

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Darlaston

Rough Hay Road, Darlaston, Wednesbury WS10 8HN

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 April 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary is an exceptional school. Leaders are highly ambitious for every child to be the best that they can be. They are relentless in their work to ensure pupils attend school regularly and are successful in securing good rates of pupil attendance. Pupils are happy and safe.

St Joseph's is a calm, orderly and purposeful environment. Leaders set high expectations of behaviour for all pupils. Bullying, harassment and violence are not tolerated. Pupils' behaviour and conduct are exemplary. Any pupil who struggles is given highly effective support to manage their behaviour well. Leaders resolve any incidents of poor behaviour swiftly and effectively. In classrooms there is a 'learning buzz'. Pupils show high levels of motivation and commitment to their education. Pupils play well together outdoors. There is a strong sense of collaboration and respect. Older children support and help younger pupils when playing. They are caring and good role models.

Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities to broaden pupils' talents and interests, including clubs, trips and visits. Activities such as mathematics or science ambassadors and 'Mini Vinnies' allow pupils to take on responsibilities in school.

Parents are positive about the high standard of education their children receive.

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

Leaders have carefully constructed the school's curriculum to ensure that it is ambitious for all pupils. It is clearly scoped and sequenced so that teachers know what to teach and when to teach it. Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They plan interesting lessons that engage and motivate pupils. Teachers check pupils' understanding in lessons and over time. They clarify any misconceptions and address gaps in knowledge effectively. The youngest children get off to a great start. Adults are highly skilled to effectively meet the needs of 3-, 4- and 5-year-olds. They make sure that children learn to read and write simple sentences and have a good grasp of early number. All pupils take great pride in their work and it is well presented. Pupils consistently achieve highly, including the most disadvantaged. They meet the high expectations leaders set.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the help and support they need to be successful in school. They identify their needs swiftly and ensure that any barriers to learning are overcome. Leaders make sure plans are implemented effectively. All pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

Leaders prioritise reading. Staff are highly skilled in teaching early reading. Pupils are taught phonics right from the start. Reading books match the sounds that pupils are learning. Pupils who fall behind are quickly identified. They are well supported

and make rapid progress to catch up quickly. As a result, pupils learn to read accurately, fluently and confidently.

Leaders provide an exceptional personal development offer for all pupils. Pupils learn not to discriminate against others, such as by race or gender. They learn about different religions, cultures and celebrations. For example, younger pupils recently visited a Hindu temple to learn more about Diwali. They created Rangoli patterns and listened to the story of Rama and Sita. This helps pupils to understand and respect difference and understand the diverse society they live in. Pupils think about life beyond school. For example, they learn about the role of mathematics and science in different careers and how to manage money. Pupils know what democracy is and the role of the local member of parliament. They value each other's contribution in discussions, learn to ask questions and share their views. Pupils learn about the importance of healthy food and lifestyles. They learn strategies to promote positive mental health, such as mindfulness, yoga and gardening. Pupils learn about the impact of plastics on the oceans, renewable energy and how precious a resource water is.

Pupils enjoy clubs, trips and visits, including a museum visit, orchestra performance, theatre production, outdoor residential and sports clubs. These enhance the curriculum offer and help children to understand and appreciate their world. There is strong take up and the most disadvantaged pupils consistently benefit from this excellent work.

Senior leaders and governors work very well to embed the school's Catholic values. They make sure all pupils are treated equally and fairly. Governors hold the headteacher to account effectively for the performance of the school. Subject leaders check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. They make any necessary improvements to make sure all pupils achieve well. Staff value the high expectations that leaders set. They are well supported by leaders to manage their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff are trained to identify any welfare concerns and take appropriate action. Leaders respond robustly to any concerns staff raise. They work in partnership with a range of agencies to make sure that any pupil in need of help gets the support they need.

Pupils learn how to keep safe when online and out and about. This includes sun safety, road safety and firework safety. They learn about healthy and safe relationships, the risks they may face and what to do if they feel unsafe.

Leaders make sure that rigorous vetting checks on staff are undertaken prior to starting work at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

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	104235
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10256944
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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Richard Dalton
Headteacher	Kathleen Hinton
Website	www.st-josephs.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 May 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school operates a breakfast club.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, French, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also met with leaders of history and PE to make further checks on the curriculum offer.

- Inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors reviewed reading resources.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation on the school's website.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's safeguarding arrangements. This included examining the record of employment checks on school staff.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at other times during the day.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher the special educational needs coordinator, the designated safeguarding leader, curriculum leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View, pupil surveys and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Nicola Price

Ofsted Inspector

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