

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Upton

Moreton Road, Upton, Wirral, Merseyside CH49 6LL

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Inspection dates:

15 and 16 October 2024

## **Outcome**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Upton has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is an incredibly happy and welcoming school. Pupils throughout the school are delightful and eager to engage with visitors. They show their kind nature to those around them during their daily lives in school.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They understand the school's high expectations of their behaviour both in lessons and at play. Pupils benefit from staff knowing them very well as individuals. They are confident that if they have any worries, there is always an adult in the school who will listen and help.

There are many opportunities in place to broaden pupils' horizons, for example through whole-school trips and events. The school offers numerous extra-curricular clubs and activities such as invitations to go horse riding and on adventure days out. Pupils were excited to share about the wonderful delights that they cook and the sculptures that they made in after-school clubs. Older pupils relish the opportunities that they have to adopt responsibility for their younger peers.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), understand that staff expect them to work hard and produce work of a high quality. They rise to these expectations and achieve well. They enjoy helping and learning from each other.

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

In recent years, the school has revised the curriculum. The curriculum is ambitious for all, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. The choices that the school has made about what the pupils will learn has been purposeful so that learning is relevant and engaging. In most subjects, the school has clearly set out what pupils should learn and in what order. In areas where the curriculum is less well defined, there are occasions when staff do not select activities which will support pupils to learn the essential knowledge as well as they could.

The school carefully monitors what pupils know and can do. Typically, teachers identify and address pupils' misconceptions as they arise. However, in a couple of subjects, the school does not identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. This means that sometimes new learning does not securely build on what pupils already know and remember.

Pupils learn to read quickly, starting their journey in the early years. Children in the Reception Year are introduced to the sounds and vocabulary that will support them to become confident readers. They regularly enjoy sharing stories and rhymes. Staff deliver the phonics programme successfully. Those pupils who need additional help to learn to read receive this swiftly. Most older pupils read with accuracy and independence. They also enjoy talking about the stories that they have shared in class or at breakfast club.

Teachers benefit from high-quality training that helps them to deliver the curriculum consistently well. Effective training for staff means they choose resources well and make effective adaptations to support pupils with SEND. This helps these pupils to successfully access the same curriculum as their peers. This is all underpinned by the school's systems that accurately identify the additional needs of these pupils. In the main, pupils, including those with SEND, achieve well across a range of subjects.

Children in the early years are very well behaved. They follow established routines and learn cooperatively alongside one another. Behaviour across the school is highly positive. Kindness runs like a golden thread through how staff and pupils act in school. Pupils have excellent attendance. The school's systems and procedures to maintain high rates of attendance are very effective.

The personal development programme is a strength of the school. Pupils experience a broad range of opportunities that enhance their wider development and prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Many pupils have a strong moral conviction that everyone should be treated with respect, regardless of their differences. Pupils understand that people live in different types of families. They experience activities in school that bring British values to life, such as voting for head boy and girl roles and choosing the new school dinner menu. Pupils were excited to share the positive impact of their project on reducing the use of plastics, as well as their design for the new prayer garden.

Governors understand their duties well. They closely monitor how well the school operates at all levels. Governors have a clear focus on the quality of education provided by the school and carry out their duties effectively. Staff feel valued and proud to work at

this school. They appreciate the support offered by school leaders around their well-being, as well as the commitment to their ongoing professional learning.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a small number of subjects, the school is not sufficiently clear about the most important knowledge that pupils should learn and when this content should be taught. On occasion, this prevents pupils from gaining the depth of knowledge that they could. The school should refine the curriculum thinking in these areas so that staff are more knowledgeable about how to design effective learning for pupils.
- Occasionally, the checks that the school makes on pupils' learning do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. This means that some pupils move through the curriculum with gaps in their learning that are not addressed before new concepts are introduced. The school should ensure that staff know how to check pupils' learning effectively and to ensure that it is secure before moving onto new concepts.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 St Joseph's Catholic Primary School the school to be good for overall effectiveness on 16 and 17 April 2019.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105068
<b>Local authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	10347933
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	225
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Nicola Robinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Marrin
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjosephs-upton.co.uk">www.stjosephs-upton.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	16 and 17 April 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Shrewsbury. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in November 2022. The school's next section 48 inspection is due before November 2027.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school uses two registered alternative provisions for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector observed pupils from Years 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- 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 lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.
- The lead inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The lead inspector met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- The lead inspector looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- The lead inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to the online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The lead inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They took account of the responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey, including the free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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