

# Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Highgate Hill, Highgate, London N19 5NE

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Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2023

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since March 2009.

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

Pupils are enthusiastic about coming to this exceptional, nurturing and inclusive school. Their behaviour and the pride they take in their school consistently reflect the school's values.

The school has very high expectations for all. Pupils are proud of the way they strive to meet these expectations. This can be seen in the excellent quality of work produced across different subjects. The school has set out a highly structured and aspirational curriculum. Teaching approaches, such as the 'last, last, last' activities, help pupils to retain their knowledge about each subject. Pupils speak knowledgeably and eloquently about their learning, recalling in depth what they have learned during their lessons.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Throughout the school there is a purposeful, yet calm, atmosphere. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils play well with each other and encourage one another to join in with their activities. In lessons, they focus on their work and listen attentively to their teachers.

The school provides a rich range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. Pupils choose from a wide range of clubs and activities, including sports and music, dance and environmental studies. Pupils are keen to give back to others, both in the school community and beyond. They take on leadership responsibilities such as pupil chaplains, librarians and digital leaders. They also actively fundraise for local charities and global appeals.

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

The school has developed a broad and highly effective curriculum. It is ambitious for everyone, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, the mathematics curriculum enables pupils to discuss their learning and use technical language with ease. Pupils' secure prior knowledge means that they approach their learning, including new concepts, with confidence. Pupils who need further support are given tailored extra help, for instance, in small groups before and after school. This helps to ensure that every pupil achieves highly and is able to keep up in learning the curriculum.

The school prioritises making sure that high-quality learning starts from the first moments that children, some as young as two, join the school. Recognising how important school attendance is, the school works closely with parents and carers to ensure that pupils attend well.

The school has prioritised reading. Pupils who are at the earliest stages of reading are supported through a highly structured approach to teaching phonics knowledge. The school holds regular meetings with parents to share what learning to read looks like in school. This includes giving resources and ideas on how reading can be supported at home. The books that pupils read, both at school and at home, are

closely matched to the sounds that pupils have been taught. Pupils are encouraged to develop a real love of reading. They relish their regular visits to the school's inspiring library. The school has carefully considered the books that pupils will want to read, and staff make suggestions for new titles to develop pupils' breadth of reading. The school also organises book fairs and events, such as author and illustrator visits, to further enthuse pupils about books.

The school ensures that all pupils' needs are fully supported. Pupils with SEND have their needs identified quickly. Teachers skilfully ensure that pupils access the curriculum, including resources used to support learning. Pupils with SEND are fully included in the life of the school and flourish in their learning. All pupils are encouraged to aim high and do their best.

Children in early years make an excellent start to their education. This includes two-year-old children. The school has considered carefully how its curriculum will meet the needs of all children, including the very youngest. Children settle well and develop their understanding of the routines and expectations that the school has. The early years environment is inviting and nurturing. The school makes sure that activities and resources connect with and extend children's interests, alongside supporting them to understand key ideas. Staff communicate with and question children skilfully, developing and enriching their vocabulary. This approach continues as pupils move through the school.

The school has carefully considered how to broaden pupils' experiences. A rich programme of special activities and events has been integrated purposefully into the curriculum. For example, pupils learn about robotics and coding, and through working with outside organisations, they are exposed to other aspects of science and technology. Pupils also have regular opportunities to learn in the school's outdoor spaces, including learning the names of trees, plants, animals and birds. In addition, clubs and eco-friendly initiatives develop pupils' interest in the world around them, complementing what they are taught in other aspects of the curriculum. Pupils also learn about the unique history of the local area, which helps to deepen their cultural education.

The school is well led. The governing body and all staff work together to ensure that they offer the best possible education for all pupils. All school leaders' work is shaped by the view that 'nothing is too good' for the children at St Joseph's. Staff feel well supported. They are proud of the work that they do to support all pupils to be highly successful in their learning.

Parents are very pleased that their children come to this school. One parent, reflecting the views of many others, said: 'St Joseph's is not just a school, but a community. My children love going to school every day and take pride in being part of the St Joseph's family.'

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## 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>	100441
<b>Local authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242356
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	430
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Lasok
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare McFlynn (executive headteacher) Angela Noronha (head of school)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-josephs.islington.sch.uk">www.st-josephs.islington.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	31 March 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character. The school had its last section 48 inspection by the Archdiocese of Westminster in October 2019.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has expanded the early years provision and now offers places to two-year-olds.

## 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.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and head of school. They also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, physical education, computing and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers. They also spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other subjects were considered as part of this inspection.
- 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.
- Inspectors also spoke to some parents and considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Adam Vincent, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sabrina Edwards	His Majesty's Inspector
Alex Hayes	Ofsted Inspector

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