

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy

Langwith Road, Langwith Junction, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG20 9RP

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 February 2024

Outcome

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy continues to be an outstanding school.

The headteacher of this school is Dani Seaman. This school is part of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic 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, James McGeachie, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nigel Stevenson.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school has high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to these expectations. Pupils are enthusiastic about school. They reflect with maturity on their learning. As one pupil said about history, 'It can shape our lives today so that we don't make the mistakes that people made in the past.'

Pupils are a credit to the school. They are friendly and well mannered. Their behaviour is exemplary. They greet visitors with confidence and warmth. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils enjoy their lessons and do their best. Pupils feel safe and happy. They enjoy very positive relationships with staff. Across the school community, the sense of togetherness is striking.

A distinctive feature of this school is the involvement of pupils in decision-making. There are many opportunities for pupils to give their views. 'Pupil voice' groups include 'agents for change' and mental health ambassadors. These groups make a tangible difference to the life of the school.

Parents and carers hold the school in very high regard. One parent summed up the views of many with the following comment: 'The staff are amazing. My children are thriving. Forever grateful.'

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

The school has constructed a very ambitious curriculum for all pupils. The curriculum builds in a logical way across all year groups, starting from the early years. Pupils achieve well. This includes pupils with SEND. In lessons, staff ensure that pupils complete tasks that are well matched to the curriculum. Pupils move on in their work as soon as they are ready. The school's determination for pupils to get the most out of every lesson is compelling. The mantra is, 'Don't waste their time!'

Teachers take a very thorough approach to checking what pupils know. This includes recapping subject knowledge at the beginning of lessons. Pupils understand what they are learning and why they are learning it. This helps all pupils to know and remember more.

All children flourish in the early years. They are quick to learn the routines of school life. The children are very well behaved. This is because staff take great care to explain and model behaviour expectations. The school tailors the early years curriculum to what each child needs to learn next. Well-planned activities bring this curriculum to life. Early years children enjoy the current theme of 'winter' in many ways. Some explore Artic scenes. Others produce water colours inspired by Monet's 'Boulevard Saint-Denis'. The deep engagement of children in these activities is evident.

The school has made reading a top priority. The school provides timely support for any pupils who need help to keep up. Staff delivering the phonics programme are knowledgeable. They work well together, supporting each other to make each lesson count. As a result, pupils learn to read with confidence. The school encourages pupils to recommend books to each other. This happens on a regular basis and helps to foster a love of reading. Pupils enjoy immersing themselves in books. As one pupil said, 'Reading increases your vocabulary, but it also lets you take a break from the world.'

The school makes sure that pupils' mathematical understanding builds in small steps. Pupils enjoy mathematics. They can talk with confidence about their learning. They are happy to have challenging work because support is available when needed. As one pupil said, 'I enjoy maths because it's challenging, and you learn more when it's hard.'

Pupils' personal development is at the heart of the school's work. The school ensures that the curriculum extends beyond the academic. Character development is important to everyone involved with this school. Pupils enjoy leadership responsibilities. The impressive range of pupil committees includes the 'I-vengers', who promote internet safety. Pupils in the 'Active Group' have helped the school launch a new approach to lunchtime play. This is proving to be very successful, with pupils saying that lunchtimes are more enjoyable now. Pupils learn about people from different backgrounds and with different religious beliefs. Pupils show high levels of respect for others.

This is a school which knows itself well. Governors are regular visitors to the school. As a result, they have an accurate view of the school and a clear vision for future priorities. The trust has provided effective support. Staff say that they are proud to work at the

school. They value the work of leaders to support their well-being and workload. Staff morale is very high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in September 2017.

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	141478
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10288349
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Stevenson
Headteacher	Dani Seaman
Website	www.stjosephscatholicprimaryvoluntaryacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 September 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Nottingham. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Catholic school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in October 2017.
- The school does not use any alternative education 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders. The inspector spoke with groups of staff and pupils. He met with members of the governing body and a trustee. The inspector also met with the CEO and other trust officers.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning. The inspector listened to pupils reading aloud to a familiar adult. He also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in a range of other subjects.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector spoke with parents and carers at the school gate. He also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, and to Ofsted's staff survey.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including school improvement plans and minutes of governors' meetings.

Inspection team

Martyn Skinner, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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