

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

The Avenue, Walford Road, Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 5AW

Inspection dates:

31 January and 1 February 2024

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at St Joseph's RC Primary School. Parents and carers share their children's enthusiasm for the education provided. They greatly value how well staff communicate with them and treat pupils as individuals.

Adults forge good relationships with pupils. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms and corridors. Pupils enjoy their learning and behave very well in lessons. At social times, they play happily together. Pupils know there is always an adult to turn to who can resolve any issues. This helps all pupils to feel safe. Pupils attend well.

Pupils benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum. This is well planned. Children get off to a great start in the early years, and learning moves smoothly from one key stage to the next. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils learn well and soon become competent readers. They are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils enjoy an exceptional range of additional opportunities. These include trips to relevant places, and clubs after school and at lunchtime. At the time of the inspection, pupils were enthusiastically rehearsing a production of 'Matilda' for a performance in the town's theatre.

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

The school makes learning to read a top priority. Starting in the Nursery class, a structured and rigorous programme ensures that children learn about letters and sounds in an effective sequence. Staff use the programme's resources in a consistent way. They check on what each pupil knows and can do. The school involves parents fully in supporting their children's reading, and makes sure that pupils read frequently to an adult. Pupils who find reading more difficult are supported to keep up. Books for younger pupils are matched well to their knowledge of phonics. Across the school, pupils read widely and often, and quickly become confident readers.

Pupils study the full range of subjects in the national curriculum. In each subject, the school has broken learning down into manageable steps. These steps help pupils to add new knowledge onto what they already know. For example, in art, pupils learn about and practise different painting techniques before using them to create their own pictures. In mathematics, pupils make excellent use of practical equipment to consolidate their thinking. Regular opportunities to recall their knowledge help pupils to remember their learning in the longer term.

Provision in the early years is very strong and this supports children to be ready for learning in Year 1. Across the school, teachers have secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. They identify the important vocabulary they expect pupils to learn in each topic, and ensure that pupils use it. For example, Year 2 pupils are able to explain that multiplication is a commutative operation. Teachers present information clearly, and promote effective discussion. In some subjects, however, they do not implement the curriculum quite as leaders intend. This means that pupils miss some elements of the curriculum. Teachers check on what pupils have learned, and in general, provide useful feedback. They also encourage pupils to assess their own work.

The school promptly identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Staff draw effectively on guidance to ensure that pupils' needs are met. As a result, pupils with SEND are able to make good progress through the full curriculum. Pupils who receive extra help do not miss out on other learning.

From the start, the school sets high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Staff apply the school's rules fairly and consistently. This ensures that pupils behave well in lessons. Disruption to learning is rare. Pupils demonstrate consistently positive attitudes to learning, and generally take pride in their work. They show consideration for each other, and courtesy to adults.

A range of rich experiences contribute to pupils' learning. For example, pupils have recently visited a local care home, HMS Belfast, and a mosque in Gloucester. Pupils benefit from a planned programme of personal and social education. They learn about different cultures and traditions and learn to respect others and value diversity. Pupils contribute significantly to the leadership of the school. Curriculum ambassadors, for example, meet with leaders to discuss what might help them to learn better.

Leaders have ensured that everyone works together to enable pupils to be confident, caring citizens well prepared for the future. Staff believe that leaders are always ready to listen to their views. They say leaders are considerate of their workload. Leaders have provided effective support for inexperienced teachers joining the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, learning sequences are not always implemented entirely as the school intend. As a result, some pupils do not learn everything that is required. The school should ensure that the curriculum is delivered, monitored and evaluated effectively.

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 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014

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	116911
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10294526
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mrs Lindsay Wise
Headteacher	Mrs Hayley Francis
Website	www.st-josephs.hereford.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	19 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Joseph's RC Primary School is a Roman Catholic faith school within the Archdiocese of Cardiff. The religious character of the school was last inspected in March 2019. The next section 48 inspection will take place before the end of the 2027/28 academic year.
- Some of the children in the Nursery attend part-time.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. Meetings were also held with the SEND coordinators and curriculum leaders.

- The chair of governors and four other governors met with the inspector. The inspector spoke by telephone to representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- The inspector spoke with pupils at social times, and with groups of pupils more formally.
- 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 reviewed a range of documents, including evaluations and improvement plans. He also reviewed the school's attendance and behaviour records.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View. The inspector met with parents at the start of the second day of the inspection. He also considered responses to Ofsted's survey for staff and pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. He also scrutinised their work in some other subjects.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils from Years 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.

Inspection team

Martin Spoor, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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