

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Bridge Road, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3DD

Inspection dates: 27 to 28 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Deirdre McNeill. This school is part of the Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust are also responsible for running the school. The chief executive officer, Bill James, is responsible for the trust and is overseen by a board of directors chaired by Col. Dave Kenny OBE.

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 September 2011.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish in this exceptional school. They thrive in the 'St. Joseph's family' because everyone takes care of one another. Pupils strive to treat others as they wish to be treated. This is evident in the warm and respectful relationships throughout the school. The behaviour of pupils is excellent, and their manners are impeccable.

Pupils are challenged to be the best versions of themselves. This is rooted in the school's strong Catholic vision, known to the children as 'Welcome, care and work hard'. The school has very high expectations of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils relish learning and are ambitious to do their best. By the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve significantly above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. They also achieve consistently highly in other subjects.

The school prioritises developing pupils' academic and personal development in equal measure. This is reflected in the extensive range of clubs and events. Leadership roles provide excellent opportunities for pupils to be advocates for their peers. Pupils develop a deep understanding of personal responsibility and learn how to positively contribute to the school and wider community. They are inspired by the education they receive and develop into well-rounded, respectful individuals.

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

The school is relentless in its determination to provide all pupils with an education of the highest quality. The excellent curriculum is designed to reflect the local community and military context. Staff have forensically sequenced the precise content that pupils will learn across the curriculum. The quality of pupils' work is excellent because pupils are supported to gradually build and recall their understanding over time. For example, pupils learn about simple framing structures in key stage 1, which progresses to designing, building and evaluating large, complex motorised models by the end of key stage 2.

The quality of teaching is consistently remarkable. In Reception, children's language skills are enriched by skilled staff, who extend and deepen their understanding. Staff across the school exemplify and model precisely what they want pupils to learn. They are highly effective in checking pupils' understanding and use this information to support learning. The school prioritises identifying pupils with SEND as early as possible. Staff provide bespoke adaptations to support these pupils to achieve highly. The school provides individualised support for other pupils who are disadvantaged to ensure they achieve success that matches their peers. The consistency of teaching supports pupils to learn the ambitious curriculum very securely. Pupils are proud of their high-quality work across all subjects. Their high achievement is reflected in published results that are well above the national average.

The teaching of reading is exemplary. Children in Reception start the reading programme swiftly and with purpose. This continues throughout the school and reading remains a clear priority. Staff use information from precise checks to ensure that pupils read books that are accurately matched to the sounds they have learned. Consequently, pupils develop into fluent and accurate readers. Pupils love reading and enjoy a broad range of carefully chosen books in the well-used library. They are keen to discuss their favourite authors and books, and this inspires them to continue reading at home.

Pupils are fiercely proud of their school. This is embodied in their highly positive attitudes to attendance and punctuality. Pupils understand the importance of attending school and being on time. The school has a supportive but firm policy to promote attendance and helping families. This has proved highly effective, with attendance rates significantly above national averages, including for the most vulnerable pupils.

Staff develop pupils' character exceptionally well. Pupils live up to the school's strong Catholic vision and values. They are kind and accepting of others. Pupils' respect and consideration towards others is a notable strength of the school. They acquire a deep appreciation and knowledge about different faiths and perspectives. They have a detailed understanding of the fundamental British values and how they relate to everyone. All pupils benefit from a coherent plan of exciting enrichment activities that complement their learning. The school ensures that pupils who are disadvantaged fully benefit from these experiences.

The school has a laser sharp focus on providing an excellent education. This is successfully realised. Leaders at all levels balance the promotion of pupils' academic and personal development. Everyone shares the relentless vision that every child will achieve highly. The school's spotlight on supporting pupils who are disadvantaged is exemplary. Staff appreciate the highly effective professional development and pastoral support, which enables them to focus on pupils' needs. Parents are exceedingly positive about the school and its provision. One parent's comment, reflective of many, described the school as 'as warm community that puts the child at the heart of what they do'.

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

Unique reference number	137422
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10288009
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	488
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair of trust	Col. Dave Kenny OBE
CEO of the trust	Bill James
Chair of governors	Richard Fridge
Headteacher	Deirdre McNeill
Website	www.stjosephsaldershot.org
Date of previous inspection	14 September 2011, under section 5 of the education act

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school became an academy in August 2011 under the name of the Catholic Academy Trust in Aldershot (CAT). In 2017, the name changed to Mother Teresa Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Portsmouth.
- The school's most recent Catholic Schools Inspectorate report was issued in May 2023, and the school was judged to be outstanding.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with the headteacher, senior leaders, teachers and pupils. The lead inspector met with the members of the governing body, including the chair of governors and board of directors and the chair of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, science, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' work from other subjects.
- 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 inspection team observed behaviour in lessons and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the school day. They considered the views expressed in Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of staff and considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Toby Martlew, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Diane Charman	Ofsted Inspector
Catherine Cottingham	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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024