

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

Gardenia Avenue, Luton, Bedfordshire LU3 2NS

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 April 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy the interesting and engaging lessons at their school. They benefit from the support of knowledgeable adults who help them to be successful. Pupils know that their teachers will help them when they need it. They take pride in their work and listen to the advice that adults give them to improve. They value receiving specialist teaching in music, French and physical education.

Pupils are cared for by adults who meet their needs well. They are polite and respectful towards staff and visitors. The vast majority of pupils comply with the school's rules. Pupils concentrate in lessons and, overall, play well together. Staff are quick to deal with anyone whose behaviour falls short of the high expectations set by leaders. If someone was being bullied or had worries, pupils are confident that staff will help sort it out. That said, pupils do feel that bullying seldom happens.

Pupils can choose from a range of additional experiences at this school. Choir, football, cricket and cross-country are particularly popular. Pupils enjoy fundraising, for example through sponsored walks, and going on trips and residential visits. They also attend mass and have regular opportunities for quiet reflection. Pupils from every faith are made to feel welcome.

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

Leaders have established a broad and engaging curriculum. They have ensured that it builds detailed knowledge year on year across all subjects. Subject leaders have provided staff with effective training on how to deliver the curriculum as intended. Leaders continue to refine curriculum content as needed. Teachers, from early years onwards, have good subject knowledge. They present work to pupils clearly, make appropriate adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and ensure that misconceptions are addressed.

Teachers, including those in early years, are clear about the precise knowledge pupils need to know. Through regular checks, especially in reading, writing and mathematics, teachers spot any gaps in learning that may emerge. They are then quick to ensure that pupils who fall behind are supported to keep up. Pupils with SEND are ably supported by staff to work independently. As a result, pupils achieve well in these core subjects.

Leaders and teachers ensure that all pupils, including pupils with SEND, learn detailed knowledge in foundation subjects. Pupils produce work of high quality. However, sometimes, teachers move on too quickly before knowledge is embedded, or there is not enough time given to revisit key knowledge regularly. Subject leaders are also still developing the way in which they check how well key knowledge is retained by pupils.

From the moment they start school, pupils are taught to read through an effective reading programme. Reading and phonics sessions take place every day with well-trained adults. Younger pupils read books matched to the sounds they know. Older pupils develop reading knowledge through lessons that focus on vocabulary and comprehension. Pupils who struggle with reading receive timely interventions and quickly catch up.

Pupils can focus on their learning in lessons because most pupils behave well. Any low-level disruption is quickly dealt with. Teachers in early years ensure that children understand school routines from the outset. They learn to share and take turns. Pupils enjoy the structured play activities on offer at lunchtimes. Some pupils need reminders of sensible play at morning breaktime. Pupils who need additional help with their behaviour are well supported by adults to access learning.

Leaders provide pupils with the opportunity to deepen their understanding of all religions and to learn different languages. There are many opportunities for pupils' personal development. Pupils take part in choral groups, learn musical instruments and perform in concerts. In addition, they participate in inter-school sports festivals and cross-country competitions. Pupils take on leadership roles as faith, anti-bullying or sports ambassadors. They can be elected to the school council and meet the local mayor. Pupils have their self-esteem raised by gaining a roll of honour award and celebrating successes in assembly. Leaders ensure that the curriculum allows for their personal, social and emotional needs to be developed.

Staff morale is high, and staff feel that leaders care about their well-being. Staff say that leaders listen to ideas to reduce workload, such as having time to plan together.

Governors fulfil their statutory duties and hold leaders to account well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. They feel comfortable in discussing worries with staff. Leaders have established robust safeguarding systems to keep pupils safe. Concerns raised by staff are responded to swiftly and appropriately. Leaders invite into school the police and youth support services to help pupils understand risk around gangs and online safety. Family

workers provide support for pupils who need additional pastoral care so that these pupils know ways to keep themselves safe. Staff and governors have up-to-date safeguarding training. All required checks are made on adults who work in or visit the school. These checks are monitored by leaders and governors.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In foundation subjects, the assessment systems are not yet fully developed. Some pupils do not retrieve securely enough the knowledge needed to achieve fully the ambitious curriculum outcomes that leaders have designed for them. Leaders need to:
 - review the curriculum to ensure that adequate time is given to ensure that key curriculum knowledge is secured at the point of learning and then revisited regularly in order to become embedded in pupils’ long-term memory
 - check that pupils can demonstrate and apply the depth of understanding in foundation subjects that leaders intend them to have.

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 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

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| Unique reference number | 109635 |
| Local authority | Luton |
| Inspection number | 10268452 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 738 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Josephine Healey |
| Headteacher | Maureen Murphy |
| Website | www.stjosephsprimaryluton.co.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 17 and 18 October 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school is a Roman Catholic school. The school's most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

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.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteachers, assistant headteacher, subject leaders, teachers and some support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, music, and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors spoke to subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks, and spoke with teachers and support staff.

- The lead inspector met representatives from the local governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to the local authority school improvement adviser.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes of meetings of the governing body, local authority adviser visit reports and the school development plan.
- The inspectors looked at the arrangements for safeguarding, including the single central record of recruitment checks. The inspectors spoke with leaders and staff about the systems and processes to support safeguarding and the safeguarding ethos in the school.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the 47 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 46 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Michele Geddes

Ofsted Inspector

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