

# Inspection of a good school: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy

Park Lane, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD5 0RB

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Inspection dates:

27 and 28 June 2023

## **Outcome**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This school celebrates the culture and heritage of all its pupils. Behaviour is good. Pupils are taught to respect and understand the views and beliefs of others. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning inside the classroom and always listen well. They are polite, friendly and engaging. They are respectful and talk confidently to adults using appropriate humour.

Pupils live by the school virtues and know how they are helping them to develop their character. By 'living mercifully and living bravely', they know that they must learn to 'forgive, be peacekeepers, show resilience and determination', while also being compassionate towards others. Pupils are happy to attend and they feel safe. They are taught how to keep themselves healthy, both physically and mentally, and know how to protect themselves online. Pupils say that bullying does not happen at the school because leaders would not tolerate this.

Pupils are given responsibilities in school that make them feel proud. Roles such as house captains, head boy and head girl make them feel like they have a voice and they know they are making a difference.

As a sanctuary school, St Joseph's is inclusive and welcoming. Leaders and staff have created an environment where there are high expectations and all pupils thrive.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that helps pupils to develop a detailed understanding of subject content from the early years. Content choices have been carefully selected to celebrate the culture of pupils at the school. The curriculum is relatable and engaging. Leaders have clearly set out what they expect pupils to know by the end of each year. They make sure that learning is revisited so that pupils can remember the most important knowledge.

Pupils 'come alive' when they talk about reading. They speak passionately about the books they enjoy and the work of different authors. Recent changes, brought about by leaders, have been positive. Teaching children to read is now a priority and starts as soon as pupils enter school in the early years. Staff have benefited from recent training that enables them to deliver the phonics programme well. Consistent approaches to teaching help to build pupils' fluency when reading. However, some pupils find it difficult to read words without breaking the sounds down even when they are capable of reading with confidence. This prevents them from developing their fluency when reading.

Leaders have implemented a mathematics curriculum that is well planned and well taught from the early years to Year 6. Pupils are given time to practise and apply their learning. They develop fluency and can apply their knowledge to increasingly complex problems. Leaders ensure that teachers fully understand what pupils know already at the beginning of each new unit of mathematics work. This helps teachers to plan lessons with precision. They provide interesting and appropriate learning activities to all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils develop appropriate knowledge and skills during their time in school. For example, in geography, pupils' geographical knowledge is strong. They learn about places that are important to the school. They can make comparisons between other places and where they live. They can talk about the relationship between physical and human features in geography. They can explain why farmers would choose to live near a volcano because the soil in the area has more nutrients meaning crops will grow there.

Provision for pupils with SEND has improved because of support provided by the deputy headteacher. Pupils' needs are assessed and identified at the earliest stages. Teachers use this information to ensure that pupils' learning and personal development needs are met well. Leaders work closely with a range of external specialists to ensure that pupils' individual targets for learning are accurate and their provision appropriate. Staff provide skilled and creative support to pupils with SEND to help remove any barriers to learning.

The promotion of pupils' personal development and wider opportunities is a high priority and a strength of the school. Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe from local dangers and how to make and maintain healthy relationships. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is enhanced by visits and visitors which bring it to life. These are often memorable experiences for pupils. Pupils appreciate the opportunities they are given to look after 'God's earth and creatures'.

The trust and the academy council supported the school well. They know the school well and are actively involved in the life of the school community. The trust offers strong, targeted support where needed. Staff are happy at the school and speak about it with warmth. They are well supported by leaders and workload is always considered.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are trained in all aspects of safeguarding. They have a good understanding of the risks that pupils may face. Leaders provide regular updates to make sure that staff remember important safeguarding information. Systems for reporting and recording concerns are well established. Leaders work with families, early help partners and external services to actively support pupils and their families.

Pupils learn about the risks that they might face both online and when in the local community. The school works closely with local partners such as the police to ensure that pupils know the risks of engaging in illegal activities.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Staff do not place sufficient emphasis on ensuring that pupils can recognise sounds automatically. This makes it difficult for pupils to develop fluency when reading. Leaders should ensure that all staff support pupils to learn their phonics to automaticity so they can read with increasing fluency and confidence.

## **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 June 2018.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148101
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269141
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	334
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Joe McDonnell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sarah Tolson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjosephsbradford.co.uk">www.stjosephsbradford.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-size primary school.
- The school joined the Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust in November 2020.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of additional funding through the pupil premium grant is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils attending the school who speak English as an additional language is above the national average
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine ungraded 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and curriculum leaders.
- The inspector met with members of the academy council, including the chair. He also

spoke with representatives from the trust, including the chief executive officer.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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. He also observed adults listening to pupils read.
- The arrangements for safeguarding were checked. These included checks on the single central record, staff training and scrutiny of safeguarding records. The inspector also talked to the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector discussed the school's records on attendance and behaviour with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school, including at lunchtime. He also met with two groups of pupils.
- The inspector looked at the school's self-evaluation document and improvement plans.
- The inspector talked informally with pupils in lessons and at breaktimes and took into account the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- The inspector took into account the responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector met with staff and considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

### **Inspection team**

Simon McCarthy

Ofsted Inspector

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