

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Poole

Sancreed Road, Parkstone, Poole, Dorset BH12 4DZ

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 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	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff care about pupils and parents in this school. They provided valuable communication throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and still do. Parents appreciate the listening hub the school provides.

Staff provide a safe place for pupils to learn in. Most pupils are happy. They feel able to speak with a trusted adult if they have concerns.

The multi-academy trust has raised expectations over time. There are many new middle leaders in the school, who are learning the importance of accountability. They are adding an important layer to the leadership of the school. Their focus is on improving the school curriculum.

There is a calm and orderly atmosphere. Pupils learn without disruption. There are rare moments when bullying occurs. Staff deal with it swiftly but, occasionally, it recurs. Leaders take this seriously and provide many ways for pupils to share issues.

The Catholic ethos sits at the centre of the school's work and its community. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths. The wider curriculum provides enrichment in music, choir, sports and many other activities.

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

Much work has taken place to improve the school curriculum. Leaders in the core subjects are ensuring that pupils make strong progress through the reading, writing and mathematics curriculums. Leaders in other subjects review and plan their curriculums annually. There is a tendency in some areas, including Reception Year, to overload the curriculum rather than concentrate on the critical knowledge that pupils need to know. Equally, some subject leaders have not considered the most effective ways to teach their curriculums. When this happens, pupils struggle to recall important facts.

Teachers are becoming more skilful in assessing pupils' work. Gaps are readily discovered so that pupils' knowledge improves. Teachers are making appropriate adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, pupils with SEND follow the curriculum more easily. Teachers know the disadvantaged pupils and ensure that they provide suitable support for their needs.

Children in Reception Year learn phonics as soon as they start school. Their fluency in reading develops well. Staff provide support immediately to younger pupils who need to catch up. Even the weaker early readers are making strides in reading accurately and with feeling. Teachers read stories to pupils throughout the school. They choose books wisely so that pupils understand the diversity and richness in literature. Teachers do not listen regularly to older pupils reading nor support them in their choice of books. At times, therefore, older pupils do not read books that are at a suitable stage in their understanding or fluency.

Teachers are not paying the same detailed attention to writing. Too many pupils, throughout the school, do not hold pencils and pens correctly. This hinders pupils from writing fluently. Children in Reception Year are not prepared effectively for Year 1 writing work. There are too many weaknesses in letter formation. Similarly, some of the older pupils do not write numbers correctly.

Leaders promote pupils' personal development successfully from Reception to Year 6. Pupils receive a well-designed personal, social, health and economic curriculum. Consequently, pupils understand how to take care of themselves and others. They have a mature awareness of how to keep healthy mentally. Meditation and reflection are a part of their daily lives. Pupils contribute to charities. Pupils in Year 6 take on responsibility as school leaders. Pupils understand democracy at a school level.

Older pupils speak confidently about the relationships and sex education and health education they receive. They understand the importance of consent in relationships. Pupils feel that staff treat every pupil in the same way. There is no discrimination about gender or protected characteristics.

The trust leaders provide a critical focus on the work of the school. The director of education is central to improving staff's understanding of the importance of clear thinking on how pupils learn. The chair of governors is new and deeply committed to the school's improvement journey. He receives training in his role from directors of the trust. Staff gain useful development opportunities from the many networks and subject hubs in the trust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads are vigilant in their duties and protect pupils. Staff receive regular and up-to-date training. They know how to identify and report any concerns about pupils who may be vulnerable. Leaders make sure that external support is provided at the right level to keep pupils safe.

Recruitment checks are undertaken thoroughly.

The school has suitable policies in place to raise awareness among staff and parents about the dangers of sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some curriculums, including the early years, pupils are not gaining knowledge in a carefully sequenced way. As a result, some pupils are not building on prior learning effectively. Leaders must ensure that curriculums are planned and implemented so that pupils learn more and remember more over time.

- Many teachers do not consider regularly the most effective pedagogy for teaching the curriculum. As a result, pupils are not able to remember and articulate their learning effectively. Leaders must ensure that teachers' subject pedagogical knowledge is strengthened so that pupils' experiences of learning are more effective.

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	140767
Local authority	Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole
Inspection number	10227982
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	388
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth O'Donovan
Headteacher	Neil McDermott
Website	www.sjcpschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Plymouth. The previous section 48 inspection took place in June 2016.

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 director of education, the chair of governors, a director of the trust, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the school improvement partner, staff and pupils.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, music 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.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record and discussed case studies of vulnerable pupils with the designated safeguarding lead. They spoke to staff and pupils about the training and education they had received about keeping safe.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of the staff and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Kathy Maddocks, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Jane Dhillon

Ofsted Inspector

Marcia Northeast

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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