

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

Scratton Road, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex SS17 0PA

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. Inspectors are recommending the next inspection to be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Joseph's like to welcome visitors to the school. They are polite and courteous to adults and each other. Pupils like all the opportunities they have. For example, they enjoy taking part in school plays and attending school trips.

Leaders have high expectations for behaviour, and pupils mostly behave well. They show good listening skills, and teachers make sure that the pupils are ready to learn when they teach. Pupils understand what bullying is. Leaders respond quickly and effectively when it happens. This makes pupils feel safe.

Some staff members are quite new to the school. This means that pupils and teachers are still developing bonds and building relationships. Pupils show that they respect teachers by working hard and trying their best. However, teaching does not fully develop all pupils' knowledge in some lessons. This can make some lessons seem too straightforward for pupils.

Many older pupils have responsibilities. They take these jobs seriously. For instance, pupils in Year 6 are 'buddies' and help children in Reception settle into school life. Older pupils understand how important they are as role models, and most behave with maturity.

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

Leaders ensure that curriculum plans in all subjects develop from Reception to Year 6. Teachers use these plans to teach lessons that enable most pupils to make connections with previous knowledge. Children in the early years engage well with the carefully planned activities that teachers prepare. Through these tasks, the youngest children learn to make choices about their learning and develop independence.

Some staff in the school are new and inexperienced, and others are temporary. These staff are not as well trained in delivering the school's curriculum. Their subject knowledge is not strong in all subject areas. This means some pupils do not learn all the knowledge they need and have gaps in their understanding. Pupils' understanding is checked regularly, so teachers and leaders can check their progress. Where gaps in learning have been identified, some pupils have 'catch-up' tuition.

Leaders have implemented a new strategy for the teaching of early reading. Children in the early years learn to read and write sounds as soon as they start school. Further opportunities are created for children to develop their writing and reading skills throughout the day. Pupils in Year 1 enjoy repeating the phrases and actions that help them to remember new sounds. Pupils read books that closely match their phonics knowledge. This helps them to practise reading the sounds they are learning. This helps them to gain confidence because they can read with fluency. Pupils at risk of falling behind are supported with 'keep-up' teaching. This means that pupils achieve well in early reading.

Leaders have accurately identified those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, some staff have not received up-to-date training to help them adapt their teaching in order to support pupils with SEND. This means that some pupils with SEND are not able to learn in the same way as their peers. They do not achieve as well as they should. A few pupils with SEND learn in small groups rather than with their classes, and have more individualised timetables.

Pupils are kind and caring towards each other. In lessons, most pupils work hard and try their best. In the playground, pupils mostly play well with each other. The youngest children in the school understand how to share equipment and get on well with each other. Pupils' learning is rarely disturbed by others' behaviour.

Pupils have a secure knowledge of different faiths. They understand how important it is to have respect for others who may be different to them. Pupils have a good understanding of British values. This is demonstrated when they talk about how pupils are elected for some important school jobs.

The school has had high staff turnover. Governors and leaders have plans to improve the recruitment and retention of staff. Staff appreciate leaders' consideration of workload and how well-organised planning, particularly in mathematics and reading, helps with this.

The governing body, leaders and the trust are working together to make positive changes to the school. Recently, leaders carried out a check where all stakeholders were able to give their opinions. Leaders have actioned change quickly, for instance by creating more daily opportunities for parents and teachers to meet. Leaders have not communicated effectively with some parents about important changes. Leaders and governors have begun making sure communication with parents is improved.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils learn how to stay safe, including e-safety. They know who to report concerns to.

Staff are vigilant for any signs of pupils being at potential risk of harm. They understand how to record and report concerns. Leaders act on concerns promptly to keep pupils safe. They work with other agencies appropriately to ensure that pupils get help.

Leaders ensure that staff complete all statutory safeguarding training. Governors and leaders ensure that all the required checks are completed before adults work in the school. Procedures to deal with concerns, including about adults working in the school, follow the latest guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few curriculum areas, teachers do not have consistently strong subject knowledge. This means that some pupils do not learn all the knowledge and skills they need in each subject. Leaders need to ensure that teachers have the training and support they need to improve their subject knowledge to teach all subjects effectively.
- Staff have not received up-to-date training about how to adapt learning to support pupils with SEND. This means that pupils do not learn in a way that helps them to keep up with their peers. Leaders need to ensure that all staff receive relevant and ongoing training so that adapted teaching approaches support the teaching of pupils with SEND and reflect the changing demographics of the school.
- Some parents lack confidence in communication with leaders and consequently do not feel positive about the school. Leaders should review arrangements for communicating with parents, together with strategies to involve them in school life and support their children at home.

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 predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, to be good in April 2016.

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	146300
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10268791
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	191
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	Steven Foster
Headteacher	Ruth Saul
Website	www.stjosephscatholicprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a new chair of governors from October 2022.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight 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 school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader. The inspector spoke with representatives from the trust and some members of the governing body. The inspector also met with some members of staff over the course of the inspection.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector visited lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to children and viewed children's work.
- The inspector viewed a range of documents and information, including governor meeting minutes and safeguarding records.
- The 56 responses and 76 free-text responses made by parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, were considered. The inspector considered 17 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 150 responses to the pupil questionnaire. The inspector also spoke with pupils to seek their views and experiences of school.

Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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