year 5 pupils visit the local pre-school every half term, where they get to read and play with younger children.

Leaders aim to develop pupils' leadership skills. Pupils readily take on roles as play leaders, school council representatives, faith leaders and house captains. In some of these roles, they get a first-hand experience of democracy as their peers get to vote for them.

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

Leaders, with the support of the trust, have designed a curriculum which is well thought out and carefully ordered. They have identified ambitious end points that they intend for pupils to reach in a wide range of subjects. Leaders check how pupils are progressing through the planned curriculum. They use assessment information to make adjustments to the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils are well supported in developing their

knowledge. Pupils achieve well overall, and this is reflected in their national tests in English and mathematics.

In most subjects, including English and mathematics, teaching considers how best to ensure that pupils build on prior learning. In these subjects, pupils acquire secure and detailed knowledge over time. For example, in mathematics, children in Reception develop a strong understanding of numbers, at least up to 10. This secure grounding is built on layer by layer as pupils progress into Year 1 and beyond. For example, by the time pupils are in Year 5, they are confident in working with mixed numbers which include whole numbers and fractions. However, sometimes, teachers give pupils too many new things to learn and understand about a subject all in one go. This results in pupils finding it harder to remember more of what they are learning.

Typically, teachers check that pupils securely understand subject-specific vocabulary. In a few subjects, however, this is inconsistent, and pupils do not fully grasp the subject-specific vocabulary needed to make sense of their new learning. For example, in geography, pupils were not clear about the differences between climate, biomes and vegetation belts. This reduced their readiness for the learning about environmental changes and protection which came next in the curriculum.

Pupils take part in discussions in lessons. They are articulate when expressing their views and are considerate when listening to others. Disruptions in learning are rare.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. Teachers and additional adults receive guidance from leaders to ensure that they understand the needs of pupils with SEND and make appropriate adaptations.

Teaching pupils how to read is a priority for leaders and staff. From when they start in the Reception class, children begin to learn phonics. Leaders have ensured that all staff are trained in the delivery of the chosen phonics programme. Staff use the strategies that they have learned to support pupils in remembering and applying their letter sounds. Pupils build up reading fluency and accuracy through regular practise with books containing the sounds that they already know. As a result, pupils read fluently by the time they reach Year 2.

Teachers assess pupils' phonics knowledge regularly. They identify those who are falling behind at the earliest opportunity. These pupils receive additional support, and they catch up quickly. Across the school, pupils show enjoyment in reading. They get to hear adults read to them daily. Pupils recommend books to each other, and they also get to meet authors who come to visit the school.

Leaders use a wide range of strategies to support pupils' mental health and emotional well-being. Pupils take part in activities aimed at developing their self-esteem and communication and problem-solving skills. There are also a wide range of enrichment activities for all pupils, including educational visits and themed days linked to the curriculum. Pupils also like being able to go to a range of after-school clubs, and take up of these is high.

Staff appreciate that leaders operate an 'open-door' policy. They said it is easy to approach leaders if they need support with their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff work together to ensure that pupils are kept safe. They know the early warning signs that might indicate a pupil is at risk of abuse, neglect or exploitation. They make prompt referrals to external agencies to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils who are at risk.

Leaders ensure that all required checks are carried out prior to staff starting employment. New staff must complete a safeguarding induction before they can start working in school.

Pupils are taught about how to keep themselves safe at home, at school or when online. They learn about keeping safe, including strategies for using the internet and mobile apps safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teaching gives pupils too much new information at the same time. This can confuse pupils and decreases how well they are able to understand and remember important subject content. Leaders should strengthen the delivery of the curriculum by supporting teachers to identify and focus on the essential subject content that pupils need to know, recall and retain.
- In a few subjects, pupils learn subject-specific vocabulary but teaching does not make sure that pupils understand these words accurately and securely. This makes it hard for pupils to use what they know to understand the subject content that is being taught next in the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that teaching checks that pupils have mastered the required vocabulary before they move on to new 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 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	141566
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10255463
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Allison Thornton
Headteacher	Clare Hallett
Website	www.st-josephs.bromley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the South East London Catholic Academy Trust. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in January 2016.
- Leaders do 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 his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector also met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.

- In inspecting safeguarding, the inspector carried out a scrutiny of the school's single central record of pre-employment checks as well as other records. The inspector considered the views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff through discussions and their responses to Ofsted's surveys.

Inspection team

Edison David, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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