

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

Norfolk Road, Dorking, Surrey RH4 3JA

Inspection dates:

28 to 29 March 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is an inclusive school where everyone is valued. Parents appreciate the nurturing ethos of the school. Many comment on the sense of community. Pupils are happy. In classrooms and on the playground, they share equipment and take turns. On the rare occasions where there are incidents of unkindness, staff take swift action to resolve these. As a result, pupils are rightly confident that they do not need to worry about bullying.

Pupils are proud to have positions of responsibility within school. This includes being part of the Lily squad and playground squad and being a librarian. The Lily squad representatives work with their classes to collaboratively decide on the value of the month. Pupils are eager to take turns to complete the class newsbooks throughout the year. These enable pupils to reflect on local, national and global issues. These books begin in the early years, where children enjoy taking their bear on different adventures.

The school's curriculum is designed so all pupils can be involved in learning. Leaders reflect on what is working well in each subject and make adaptations where needed. As a result, pupils achieve well.

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

Leaders have designed a well-planned and structured curriculum. This means that pupils learn the most important information in each subject. In the early years, teachers have carefully considered what pupils should learn. Here, children start to explore the world around them and learn about the local area. As they progress through the school, pupils apply their understanding in different ways. For example, Year 6 pupils consider the advantages and disadvantages of different energy sources to debate what should be built on a new housing development. Leaders have updated some subjects this year and introduced new schemes. They have identified that these changes may mean pupils are missing some essential knowledge from the past. To combat this, leaders are working with teachers to ensure a smooth transition and to close any gaps in these subjects. They

have not, however, considered yet how teachers will check what pupils have retained from previous years to address any areas where learning is less secure.

Reading has a high priority in the school. There is a sharp focus on pupils learning phonics from the early years. All staff have been trained effectively on the relatively new phonics scheme. As a result, there is a coherent structure followed by staff and understood by pupils. Teachers expertly identify pupils who require additional support to keep up. These pupils are supported through carefully matched interventions. An enthusiasm for reading is evident through the school. Pupils enjoy talking about books they have borrowed and read. Older pupils provide detailed reasons for their literature choices.

Pupils learn well across the curriculum. Teachers break down complex information into smaller parts. This helps pupils to understand the key content. This begins from the early years onwards. Questioning is successfully used to deepen pupils' thinking as well as check understanding. Teachers make adaptations to ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can access learning. The robust school systems allow staff to identify pupils with SEND and provide appropriate support so they can learn alongside their peers.

There are high expectations for behaviour, which pupils rise to. This results in a positive and calm environment where pupils can learn. Pupils understand that their behaviour is underpinned by the values of the school. Relationships in school are built on a foundation of respect. This is modelled by all staff. Pupils understand the importance of respecting everyone and they know that being unkind means they are not upholding this.

There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils' personal development. They relish the chance to become a representative in the school. Pupils talk positively about the range of clubs they can attend and the ways they can represent their school. This includes attending sporting tournaments, such as swimming galas and football events. Through the curriculum, pupils are beginning to explore a range of texts which celebrate the lives of prominent individuals from diverse backgrounds. Pupils take part in a range of charity events. They have designed activities to raise money for different charities, such as an obstacle course and a pyjama day.

Staff engage in training and feel well supported by leaders. This helps to ensure a high-quality curriculum for pupils. Leaders, including governors, are mindful of the impact that curriculum changes may have on workload. They have created a caring culture where aspirations are high within the school. This is recognised by all stakeholders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. They share pertinent safeguarding information during staff meetings as well as during governing body meetings to ensure that it remains at the forefront of everyone's minds. Staff are well trained. They understand and implement the

school's procedures for raising concerns. Leaders respond appropriately and will challenge external agencies if they do not receive information in a timely manner.

Pupils confidently talk about the ways to stay safe. They recall the key rules for staying safe online. Pupils have also learned how to be safe when crossing roads and riding their bicycles.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum planning in some foundation subjects is newly implemented. Leaders have not yet identified how assessment information will be used in these subjects. As a result, teachers do not always have an accurate view of the knowledge that pupils have remembered over time. Leaders need to continue to refine assessment practice, so that teachers have the information they need to plan future 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 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	125204
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10256535
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	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Francis Cluett
Headteacher	Carolyn Scrutton
Website	www.stjosephsschooldorking.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The previous section 48 inspection was carried out in June 2019.

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 the evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. She also met with other school leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector met with five governors, including the chair of governing body and spoke with representatives from Surrey local authority and the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and art. 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. She also reviewed curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about mathematics, science and modern foreign languages.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. The inspector also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- The inspector considered the responses to the confidential staff survey and pupil survey and spoke to a range of staff and pupils about their views of the school.
- The inspector took account of the 81 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the additional 66 free-text responses. She talked with some parents on the second morning of the inspection and talked to pupils informally during social times and in lessons.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and school self-evaluation.

Inspection team

Sara Staggs, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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