

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

Bristol Road, Bristol Rd, Portishead, Somerset, BS20 6QB

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 December 2021

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this school, which is described as a 'happy family'. Pupils get along well. Older pupils like having jobs to care for the youngest children. The gospel values underpin the caring ethos that permeates the school. Pupils say bullying is rare and that staff resolve issues quickly. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and at other times of the day.

Pupils are keen to learn because teachers have high expectations. There is a strong curriculum in place, which supports pupils to achieve well. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, including the children in the early years foundation stage (EYFS). However, there are still some inconsistencies in a few subjects that mean pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), could do even better. This includes making sure that pupils who are still learning to read have phonics books that precisely match the sounds they are learning.

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

Leaders, including governors, are not complacent. They continually check how well the school is doing to get an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This enables them to take the right actions to improve the school. Recent changes in key leadership posts have not stalled improvement or interfered with the ambitions of the school. Leaders motivate staff and pupils. They have created a positive environment, where everybody feels valued and want the best for pupils.

Leaders have made the development of the curriculum a high priority. This has continued during the COVID-19 pandemic, so that pupils benefit from a well-considered curriculum. Leaders have carefully set out what they want pupils to know in most subjects. However, a few subjects still have some minor inconsistencies. For example, the smallest steps of knowledge in geography, history and computing are not as precise as they could be. These curriculum plans sometimes lack a logical order, such as developing pupils' knowledge of different types of maps in geography. Consequently, pupils do not gain as

full an understanding of the whole curriculum as they could. This includes how the curriculum is designed from, and through, the EYFS.

Leaders prioritise reading in the school. This has become an even higher priority for some pupils, due to the pandemic. Leaders have clear ambitions and strong plans to get pupils reading. These start with developing children's communication and language skills in the new nursery. This continues with effective teaching of phonics in the Reception Year and beyond. The progression of phonics builds appropriately through a coherent approach. However, sometimes teachers' assessments do not identify the phonic sounds that pupils must learn or consolidate precisely enough. This means that the choice of reading books is not always matched closely enough to pupils' phonic knowledge. As a result, a few pupils, who still find reading difficult, find it hard to catch up.

Leaders support pupils to become responsible individuals as part of a caring, wider school community. Their emphasis on developing pupils' personal development prepares pupils well for the world around them and for life in modern Britain. This starts from when children join the school in the early years foundation stage. For example, children in the Reception class are taught to become independent through registering and tidying away for themselves. Pupils do not shy away from responsibility, such as being school councillors in Year 6 or taking the lead in developing the school grounds in Year 5. Consequently, pupils become responsible and reflective and are well prepared for the next steps in their lives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise safeguarding. They are diligent in their work to keep pupils safe. The school has effective systems for checking, recruiting and training staff in child protection. Staff know when, and how, to escalate their concerns. They work well with a range of external partners to ensure pupils' safety and their well-being. Leaders have also taken steps to help pupils recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including promoting pupils' mental health.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are some minor inconsistencies in a few subjects. These weaken the overall knowledge of pupils across the whole curriculum and prevents them from achieving their full potential. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum is coherent and logically sequenced in all subjects, including in the early years foundation stage.
- Despite the overall strengths of the phonics programme, some pupils' reading books do not match their phonic knowledge closely enough. This means a few pupils struggle when they practise reading. Leaders must ensure that phonics books are consistently matched well to pupils' needs, particularly for those who need to catch up.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged school to be good on 2–3 March 2016.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	109238
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10199663
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Andy Shiel
Headteacher	Greg Bath
Website	www.st-josephs.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	2 – 3 March 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and chair of the governing body took up post in September 2021.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is part of the Catholic Diocese of Clifton.
- The school opened an on-site nursery for three- and four-year-old children in September 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.

- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector looked at the single central register and checked the school's systems for monitoring and reporting safeguarding concerns. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead.
- The inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate provision and practice in the school. The inspector reviewed individual plans for pupils with SEND, to evaluate how well these are being implemented.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff and pupils to find out what it is like to be a pupil, or to work, in this school.
- The inspector met with a representative group of governors.
- The inspector reviewed key documentation, including the school's self-evaluation form, school action plans and monitoring records.
- The inspector checked all survey responses, including those from pupils, staff and parents. This included taking into account the 55 responses to Ofsted's free-text service, Parent View, as well as letters written directly to the lead inspector.

Inspection team

Stewart Gale, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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