

Inspection of St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Babworth Road, Retford, Nottinghamshire DN22 7BP

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 February 2024

Outcome

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Richard Hilton. This school is part of the St. Francis 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, Siobhan Kent, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin McDonagh.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a very welcoming school, where pupils enjoy their learning. Pupils are keen to share their enthusiasm for learning and their high opinion of their teachers. As one pupil commented, 'I like mathematics. That's because our teacher explains things like fractions really well.'

Expectations of work and behaviour are high. Pupils strive to meet these expectations. The school's '7 Rs' values thread through all aspects of school life. Pupils are very friendly and courteous. They conduct themselves as 'responsible' and 'respectful' learners. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional in class and around the school. There is a calm atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and happy. Relationships are very positive.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access all activities. They receive effective support to achieve well in line with their peers. Parents of pupils with SEND agree that this is a particular strength of the school's work.

Parents and carers have full confidence in the school. They appreciate the sense of community and the guidance provided for their children. As one parent explained, 'My daughter feels cared for, liked and respected at this school. They steer her well.'

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

Subject leadership is strong. The school has constructed an ambitious curriculum, which pupils enjoy. Pupils build up their knowledge in logical sequences. The curriculum provides regular opportunities for teachers to check what pupils know. This is happening in all

subjects. These checks help teachers to identify any misconceptions that pupils may have. Pupils are achieving well across the curriculum, including in mathematics and English.

Children in the early years are quick to learn the routines of school life and are very well behaved. Children engage with a well-planned early years curriculum. In Nursery, children enjoy taking orders in their Chinese restaurant. Excitement is evident as one child explains that tomatoes and noodles are on the menu. In the Reception Year, children take care to plan and review their learning. Across a wide range of activities, interactions with adults are positive. These conversations support and challenge children to become independent learners. This helps to ensure children are ready for key stage 1.

Positive attitudes to learning extend throughout the school. In lessons, pupils are eager to share their thoughts. Pupils in a history lesson explore questions on mummification. They show a lively interest in Ancient Egypt and in history generally. As one pupil commented, 'I like learning about what happened before we came into the world.'

The programme for teaching pupils to read is well established. The school is quick to spot any pupils who struggle with the phonics programme. Support is immediate for these pupils. As a result, all pupils achieve success in learning to read. The school prioritises reading in every year group. All pupils visit the school library on a regular basis to select books to read at home for pleasure. They enjoy sharing a variety of texts with their class teachers.

In mathematics, the school builds pupils' understanding in small steps. This approach begins in the early years. When necessary, teachers adapt plans to ensure that no-one falls behind. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They recap previous learning well. This helps pupils remember what they have learned. Pupils enjoy the challenge of mathematics. As one pupil explained, 'Mathematics is kind of fun and I like to do hard questions.'

Pupils have opportunities to broaden their horizons through a range of learning experiences. They take part in a variety of sports, including sports hall athletics and football. Other clubs, including gardening and Spanish, further develop pupils' interests. Most pupils attend at least one club. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. They serve in different roles, including as school councillors and as 'Mini-Vinnies'. In these roles, pupils make a real difference to the school and wider community. Pupils learn about people from different backgrounds. They show respect for others. The school has not yet developed a precise plan for teaching fundamental British values. As a result, some pupils do not have a clear understanding of these values.

Governors and trustees have a clear picture of the current strengths of the school. They work well with leaders to take the school forward.

The school has taken steps to manage staff workload and support staff well-being. Some staff members feel well supported. Others continue to have concerns about 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)

- The school has implemented strategies for managing staff workload and supporting staff well-being. However, these are not yet fully effective. As a result, some staff have concerns regarding workload and well-being. The school should establish clear processes for communicating with all staff about strategies to manage workload and to support their well-being. The school should then liaise with all staff to determine how effective these strategies are.
- The school's plans for teaching British values are not yet fully developed. As a result, some pupils do not have an age-appropriate depth of understanding of British values. The school should ensure that all pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the key values that are important in Britain today.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be good in March 2014.

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	142158
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10313297
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	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Martin McDonagh
CEO of the trust	Siobhan Kent
Headteacher	Richard Hilton
Website	https://www.st-josephs.notts.sch.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	24 April 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Hallam. The most recent section 48 inspection of this Catholic school, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in February 2019.
- 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 had 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, the chair of trustees and the chief executive of the trust.
- 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 in the playground. He also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey, 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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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