

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Wx)

Royal Avenue, Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire EN8 7EN

Inspection dates:

12 and 13 November 2024

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Barbara O'Connor. This school is part of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Andrew Celano, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Father Peter Harris.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are incredibly proud to be part of this welcoming and inclusive school. Pupils and families immerse themselves in all aspects of school life. For instance, international day helps pupils to learn about each other's cultures and aspirations week explores different careers. This creates a strong sense of community.

The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils are keen, curious and inquisitive learners. They value the learning opportunities the school provides. This is reflected in lessons where pupils are diligent and highly engaged. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. From the early years onwards, staff have clear expectations and well-established routines. Relationships are respectful. Pupils do the right thing because they know it is the right thing to do. Pupils are polite, kind and support one another. They enjoy social times and play happily.

Pupils relish the many opportunities to be actively involved in their school. This includes a wide range of roles of responsibility. For example, as 'primary minister', house captains or a subject or anti-bullying ambassador. Pupils take these roles very seriously. They have a voice, which is heard and acted upon. The school uses pupils' ideas, suggestions and feedback to improve their school experience.

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

The school, trust and governing body share a commitment to give pupils the best possible education and prepare them for their next stage of education. The trust effectively supports the school to learn from others and share their own best practice. This means the school is continuously looking at what it can improve further.

The school's curriculum is ambitious. Learning has been carefully sequenced with key knowledge and skills for pupils to learn identified. Deliberate thought has gone into making the curriculum meaningful for pupils. For example, the school's work on diversity and equality is woven meticulously through the academic curriculum to promote pupils' wider development. Pupils learn about the importance of treating everyone with respect and valuing difference. This inclusive ethos continues throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well across the curriculum. This is because their individual needs are swiftly identified, and effective support is put in place.

The curriculum is implemented by skilled and well-trained staff. Children in early years get off to a great start because adults sharply focus on developing children's communication and language and basic skills. Starting in Reception, children have daily phonics sessions. These provide lots of opportunities for pupils to practise and rehearse their phonics knowledge and reading skills. Regular checks identify any gaps in pupils' learning and support is put in place to help them catch up. As a result, pupils become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils build their knowledge over time. They talk enthusiastically about their learning. There is an excitement and thirst for what they will be learning next. Pupils can recall and describe, using subject specific vocabulary, what they have been taught. New learning is introduced clearly. Staff check pupils' understanding regularly and quickly address their misconceptions. Pupils with SEND receive effective support with adaptations put in place. Some pupils with SEND, who have more complex needs, follow a tailored, bespoke curriculum that is specific to their needs and next steps. Pupils are able to make meaningful links across the curriculum. For example, older pupils use and apply their mathematics knowledge to support their learning in other subjects. Examples of this include when pupils measure with accuracy during science investigations and create products in design and technology.

The provision to prepare pupils for life beyond the school is exceptional. The wider opportunities and experiences are carefully mapped out. This enriches the taught curriculum and develops pupils' talents and interests. The eight school values guide pupils

to become positive citizens of society. For example, the values of respect and self-control are reflected in their behaviour in lessons, around the school and in their relationships with one another and adults. Pupils take part in fundraising for charity, visiting the local theatre and celebrations of festivals and national events. Pupils' active involvement in their school is extensive. They have leadership opportunities that also provide support and care for one another. For example, the 'lighthouse keepers' champion equality and celebrate how everyone is unique. They do this through delivering assemblies to the whole school. Alongside this, they are points of contact for other pupils should they feel they have not been treated fairly or equally. This makes every child feel valued for who they are.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, the school to be good for overall effectiveness in April 2017.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148492
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345539
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Father Peter Harris
CEO of the trust	Andrew Celano
Headteacher	Barbara O'Connor
Website	www.stjosephsherts.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- This is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Westminster. The last statutory inspection of its denominational education and collective worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, was in January 2018. The next section 48 inspection will take place by 2026.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the associate headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and spoke to some pupils about their learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector spoke with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors and spoke. The inspector also spoke with the CEO and other trustees and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

Inspection team

Julie Wright, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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