

# Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Chapel Street, Devonport, Plymouth, Devon PL1 4DJ

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Inspection dates: 4 and 5 May 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils feel proud to attend St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. They try hard to meet leaders' high expectations. Staff take the time to understand pupils' individual needs. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive the help they need to be able to learn well.

All parents who responded to the parent questionnaire say that their children are happy and safe at St Joseph's. They are overwhelmingly positive about the recent changes at the school. Parents value the individual care and attention that pupils receive. Leaders ensure that parents know how to support pupils with their learning at home. Families who are new to the school community feel welcome. They often recommend the school to other parents. A parent commented, 'It is an amazing experience being part of this school community.'

Pupils say that bullying is rare. They feel safe because they know staff are there to look out for them and listen to them. There are strong relationships based on respect between staff and pupils. Consequently, most pupils behave well. Classrooms are calm and orderly. Some pupils receive specialised support to help them to behave well. Pupils take pride in being play leaders at social times.

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

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils benefit from a high-quality phonics curriculum. Staff understand the school's approach to teaching phonics. Leaders provide a regular cycle of training. Staff quickly spot pupils who fall behind. They make sure that pupils get the extra help that they need to catch up. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and read for pleasure at home. They talk positively about their reading in the daily 'book talk' sessions. Pupils read books that are suitable for their reading ability. This builds their confidence and fluency as they move through the school. Teachers encourage pupils to read widely and often. Adults act as reading role models and recommend their favourite books.

Children get off to a strong start in the Reception Year. Learning is well organised and prepares children for the curriculum in Year 1. For example, children learn about positions on a map and have a basic understanding of direction. Children take turns and show care towards each other. They listen intently to adults and have positive attitudes to their learning.

Leaders have made recent improvements to the curriculum. It is ambitious for all pupils, including those with SEND. Teachers know what they want pupils to learn. They explain tasks clearly. Leaders ensure that pupils can build knowledge because the sequence of learning is well considered. However, assessment is inconsistent. Teachers are sometimes unsure of what pupils know and remember. As a result, teachers do not always adapt their teaching well enough.

Curriculum leaders know their subjects well. They check how their subjects are being taught in each year group. Leaders know what is working well and share areas for development with teachers. However, some teachers do not have secure enough subject knowledge in all the subjects that they teach. Consequently, they do not break learning down into small enough parts. Learning activities do not always help pupils to know more and remember more.

Pupils with SEND are supported well. Pupils' needs are identified as early as possible. Staff take the time to work out the best ways for pupils to access the full curriculum. Parents, teachers and pupils work together to reach successful outcomes.

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging. They, and their parents, appreciate the 'family feel' that leaders create. Pupils consider it to be a unique feature of St Joseph's. They feel that adults treat them fairly and with respect. Pupils understand the school rules. They say that 'only their best is good enough'.

Pupils have a voice in the school through roles on the school council. They speak fondly of their trips and visits, including a recent theatre trip. Pupils are considerate and present themselves confidently. They respect and appreciate differences. Pupils learn about people who have beliefs that are different to their own. They understand the world around them. Pupils visit the adjoining church regularly. They learn how to reflect and consider how their choices impact others.

Staff's morale is high. They consider leaders to have a clear vision for the school's future. Leaders have made many recent improvements. Staff say that leaders have thought about their well-being and workload throughout the changes. Leaders, including governors, have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors ask suitable questions to check that leaders' knowledge of the quality of education is accurate.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff receive appropriate safeguarding training. Staff quickly identify pupils causing concern. There are robust procedures in place for reporting concerns. Leaders know pupils well. They show determination in securing the right support for families.

Leaders make the appropriate checks when staff join the school. They record the checks accurately on the single central record. Staff understand the school's whistle-blowing policy.

Pupils have a secure understanding of how to keep safe online. They know what the possible risks are.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some teachers do not have secure subject knowledge in all the subjects they teach. They do not break learning down into small enough parts. As a result, learning activities do not always help pupils to know more and remember more. Leaders need to ensure that teachers receive support to strengthen their understanding of each subject.
- Assessment across the curriculum is inconsistent. Teachers do not always adapt their teaching to reflect what they learn from assessment. Leaders need to ensure that there is a consistent approach to assessment across the curriculum. This will enable teachers to make adaptations to learning where necessary.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140764
<b>Local authority</b>	Plymouth
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227949
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	195
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ruth O'Donovan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mark Dyson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-josephs.plymouth.sch.uk">www.st-josephs.plymouth.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12 and 13 October 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is part of Plymouth CAST multi-academy trust.
- The headteacher joined the school in 2021.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- A section 48 inspection was carried out in March 2016.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this 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 met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, members of staff, parents and representatives from the trust and governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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 spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors checked the procedures for keeping pupils safe, including scrutinising the single central record.
- An inspector considered responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. The inspector also took into consideration responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors met with pupils and staff to gather their views and find out what is it like to be part of the school.
- An inspector met with parents at the school gates on the second day of the inspection. They also visited the before-school club.
- Inspectors looked at the school's plans for improvement, leaders' self-evaluation, minutes of meetings, monitoring documents and reports from the trust.

### **Inspection team**

Jane Dennis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Iain Freeland

Ofsted Inspector

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