

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Coombeshead Road, Highweek, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ12 1PT

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The head of school is Sarah Pascoe. This school is part of Plymouth Cast multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Zoe Batten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Elizabeth Ruth O'Donovan. There is also an executive headteacher, Nichola Day, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They are happy and they feel safe and welcome. Parents and carers appreciate the close relationships staff build with their children.

The trust and staff are ambitious for pupils to succeed. However, the quality of education does not always match this ambition.

Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of roles. The school chaplains help to lead prayer. Play leaders help to ensure breaktime is purposeful. These roles enable pupils to build their confidence.

Older pupils believe that everyone should be treated fairly. They act as role models for younger pupils. Older pupils take this responsibility seriously.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences. They visit the local museum, and younger pupils visit local retirement homes to sing to older generations. Pupils know what it means to stay safe, both online and in the community. They are confident that if they have any concerns, there are trusted adults for them to speak to.

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

The new leadership team has not been afraid of addressing the challenges that the school has faced. Central to this has been the development of a well-sequenced curriculum. Furthermore, leaders have employed new staff who share the same ambitious vision for pupils and the local community. However, the trust also appreciates that further work is needed.

The school's reading curriculum is well established. Pupils enjoy reading and access a wide range of books. Children learn to read from the time they begin school. The school uses an effective programme for the teaching of phonics. As a result, outcomes in Year 1 phonics have improved. The books that pupils read mostly match the sounds that they know. However, some staff do not always model and reinforce the programme's agreed reading strategies. This means pupils do not routinely practise the sounds and words they are learning. This then limits some pupils' fluency and accuracy.

The school curriculum meets the requirements of the national curriculum. The trust has identified the key knowledge and skills that it wants pupils to learn in most subjects. The curriculum has also been adapted to be relevant for the community the school serves. However, some staff do not have the requisite subject knowledge to teach the curriculum effectively. Some teachers do not regularly check pupils' understanding. For example, in mathematics, learning is not checked or adapted to ensure pupils are secure in key concepts before learning new content.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified at an early stage. The school works closely with families to develop personalised targets for pupils with SEND. The implementation of these targets, however, varies depending on the expertise and subject knowledge of the staff. Where staff are knowledgeable, they are able to adapt the learning to meet the needs of pupils. However, this is not consistent. As a result, some pupils with SEND do not achieve well.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. The school is calm and pupils have positive attitudes to learning. The school's 'gospel' values permeate the school. Pupils talk confidently about the importance of compassion and forgiveness. As pupils say, these values help us to be good friends. However, pupils have a limited understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of values such as democracy and tolerance are not secure. Furthermore, pupils have a limited understanding of different religions beyond the religious character of the school. As a result, they are not fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

Children in the early years receive a warm and friendly welcome. The school is proactive in working with external nurseries to ensure that staff have an in-depth knowledge of children before they start school. However, staff have not yet considered how best to support children to develop their communication and language skills. As a result, teaching and activities do not always deepen children's understanding.

The trust is persistent in ensuring pupils come to school. The recent recruitment of extra staff to work with families has meant attendance has improved.

Governors have an understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for development. They appreciate the work of staff and school leaders in addressing the historic challenges faced by the school. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel that the trust and school support them to manage their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not assess or use assessment information to adapt the curriculum sufficiently well. This means pupils cannot build on prior learning. The trust needs to support teachers to use assessment information to adapt the curriculum effectively to ensure pupils know and remember the curriculum's essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary.

- Some staff do not always have the subject knowledge to teach the curriculum in a way that supports pupils to build a depth of knowledge. This hinders the learning of some pupils. The trust needs to ensure that all staff have the expertise to teach the curriculum in a way that supports all pupils to learn successfully.
- Pupils do not have a full understanding of fundamental British values. This means that they are not fully prepared for life in modern Britain. The trust should ensure that it further develops pupils' understanding of British values and that pupils have a clear understanding of what this means in their lives.

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	140765
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10288194
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth Ruth O'Donovan
CEO of the trust	Zoe Batten
Headteacher	Nichola Day
Website	www.st-josephs-primary.devon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Plymouth Cast multi-academy trust.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in April 2018.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to parents before and after school. The inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Carl Thornton

Ofsted Inspector

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