

Inspection of St. Joseph's CofE Junior School

Orchard Street, Chichester, West Sussex PO19 1DQ

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St. Joseph's CofE Primary School is an inclusive, nurturing school, with a clear Christian ethos. The school's chosen bible verse, 'Love one another as I have loved you', underpins the way in which every pupil is individually valued and celebrated, by school staff and by each other.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of personal development opportunities. Pupils talk with great enthusiasm about the range of trips and visits that leaders provide. Pupils in Year 6 particularly enjoyed a recent visit to Fort Nelson, the Royal Armouries' national collection.

Leaders have ensured that there are high expectations both of pupils' behaviour and of what each pupil can achieve in their learning. New curriculums, designed to ensure that all pupils can achieve the best possible outcomes, have been introduced in several subjects. Most pupils now have very positive attitudes to learning.

Pupils know the school rules of 'ready, respectful, safe'. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is calm and pupils are respectful of staff. Pupils recognise that staff are there to help them with their learning, and also with any worries that they might have. Parents, particularly parents whose children have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), feel very well supported by the school.

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

The appointment of the headteacher in September 2019 was a turning point for the school. The headteacher quickly recognised that there was a great deal of work to do. Staff morale was low and pupils' behaviour needed to improve. In addition, the curriculum needed a significant amount of work.

A clear approach to behaviour management was introduced and this brought dramatic improvement. For the small number of pupils who have struggled with expectations, leaders have been determined to understand why. By identifying and addressing underlying causes, leaders have been able to secure long-term changes. Older pupils talk about the ways in which the school has helped them to learn to manage their feelings and positively re-engage with learning.

Early on in this journey, leaders recognised that reading was not sufficiently prioritised within the school. Too many pupils were not reading widely enough, or with enjoyment. Reading now has a high profile. Staff regularly share their favourite children's books and authors with pupils and promote high quality-discussion about books. This is improving pupils' reading attitudes and habits.

There is a clear reading curriculum in place that supports pupils to read and comprehend increasingly complex texts. Since the pandemic began, there has been a sharp increase in the number of pupils arriving to the school at an earlier stage of

learning to read. Pupils are currently being supported with reading by staff from the linked infant school. Leaders are in the process of retraining all staff in the junior school so that they can more effectively support those at an early stage of learning to read.

Leaders recognised that the curriculum in most subjects needed to be redesigned. This was to ensure that planned learning was sequential and would provide pupils with knowledge and cultural capital that would help them to succeed. In some subjects the curriculum is developed well, but in others curriculum thinking lacks clarity. In these subjects, it is not clear exactly what pupils should learn at each stage. This lack of shared understanding about what pupils should be learning makes it harder for teachers to plan effective lessons. It also makes it hard for teachers and leaders to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum.

Senior leaders, and trust executive leaders are aware of these weaknesses. They are already supporting subject leaders and teachers to build their subject-specific knowledge through the trust's professional development programme. Over the next term, there is planned training to consider curriculum thinking and design.

The school has very recently adopted a new curriculum to support pupils' personal, social and health education, and to provide relationships and sex education. This programme is built around developing positive mental health and well-being. Alongside this, pupils follow the school's 'working with others' curriculum. This curriculum focuses on trust, communication and problem-solving. It teaches pupils the social skills that they need to thrive now, and in the future. Pupils learn to identify and celebrate positive attributes in themselves, and also in others.

School leaders, executive trust leaders, and those responsible for governance, share a clear and unwavering vision for the school, underpinned by their Christian values. They are determined that the education pupils receive at St Josephs will 'enable every child to achieve their God given potential'. Local governors and trustees bring a wealth of experience and a great deal of commitment to their roles.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a clear culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff are trained to identify when a pupil might be at risk. Leaders responsible for safeguarding are rigorous in ensuring that children get the right help. In addition to annual safeguarding training, there is a clear programme of ongoing training and reminders for staff. Leaders have a keen awareness of key contextual risks for the school and ensure that these remain at the forefront of staff's minds.

Leaders work with families in a non-judgemental way, but with the interests of children always the priority. Safer recruitment processes are followed. Allegations about adults are appropriately managed, and staff know how to report any concerns.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum thinking in some subjects is not sufficiently precise, which leads to a lack of common understanding about what needs to be learned and in what order. It also makes it harder for leaders to monitor how well teachers are implementing the curriculum in these subjects, and how well pupils are making progress through the intended curriculum. Leaders need to ensure that curriculum thinking is sharpened so that leaders and teachers understand exactly what pupils need to learn in each subject. As this work is completed, leaders need to be rigorous in checking that the curriculum in each subject is being delivered as intended, and that teachers are ensuring that pupils are retaining the key knowledge and understanding they require to make the best possible progress.
- Following the start of the pandemic, leaders identified a sharp increase in the number of pupils arriving at the school an early stage of learning to read. Some of these pupils are also at an early stage of learning English. Leaders are in the process of transitioning to a new phonics programme intended to strengthen the support for these readers. Leaders must ensure that as the new phonics curriculum is implemented, all pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read are quickly identified and assessed so that they get the right support from the moment they join the school to ensure rapid access to the full curriculum.

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	143553
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10241517
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Archdeacon Luke Thomas Irvine-Capel (Chair of trustees), David Brixey (Chair of governors)
Headteacher	Lisa Hardy
Website	https://www.stjosephscejunior.school/
Date of previous inspection	19 November 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in September 2019.
- The special educational needs coordinator was appointed to the role of deputy headteacher in September 2019.
- The school is using one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school is a Church of England Primary School in the Diocese of Chichester. The Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in 2019.

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 met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors met with the chief executive officer (CEO) and deputy CEO of the multi-academy trust and a member of the trust school improvement team.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, 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. For the English deep dive, inspectors listened to pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 reading.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum planning, and spoke to leaders about curriculum development in a range of other subjects.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record and spoke to trust and school leaders, staff and pupils. Inspectors considered the safeguarding education that pupils receive. Throughout the inspection, leaders considered and checked the culture of safeguarding within the school.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including school improvement plans and minutes from recent meetings of the board of trustees.
- Inspectors talked to pupils formally and informally about their learning, what behaviour is like at school and whether they feel safe at school.
- Inspectors reviewed 10 responses to the staff survey and 14 responses to the parent survey, including the associated free-text comments.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Judith O'Hare

Ofsted Inspector

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