

Inspection of a good school: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Old Road, Crayford, Dartford, Kent DA1 4DZ

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 July 2023

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are safe and happy and they work hard at this school. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. Pupils are respectful to staff, to visitors, and to each other. Pupils benefit from a well-thought-out curriculum which is broad and balanced. This begins in Reception, where children have a very strong start to school. Leaders are very proud of the inclusive nature of the school. This is reflected in the support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils access the same broad curriculum as their classmates.

Pupils are part of a very supportive school community. Leaders and teachers know the pupils and their families well. This means that any concerns can be quickly addressed. Parents and carers value the regular communication between school and home, and they appreciate that leaders and teachers are approachable and available to talk to.

Leaders want pupils to succeed beyond the academic. Pupils benefit from a range of activities that enrich their curriculum and broaden their horizons. This includes carefully thought-out theme days, such as environment days, as well as trips to museums, galleries and places of interest. Leaders ensure that these activities are accessible to all pupils.

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

Leaders make sure that children have a strong start to their time in school. The teaching of reading is prioritised and starts very early on in Reception. Staff are trained and regularly updated so that they can deliver the phonics programme accurately. Any pupils who need extra help with learning letters and sounds are quickly identified and given support to keep up with their classmates. Leaders and teachers are meticulous in ensuring that the books pupils are reading match the sounds they are learning in class. As pupils progress through the school, they read diverse and ambitious texts, including non-fiction and Shakespeare.

Leaders have put together a broad and balanced curriculum. They have thought carefully about how content is put together so that pupils are equipped to study more complex ideas as they get older. In mathematics, children in Reception become more confident in working with numbers because of regular revisiting and recapping. In later years, pupils continue to revisit earlier learning so that they learn more and remember more over time. Leaders have identified how each subject can support learning in other areas. For example, pupils practise their skills in art by drawing portraits of the World War Two leaders they have learned about in history.

Pupils with SEND are very well supported to access the curriculum. Leaders and teachers know their pupils very well, and they are quick to identify any additional needs. Teachers make adjustments in class to help these pupils, and leaders provide small group work, 1:1 help, and therapy sessions for pupils with more complex needs.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge, and they deliver the curriculum as intended by leaders. Sometimes, however, teachers do not check pupils' understanding of the subject content. This means that some pupils are unable to complete tasks, or they develop misconceptions. This leads to gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Leaders have very high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Adults are positive role models. They reward good behaviour. Pupils listen to their teachers and have positive attitudes to their learning. They know that unkind or discriminatory language is not tolerated. From the early years and onwards pupils play together well, taking turns and sharing.

Pupils' wider development is prioritised. A carefully considered programme of personal, social and health education teaches pupils important life skills in an age-appropriate way. Pupils learn how to stay healthy and safe, including how to keep teeth healthy, how to travel safely on public transport and how to cycle safely. Pupils are given opportunities to develop new talents, such as learning Mandarin or singing in the very popular school choir.

Leaders and governors have the same high ambitions for all pupils in the school. Governors know the school well, and they keep themselves informed by talking to pupils, staff and parents. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths. Staff feel valued, and benefit from ongoing high-quality training. Leaders have taken advantage of the benefits of being a small school so that families, pupils and staff feel part of a close-knit and caring community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are knowledgeable and committed to maintaining a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff are vigilant and report any concerns they may have, no matter how small. Leaders are pro-active and tenacious in seeking support for the most vulnerable pupils. Staff know the pupils and their families very well. This helps them to identify and address any issues before they become too serious.

Pupils feel safe. They know they can talk to adults in the school about any concerns they may have. Pupils have been taught how to keep themselves safe, including how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not check pupils' understanding quickly enough to be able to address any misconceptions or to go over work that pupils have found difficult. This means that pupils develop some gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding more routinely so any misconceptions and mistakes can be quickly addressed, and pupils do not develop gaps in their knowledge.

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 school to be good in June 2013.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	101457
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10268964
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Edgar
Headteacher	Amanda Truss
Website	www.st-josephs.bexley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a Roman Catholic voluntary-aided school in the Diocese of Southwark. The last section 48 inspection and published report was in 2016. However, the school recently received another section 48 inspection in June 2023, but the report had not yet been published at the time of this ungraded inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative education providers.
- Since the last inspection there have been changes to the school leadership, including the appointment of a new head of school. An executive headteacher currently supports the school on a part-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, he discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons,

looked at pupils' work and talked to teachers and pupils. The inspector also visited lessons in other subjects, and he looked at pupils' work and curriculum information.

- The inspector held meetings with the head of school, executive headteacher and members of the leadership team, and with members of staff, as well as a range of pupils. The inspector met with leaders responsible for SEND, behaviour and attendance, and pupils' wider development.
- The inspector looked at the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding and supporting pupils' welfare and well-being. This included looking at case studies and reviewing the school's single central record of pre-employment checks.
- The inspector spoke with parents, and he considered the survey responses from parents and staff.
- The inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body, and with a representative from the local authority. He also spoke with a representative from the Diocese of Southwark.

Inspection team

Bob Hamlyn, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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