

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

Connor Road, Dagenham, Essex RM9 5UL

Inspection dates:

27 and 28 June 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and staff are proud members of their school. Pupils are happy and enjoy playing together at breaktimes and lunchtimes. Bullying is rare. Pupils trust that adults will swiftly deal with any issues.

Pupils achieve well. Leaders and staff have high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They celebrate and value the uniqueness of every pupil. The school's mission statement, 'Each one of us has been created for a special purpose and is therefore uniquely special', threads through all aspects of school life. Pupils relish the opportunities that they have for responsibility. For example, pupil ambassadors are thrilled when visitors enter the classroom so that they can welcome them to their class and tell them about their learning.

Pupils are polite and well mannered. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect. In lessons, pupils are typically focused on and engaged with their tasks. This helps them to learn well across the curriculum. When low-level disruption occurs, adults deal with it quickly to minimise it having an impact on the learning of others.

Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the range of extra-curricular clubs and educational visits they experience. They also enjoy the opportunities to develop their leadership skills as school councillors or eco-champions.

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

Leaders have adopted an ambitious curriculum that matches the expectations of the national curriculum. Leaders have made deliberate choices about what pupils experience. They ensure that, overall, pupils develop knowledge securely and that the curriculum represents the diverse community of the school.

The curriculum identifies the key knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils need to learn across the range of subjects. Teachers use this to plan and deliver coherent

sequences of learning for pupils. However, sometimes, pupils are not remembering with fluency what they have been taught, and they are unable to make connections across their learning. This is because, at times, lessons are not focusing enough on the knowledge, skills and vocabulary identified in curriculum thinking.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure. They deliver information to pupils clearly. Typically, pupils have opportunities to recap and revisit prior learning. In some curriculum areas, such as early reading, the approach to checking what pupils know is clear and is being used effectively. However, across the curriculum, some teaching does not build in checks on pupils' understanding as effectively. On occasions, teaching misses opportunities to pick up gaps and misconceptions in pupils' learning and does not address these swiftly. This means that there are instances where pupils are not fully understanding what they are being taught.

Pupils with SEND are fully included in school life and learn alongside their peers. There are clear procedures in place to identify and plan for any needs that a pupil may have. This ensures they get the right support. Staff receive training so that learning can be adapted effectively to allow pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. Leaders work with external agencies to obtain specialist support for pupils when it is needed.

Starting in the early years, reading is taught through a systematic phonics programme. Pupils quickly learn the sounds that letters make. They have regular opportunities to practise and recap the sounds that they learn. This includes reading books that are closely matched to the sounds they know. Pupils who need extra help are given additional practice so that they do not fall behind. A love of reading is promoted through daily story time sessions and use of the school library, where pupils can borrow books to read for pleasure. Pupils also like linking up with classes from different year groups to read together and share a book.

The provision for pupils' personal development is underpinned by the school's ethos, including its teaching on social values. Pupils take part in activities such as charity work and are taught about caring for others and the environment. Working on a joint project with the local authority, pupils also explore themes linked to social justice. They research their own history and discuss matters relating to race and equality that affect them. Pupils learn about different types of relationships and that not all families are the same. Understanding that everyone has the right to be treated with respect is taught and reinforced. Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils are also given important messages on how to keep physically and mentally healthy.

Those responsible for governance make sure that they support and challenge school leaders. There are increasing opportunities for staff to work together and share practice with other schools in the trust. Staff feel that leaders manage their workload well and that their well-being is considered. Staff enjoy working here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff and governors have up-to-date training. This ensures that staff understand and follow the school's safeguarding procedures. Leaders and staff are alert to any signs that pupils might be at risk. There are clear reporting and recording systems in place. This gives leaders strong oversight of actions that they have taken or may need to take, including involving external agencies where needed.

The curriculum has been designed to teach pupils how to stay safe. For example, pupils learn how to keep safe online. They also learn basic first aid, with older pupils attending events such as 'junior citizens', where they learn and practise a range of life skills.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is a clear and coherent curriculum in place with key knowledge, skills and vocabulary identified and mapped out. However, at times, teachers are not drawing on this guidance precisely enough when delivering the curriculum to pupils. This means that pupils can find it hard to recall knowledge fluently. Instead, they remember the activities they have completed. Leaders need to continue to work with subject leaders and teachers to ensure there is a sharp focus on the teaching of the identified knowledge and skills across the curriculum.
- On occasions, teachers are missing opportunities to recap and reinforce learning. Some teaching is not identifying and addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge or misconceptions in their understanding. This means that, in some cases, pupils are not able to build on prior learning and fully grasp what they are being taught. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are supported to deliver the curriculum in line with leaders' expectations, including building in and responding to purposeful checks on pupils' understanding.

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 predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, to be good in December 2014.

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	147329
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10268918
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	John Anthony
Headteacher	Natalie Holden
Website	stjosephsdagenham.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic school within the Diocese of Brentwood. The last statutory inspection under section 48, for schools of a religious character, was in May 2023.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2019. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- This school is part of The Good Shepherd Catholic Trust.
- Leaders make use of one registered 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science and physical education. 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. The inspector listened to

pupils read. Other subjects were also considered as part of this inspection, including mathematics, geography and history.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher/chief administrative officer, the headteacher, school leaders and those responsible for governance.
- The inspector spoke with leaders, staff and pupils about safeguarding. The inspector also checked safeguarding records and documentation.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector also considered the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Julie Wright, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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