

Inspection of a good school: St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Sunderland

Rutland Street, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR4 6HY

Inspection dates:

15–16 October 2019

Outcome

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Sunderland continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this happy and welcoming school. Staff have high expectations of all pupils. They expect pupils to work hard in all they do. The school's motto, 'Strive to be better than your best', is evident in all classrooms. Pupils rise to the challenge and say that their teachers help them to improve their work.

There are lots of extra-curricular activities that pupils can enjoy. They cover music, arts and sporting events. Leaders nurture pupils' talents. They also signpost pupils to a variety of other clubs.

Pupils say that bullying is rare, and that there is no name-calling. A review of school records would confirm this. Pupils know what bullying is and the different forms it can take. They are confident that teachers will deal with any issues straight away. Older pupils can explain how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. They were less clear about aspects of online bullying associated with social media. Leaders are implementing a new scheme of work for pupils' personal development. It will support teachers to build pupils' knowledge of this aspect of personal development better.

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

Leaders make sure that all pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. Curriculum leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They have worked hard to develop schemes of work that build pupils' knowledge step by step.

In mathematics, pupils are very secure with number facts. This starts in the early years. Here, children gets lots of practice with their counting and measuring. Teachers in key stage 1 and 2 plan precise activities that build pupils' number skills. At the end of key stage 2, pupils' outcomes in national tests are well above the national average. Yet

mathematical reasoning and problem-solving activities are not planned with the same exactness.

Pupils enjoy their reading. They have a wide range of books to choose from to practise their reading at home. Their books are well matched to their phonics knowledge. There is a strong and consistent programme of phonics in place. It supports pupils to be accurate with their reading and spelling. Almost all pupils reach the phonics screening check in Year 1. The phonics programme continues into Year 2. Leaders are changing this. They are placing greater emphasis on developing pupils' reading comprehension skills.

In early years, children get off to a secure start in their early reading. Children in Nursery hear lots of stories and rhymes. They retell these stories during independent play. Children in Reception access a daily phonics session. However, lessons lack the precision of those visited in Year 1.

From September 2019, leaders have opened a base for two-year-olds. This is well resourced. Staff make sure that children are well looked after and safe. Children in the unit have settled into their routines well. They are confident and happy. It is difficult to think that they have only been in school a matter of weeks. Already, they are learning nursery rhymes and exploring books.

Foundation subjects are taught through a topic. This links different subjects together. It provides a useful context to engage pupils in their learning. Pupils enjoy the varied activities that teachers plan for them. They are able to remember important facts that they have learned. Yet pupils do not develop a deeper understanding of key concepts. For example, in history, important concepts such as change, sovereignty and chronology are not planned for step by step. The actions leaders are taking to improve this are appropriate.

All pupils access the same curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. They are set targets linked to their needs. Not all targets set for them are as precise as they need to be. Leaders are taking the right action to improve this.

This is a happy school, where staff feel valued. Leaders do all they can to consider teachers' workload. Teachers appreciate this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders check that anyone wishing to work at the school is fit to do so. They make the right employment checks. Staff record these on an electronic record. Administrative omissions were put right during the inspection.

Leaders make sure that staff receive regular safeguarding updates in daily briefings. There is a secure safeguarding culture within the school. Lunchtime supervisors are

vigilant when watching the school's perimeter fencing. They make sure that pupils do not engage in chat with passers-by.

Staff know what to do to report any concerns they may have. These concerns are then referred to appropriate professionals as soon as possible. A recently introduced electronic system stores a record of any referrals. The designated safeguarding officer checks the progress of these cases. Monitoring notes from these checks are not always recorded within the electronic system.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have reviewed their schemes of work for the foundation subjects. They have made sure that the important knowledge from the national curriculum is included in them. Leaders now need to make sure that key concepts are planned sequentially within all topics, so that pupils acquire a deep understanding of all foundation subjects.
- The culture of safeguarding in school is secure. Staff are vigilant in spotting any changes in pupils' demeanour and reporting it. Leaders have recently invested in an electronic programme to store records of such referrals. Record-keeping within this system is not fully established. Some contemporaneous evidence is not recorded as robustly as it needs to be.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Sunderland to be good on 9–10 March 2016.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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 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

Unique reference number	108841
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10110801
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	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Riddell
Headteacher	Damian Groark
Website	www.stjosephssunderland.school
Date of previous inspection	9–10 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- There is a higher proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language.
- There are fewer disadvantaged pupils than the national average.
- There are currently no pupils who have an education, health and care plan. There are fewer pupils with SEND.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I had several meetings with the headteacher, several members of the governing body including the chair, and a telephone conversation with the local authority representative. I met with the special educational needs coordinator, curriculum leaders for mathematics, reading, phonics and history.
- Through the inspection I looked at how well school leaders provide safeguarding training and updates for staff, and create a culture of vigilance. I talked to the designated lead for safeguarding, and reviewed the school's documents and records relating to safeguarding.

- I agreed with the headteacher to carry out a review of reading, mathematics and history as part of the inspection. Together with curriculum leaders, I completed connected inspection activities that included: discussions with leaders, lesson visits, work scrutiny, discussions with teachers and pupils.
- I reviewed the wider curriculum and pupils involvement in after-school clubs, events and visits. I also looked at how well leaders protect pupils from bullying and manage staff workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Diane Buckle, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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