

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

Hill Top, Hednesford, Cannock, Staffordshire WS12 1DE

---

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 October 2023

## Outcome

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

## What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a caring, supportive and safe school. There is an exceptionally strong sense of community and everyone helps each other to do their best. Staff notice and celebrate pupils' unique talents and qualities.

Expectations are high and academic standards are strong. Indeed, achievement in many different aspects of school life is celebrated. From sports competitions and musical performances to busy design and technology projects, there is always plenty going on across the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported well, both with their learning and behaviour.

The school's Catholic faith and values are evident in many ways. The rules are fair and staff are kind to pupils. This kindness is reflected in the way pupils behave in class and towards one another. Bullying or poor behaviour is rare. If these behaviours do happen, pupils and staff work together to sort out problems fairly and calmly.

Communication with home and the involvement of parents and carers in school life are notable features. Many parents visit the school regularly for assemblies, workshops or to take part in classroom work.

Community-minded and thoughtful leadership ensures that staff and pupils are happy in their work. Parents speak very highly of the school.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to strengthen its work. The teaching of early reading is strong, well resourced and effective. The language-rich Nursery prepares children well for formal phonics teaching in Reception. Throughout the early years and key stage 1, informed and efficient teaching builds pupils' knowledge of letter sounds and words. By the time pupils move into key stage 2, most are doing very well with reading. Those who need an extra boost receive daily support to help them

catch up. In addition to reading lessons, staff regularly read aloud to classes. They introduce them to a range of fiction, non-fiction and poems. Looking ahead, there is now scope for the school to be even more ambitious with the reading material shared with pupils in key stage 2.

The rest of the curriculum is well organised. From early years to Year 6, staff have thought carefully about how to sequence learning logically. In geography, for example, pupils' knowledge of place and locational language builds carefully on what they already know. Staff make the most of local links, which helps pupils to make connections between places near and far, and events past and present. On top of this, trips to museums and visitors to school add an extra dimension to learning. During this inspection, for instance, a former pupil shared experiences of their schooldays many years ago. Such enriching events help pupils to see beyond their own experiences, to make informed comparisons and build respect for others.

Learning is also promoted through a well-stocked library and eye-catching displays. The school's walls are covered with work and information that value pupils' achievements, promote worthy values and support learning. A splendid timeline, for example, supports pupils' sense of chronology.

Subject leaders check on how well different subjects are taught, and they talk to pupils to find out what they know. This keeps staff informed about how well pupils are learning and where any adjustments to the curriculum are needed. Leaders know, for example, that curriculum design in some foundation subjects is further ahead than in others.

Beyond classroom learning, there are lots of other things to do. Pupils regularly take part in sports events and performances. There are after-school clubs and opportunities during the school day for pupils to do helpful jobs. Pupil play leaders organise breaktime games for others. Older pupils buddy up with younger ones to help them with reading. Across the school, relationships between pupils of all ages are supportive, friendly and marked by interest and concern for others.

The school shares plenty of information with parents. During this inspection, for instance, parents could join their children in class as part of a design and technology project. Many came along, and classrooms were a buzz of constructive chatter and happy activity.

Most pupils attend school regularly and on time. If anyone misses too much school without good reason, leaders track this carefully and offer appropriate support. The school also provides effective support for pupils with SEND. Their needs are identified accurately and the school has efficient systems for checking on their progress and welfare.

Staff say they value being part of the school team. They have regular training and share practice with other schools. Staff say they are treated fairly and that workload expectations are reasonable.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Curriculum design and staff support in some foundation subjects are still being developed. This means that pupils make stronger progress in some subjects than in others. The school should continue to strengthen curriculum design so that pupils' knowledge builds sequentially and securely in all subjects.
- The way in which some stories, texts and poems are chosen and used in key stage 2 could be even more deliberate and ambitious. Currently, the attention to generic comprehension strategies means that pupils do not learn all that they could from literature. The school should continue to review the way texts are used so that pupils make even greater progress.

## 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 school to be good in November 2013.

### 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124354
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10290566
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jeremy Howard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Bernadette Corbett
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-josephs-hednesford.staffs.sch.uk">www.st-josephs-hednesford.staffs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- St Joseph's Primary School is a voluntary-aided Catholic school.
- The school's most recent diocesan section 48 inspection took place in June 2017. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school has a nursery that takes children from three years old.
- A private childcare service provides before- and after-school childcare on the school site. This is subject to a separate inspection at a different time.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector considered published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, governance, school improvement planning and documents published on the school's website.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, school staff, pupils and governors. He spoke on the telephone with representatives from the Archdiocese of Birmingham and Staffordshire local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, history, and design and technology. In these subjects, he discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. He also considered the curriculum in early mathematics and other subjects to check how they were organised and taught.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector talked informally with pupils, parents and staff to gather general information about school life. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff, pupils' and parents' views.
- The inspector observed pupils in class, at lunchtime, on the playground, at clubs and at other times during the day.

### **Inspection team**

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2023