

Inspection of a good school: St Josephs Catholic Primary School

Macklin Street, Covent Garden, London, WC2B 5NA

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2024

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school love to come to school each day. Parents and carers described the school as a family and at the heart of their community. Pupils are very proud of their school. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. The school encourages older pupils to take leadership roles around the school. Younger pupils look up to older pupils and aspire to be like them in the future.

The school has the highest ambitions for what pupils can achieve. Pupils study a broad range of subjects. They routinely study concepts that go beyond what might be expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive exceptional support to access the curriculum alongside their peers. All pupils achieve highly here.

The school provides a well-planned programme of enrichment. The school makes the most of its location in the heart of London's West End. Pupils explore the local galleries and museums through educational visits linked to what they learn in class. They are taught about faiths and cultures that are different to their own and encouraged to respect differences and treat everyone equally well.

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

Across different subjects, the school's curriculum is rich and ambitious. The key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn have been carefully sequenced. Teachers are experts at guiding pupils to gain a deep knowledge of the subjects they study. As a result, pupils make sophisticated links between different pieces of learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 learn about the features of settlements in the Stone Age and Iron Age in history. In Year 4, they compare these to Celtic and Roman civilisations to explain the similarities and differences.

Staff enjoy working here. They appreciate the work of leaders and governors to support their wellbeing. There is a strong programme of professional development that all staff benefit from.

Teachers are highly skilled in delivering the curriculum with clarity. When they explain new concepts, they pay particular attention to using subject-specific vocabulary and teach pupils to use precise key words and phrases. For example, in mathematics, teachers demonstrate methods clearly for pupils to use when solving problems. Pupils have ample time to practise these methods and solve similar problems with increasing independence. In the early years, children get a strong foundation in early mathematics. Teachers ensure that children in Nursery and Reception gain confidence in using numbers.

Teachers use assessment effectively to measure what pupils know and can do across the curriculum. They check pupils' knowledge regularly in lessons. This allows them to address any knowledge gaps or misconceptions when they arise. Teachers adapt the curriculum skilfully to support the emerging needs of their pupils. For example, in Year 6, pupils study motion and musculature in art lessons to help them build increasingly realistic sculptures. The school identifies pupils with SEND swiftly. Leaders work closely with pupils with SEND and their families to understand each pupil's individual needs. Teaching staff know to get the best from pupils with SEND and ensure they access all parts of the curriculum.

The school encourages pupils to develop a passion for reading. The school prioritises learning to read, including for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Staff who teach the phonics programme are well-trained. They follow clear routines to model sounds and help pupils to develop reading fluency. The school assesses pupils' reading regularly. This allows leaders to identify swiftly pupils who are struggling to read and provide them with the additional support they need to develop reading fluency and confidence.

The school is a calm and peaceful place where pupils can focus on their learning. The school establishes positive routines for behaviour right from the early years. Here, children learn to share, be curious and pay close attention. The school encourages pupils to demonstrate the school's core values, including integrity and compassion, and praises them for doing so. The school teaches pupils to be ambitious for themselves and to understand the impact of significant historical figures. For example, in Year 2, pupils are taught about inspirational women from history and how they made a difference in the world. Pupils in the school council organise events to raise money for local charities.

Attendance rates at the school have been below national figures in recent years. The school quickly identifies pupils who are not attending school regularly. Leaders work effectively with families to help address any barriers to regular attendance at school. Over time, attendance rates have improved as a result of leaders' work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in 10 and 11 October 2018.

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	100041
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10323221
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Harvey
Headteacher	Natalie O'Donovan (headteacher), and Moya Richardson (executive headteacher)
Website	www.stjosephs.camden.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	10 and 11 October 2018, 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 Diocese of Westminster in June 2019.
- The current headteacher took up post in April 2023.
- The school works in close partnership with three other Roman Catholic primary schools in Camden.
- Many pupils join the school at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and spoke to the school improvement partner.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, history and art. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers. They spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also discussed the curriculum in mathematics and visited a sample of mathematics lessons.
- 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 spoke to a range of staff members and reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys. They also considered the views of parents who made responses to the parent online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Annabel Davies, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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