

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Little Sutton Lane, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B75 6PB

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The principal of this school is Gerry O'Hara. This school is part of the St. John Paul II Multi Academy Company (MAC), which means other people in the MAC also have responsibility for running the school. The MAC is run by the chief senior executive leader (CSEL), Matthew Emery, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Maria Stirrop.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to belong to St Joseph's. Warm relationships are at the heart of the school. The staff care about the pupils. Pupils say that this makes them feel valued and safe. The school has high expectations of its pupils. Pupils work hard and take pride in their work. They achieve well. Children flourish right from the start in the early years. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are respectful and considerate towards everyone. The school's values underpin everything and are evident in the way in which staff and pupils behave and act. Pupils behave impeccably both in lessons and at breaktimes. Through the buddy system, older pupils pass on to the youngest pupils the importance of being kind and using good manners.

The school makes sure that pupils benefit from a rich variety of activities. This includes clubs such as football, walk and talk club, chess and art club, to name but a few. Trips to places of worship, rivers and castles make classroom learning come to life. The school values pupils' ideas and opinions. For example, the school council and the 'Mission Team' selected and planted the plants in the memorial prayer garden.

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

The school has established an ambitious curriculum. Leaders have identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to learn. Right from the early years, adults make sure that pupils learn this information in an order that builds their knowledge over time. For example, the youngest children in Reception develop and practise their ball control skills. In Year 2, pupils then learn to intercept balls and pass them accurately at speed. They use words such as 'attack' and 'defending'. This means that by Year 4 they can apply these skills when playing games such as tag rugby.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They explain learning well. For example, in mathematics, teachers clearly model how to solve calculations. They encourage pupils to explain their answers by using different ways to prove their answer is correct. This helps pupils to remember mathematical methods. Teachers make regular checks to ensure that pupils remember what they have been taught. These checks help staff to identify misconceptions and address them. Pupils know that they learn from mistakes. This makes them keen to try hard.

In the early years, skilled adults plan purposeful activities that ensure children develop their knowledge and vocabulary well. The stimulating environment enables children to be independent. Parents are involved as partners in their child's learning from the start.

Reading is prioritised, and children start to learn to read as soon as they start school. Staff deliver phonics expertly. This helps pupils to become keen and

confident readers. Pupils read books that match the sounds that they know. Those who find reading more difficult receive the support they need to keep up. Pupils particularly enjoy story time, when staff read aloud to them.

The school identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. Teachers adapt the curriculum and provide support so pupils can achieve well. However, occasionally the delivery of the curriculum does not provide sufficient challenge for some pupils, including some pupils with SEND.

Pupils know and follow the school rules. They are motivated by the school's reward systems and recognise that positive behaviour reflects the school's values and ethos. Pupils are keen to collect 'carpenters coins' and house points. They take a lot of joy from celebrating their own and others' success.

The personal development curriculum ensures that pupils understand the importance of their actions towards others. The way that the school develops pupils' character is exceptional. Pupils have a strong understanding of human rights and fundamental British values. They talk confidently about their right to an opinion, to shelter or to a faith. Leaders take every opportunity to promote equality and diversity. Pupils are proud to be part of a school where difference is welcomed and respected.

Pupils enjoy the opportunity to take on responsibilities and value the contribution they make to their school. They can join the Mission Team or be elected to the school council. They can become play leaders, foundation monitors or office monitors. Pupil mental health ambassadors receive training for their roles. They know that it is important to look after their own mental health before supporting others with theirs.

The trust provides the school with considered and effective support. It accurately identifies the strengths of the school and where things could be even better. Governors are committed and highly involved with the school. Staff know individual pupils and families very well. However, some of the information the school holds on aspects such as attainment and behaviour is not analysed coherently. This makes it difficult to track the impact of actions on groups of pupils over time.

The school is a happy, caring environment for both staff and pupils. Leaders ensure that they work in collaboration with parents and the trust. Staff are proud of the school and value the support they receive to fulfil their roles. Leaders ensure that teachers' workload is manageable. The school puts pupils' and staff's mental health as a priority. The well-being of all is important.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not consistently analyse and use all the information it collects about the work it does carefully enough. As a result, those who are responsible for holding others to account and providing appropriate challenge are not always sufficiently clear about the impact of some actions taken and decisions made. The school should make sure that it evaluates the impact of its work more fully to inform further decisions and actions to improve the school.
- On occasion, the way in which the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of some groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, is not as successful as it could be. As a result, some pupils are not achieving as highly as they should across the curriculum. The school should ensure that strategies and interventions used to support some pupils enable them to achieve as well as their peers in all subjects.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140528
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10267931
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	389
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
CEO of the trust	Matthew Emery
Chair of governing body	Terence Forker
Principal	Gerry O'Hara
Website	www.stjosutton.net
Dates of previous inspection	18 and 19 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic primary school and is part of the St. John Paul II Multi Academy Company within the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The school's last section 48 inspection was in May 2023.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school operates a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and design, physical education and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors had formal meetings with the principal and other senior leaders, subject leaders, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and the designated safeguarding lead. The lead inspector spoke to representatives of the governing body, the MAC and the diocese.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance, and documentation relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of staff and took account of views shared through the staff survey.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with groups of pupils both formally and during less structured parts of the day.
- The inspectors took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, the pupils' survey and the staff survey. The inspectors spoke informally with parents on arrival at school.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Corinne Biddell, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Malam	Ofsted Inspector
Rob Hackfath	His Majesty's Inspector

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