



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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"learning, growing, belonging ... happy together in God's family"

Ofsted Section 8 Inspection Headteacher's Supporting Letter January 2020

Dear parents and carers

We are delighted that Ofsted visited school recently and recognised the good work we are doing each day for our children.

The present arrangements for Ofsted Inspections only include a short letter to parents outlining its deliberations. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to give more detail to keep all informed and to celebrate the great work of children, staff and governors.

Please read this letter in conjunction with the Parent View school response, *You said, we did!*

What is it like to attend this school?

The overwhelming impression voiced by the Inspector, Sheila Iwaskow, throughout the preparation day and the two visit days, was one of positive recognition. St Joseph's is a good school where staff and governors work really hard to provide an environment and curriculum whereby all children can flourish not only academically but also emotionally.

Mrs Iwaskow commented several times on the strong relationships evident through observation and in conversation with many members of the school community. She spoke of positive behaviour for the most part and the determination by staff to support children experiencing difficulties. She spoke of a variety of opportunities for personal development and the wide and enriching curriculum. She reported that most pupils are keen to learn, though occasionally, poor behaviour disrupts learning. We are presently reviewing our behaviour policy in order to better support expectations for all.

Parents were very positive about the school and its care for your children and we are grateful for your trust in us.

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

Mrs Iwaskow was emphatic in her praise of our well-planned curriculum: one which builds on previous learning and prepares each child for the next stage in their learning. She could see strong connections from the Foundation Stage (*the jewel in our crown*) through Key Stages 1 and 2, so children were prepared for their transition to high school. Importantly, the Inspector recognised that high expectations were made for all children, including disadvantaged children and those with SEND.

Leadership was strong in many areas, especially mathematics and subject leaders were clear in their expectations of colleagues and children. Again, we are developing historians, geographers, artists!

A clear drive in reading development and reading for pleasure was seen across school with a

strong sequence of skill development from the Foundation Stage onwards. Mrs Iwaskow was aware of the work we have done to strengthen teaching in phonics and in comprehension. Likewise, she could see the continuing work we are doing, with the support from parents, to enhance the profile of reading across school. One of her observations was to give more opportunities for children to read non-fiction books for pleasure, perhaps even taking them home for bedtime reading. We are at present engaging with local businesses to sponsor boxes of books for precisely that purpose.

Mrs Iwaskow recognised the school's efforts to widen children's understanding and experience of the wider world through studies of world religions and through learning opportunities outside school.

She also recognised the value the school gives to the mental and physical wellbeing of children and staff.

Safeguarding was seen as a high priority in school with robust systems in place and a clear understanding by all staff of their roles in its support for personal growth and development.

Education is not preparation for later life: education is part of life itself. Our core purpose at St Joseph's is to nurture and awaken in each child a desire to learn and provide some of the skills necessary for that endeavour. It is a privilege to do so and a role which we share with parents in nurturing each child as a unique gift from God.

Central to our work is the development of knowledge, skills and an attitude for learning and the focus of this is the taught curriculum. However, underlying the taught curriculum is a curriculum that reveals our beliefs. It is the way we teach, the way we are with each other in our daily interactions. It is our culture.

'Catholic Education aims not only to communicate facts but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom.' St John Paul II

Again, I would like to say thank you to all our school community for the support you give. It is a privilege to play a part in the development of your children. As a school we will strive to make St Joseph's stand out as a place of love and learning.

Alan J Saunders
Headteacher