

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

Walton Avenue, Penketh, Warrington, Cheshire WA5 2AU

Inspection dates:

8–9 January 2020

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this school. The positive relationships between everyone make St Joseph's Catholic Primary School a happy place to learn. Pupils that I spoke with told me that they feel safe. They are confident to talk to staff if they have any worries or concerns.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Teachers make learning interesting and fun. Most pupils work hard in lessons and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. I observed lots of good-humoured and positive interactions between pupils and staff.

Pupils make friends across year groups. During breaktimes and at lunchtimes, pupils are well supervised. Most pupils behave well. They move around the school in an orderly manner. Pupils told me that bullying sometimes happens but staff quickly sort things out.

Pupils have an active voice in this school through their roles as school councillors and digital leaders. They enjoy a varied range of after-school clubs and trips to broaden their experiences beyond the academic curriculum.

Most parents and carers are pleased with the quality of education that the school provides. Parents typically commented: 'This school is amazing. I see my child growing and developing in a positive environment.'

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

Leaders, staff and governors are united in their desire to ensure that all pupils get the best possible start to their education. Pupils are taught the full range of national curriculum subjects. Leaders have given careful thought to what they want pupils to learn. Planning of the curriculum is logical in many subjects, including mathematics and geography. Clear guidance is given to teachers about what they should teach and in what order. Subject leads make regular checks to make sure that curriculum planning is effective. Most pupils are keen to learn. Occasionally, poor behaviour disrupts learning.

Equipping pupils to become fluent and confident readers is a main priority for the school. Pupils enjoy reading. They make good use of their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. Comprehension skills are developing well. Older pupils talk confidently of their favourite authors and the type of books they like to read. Effective support is given to pupils who struggle with their reading. Pupils achieve well in reading and phonics.

Nevertheless, leaders are keen for pupils to do even better and have introduced new ideas. For example, leaders have reviewed the approach to the teaching of phonics and reading. However, it is too soon to see the full impact on pupils' reading achievement. More could be done to raise the profile of reading within the learning environment in key stages 1 and 2. In addition, pupils do not have enough access to books which deepen their learning in subjects such as science, history and geography.

Pupils' mathematical skills are developed right from the start. For example, in early years, I observed children identifying the properties of 2D and 3D shapes, counting in sequence and adding numbers to 10. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they explain new learning well. They make effective use of assessment to plan activities that build on what pupils already know.

Pupils show a keen interest in geography. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 can remember what they learned in key stage 1. With excitement, they named the four countries that make up the United Kingdom and their capital cities. Some pupils could recall eight compass points and were able to confidently contrast life in Great Britain to that of Australia.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is accessible to all. They work well with families and external agencies to support pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that whenever possible, pupils with SEND have their needs met in class.

The provision in the early years is the jewel in the school's crown. In 2019, virtually all children achieved a good level of development. The learning environment is exciting and well resourced. Books are beautifully displayed everywhere. Adults take every opportunity to develop children's language skills. Children access healthy snacks, and drinks to quench their thirst.

Pupils learn about different faith and cultures such as Islam and Judaism. They enjoy trips and residential visits which broaden their life and educational experiences. Leaders and staff give due regard to pupils' physical and mental health.

Teachers appreciate that leaders do all they can to reduce their workload and ensure they have time for life outside of school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a high priority in the school. Leaders and governors ensure that all staff appointed to the school are suitable to work with children. All staff receive training in safeguarding. This enables them to identify early signs of abuse or neglect. Good levels of support are given to children and families facing challenging times. A filtering system is in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders recognise that outcomes in phonics and reading across the school could be even better. They have recently put in place a raft of new initiatives to improve outcomes in reading and phonics. However, it is too soon to see the impact of these actions. Leaders need to ensure that these new initiatives are embedded so that pupils' achievement in phonics and reading improves further and that it is sustained over time.
- Pupils have access to a good range of high-quality reading books. However, they do not have enough opportunities to access reading materials which strengthen their understanding within as wide a range of subjects as possible. Leaders need to ensure that pupils have more access to a broader range of texts to deepen their knowledge and understanding of subjects in the curriculum.
- Although improvements have been made, the learning environment across key stages 1 and 2 does not promote a real love of reading. Leaders should ensure that reading is given a higher profile within these areas of the school so that it reflects the high standard evident in the early years.
- Occasionally, low-level disruption slows learning. This is because staff do not always make their expectations of behaviour clear. Leaders should ensure that staff make pupils aware of their expectations with regard to behaviour so that learning is not disrupted.

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 school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 22–23 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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're 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	111373
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10122080
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	282
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kathryn Price
Headteacher	Alan Saunders
Website	www.stjosephs.warrington.dbprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	22–23 March 2016

Information about this school

- A new chair of the governing body has been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in February 2019.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection I held meetings with the headteacher, staff and governors.
- I met with a representative from the local authority and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the Diocese of Liverpool.
- I visited lessons in each key stage. I spoke to pupils at various times during the two days of inspection.
- I observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.
- I spoke with parents as they brought their children to school at the start of the day.
- I listened to pupils read from Year 2 and Year 3.
- I held discussions with staff which focused on safeguarding. I also examined a range of documentation relating to safeguarding.

- I carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics and geography. Deep dives are the methodology by which inspectors identify why a subject is as it is. This entails: discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and discussion with pupils.
- I considered the 59 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and read the free-text comments from parents. I also considered the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 64 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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