

Inspection of a good school: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Exmouth

Regents Gate, Exmouth, Devon EX8 1TA

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 June 2024

Outcome

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Exmouth continues to be a good school.

The headteacher is Jacqi Stephens. This school is part of Plymouth Cast multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Zoe Batten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Elizabeth Ruth O'Donovan.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's Primary School is a caring school. Pupils' behaviour reflects the school's ethos of kindness and respect. Pupils take pride in their learning. They play well together. If pupils have any concerns, they know there are staff who will help them. As a result, pupils are happy and feel safe at school.

Older pupils are proud of the leadership roles they have. Pupils from the 'growing in faith together' team support younger pupils at breaktime to play and pray together. Members of the school council, eco-team and librarians play an important part in school life. All pupils have the opportunity to join the school choir and perform at local residential homes. These roles help pupils to be confident and provide opportunities to be active citizens.

Pupils learn how to stay safe online and in the local community. The curriculum for pupils' personal development is adapted to reflect the coastal region pupils live in. For example, pupils can explain the importance of identifying riptides when going to the beach.

Most parents are very positive about their children's experience at the school.

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

School and trust leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. They have built a culture where pupils are curious about learning. School leaders have ensured that staff have specialised knowledge in the areas they lead. As a result, the school's curriculum has been developed well to build knowledge and skills progressively over time.

The school has placed reading at the heart of the curriculum. Expectations of what pupils can achieve in reading lessons are high. In the early years, children start to learn phonics and begin to read simple sentences. The school ensures all staff are trained to teach phonics to a high standard. This means staff present phonics sounds clearly to pupils and regularly check pupils' understanding. Pupils are encouraged to decode unfamiliar words through the techniques they have learned. Through the use of monitoring, pupils who fall behind are identified quickly. Personalised support ensures these pupils catch up quickly. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes to reading and achieve well.

The wider curriculum has been carefully designed to include experiences that deepen pupils' understanding about the subjects they study. For example, pupils visit the Houses of Parliament to learn about history and democracy. Pupils also visit the local coastline and ecological sites to learn about geography and science. In discussions, pupils use subject-specific language accurately to explain what they have learned. For example, younger pupils explain that palaeontologists and archaeologists help them to learn about the past.

However, at times, the curriculum is not implemented in a way that reflects the school's ambitious intent. At times, learning activities do not match what pupils know and can do. This means activities do not always support pupils to move forward in their learning. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge as well as they should.

Children in the early years get off to a flying start. The environment is filled with activities that reflect children's interests. Children successfully learn about plants by growing seeds. They also learn about significant individuals, such as Florence Nightingale. Children then have the opportunity to role play helping others. Staff are skilled at asking children probing questions about what they are learning. This helps children to reflect on their learning. Staff introduce ambitious vocabulary to develop children's communication and language.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) learn the curriculum alongside their peers. The needs of pupils with SEND are identified effectively and suitable support is put in place. When necessary, adaptations, including the use of technology, are put into place to ensure pupils with SEND achieve the best possible outcomes.

Staff and pupils have positive relationships. This means pupils respond well to instructions from staff. As a result, incidents of low-level behaviour are rare. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Each morning staff greet pupils as they arrive. As a result of the school's actions, attendance is continuing to improve over time.

Governors and trustees are committed to the school. They understand their roles and provide the school with both support and challenge. Staff enjoy working at this school. They feel valued and appreciate the opportunities for professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not implemented consistently well across all subjects and classes. Learning activities do not always reflect what pupils can do. As a result, pupils do not build their knowledge as well as they should. The trust must ensure that staff are supported to implement the curriculum effectively so that all pupils benefit from the school's ambitious curriculum.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2018.

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	140766
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10334707
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ruth O'Donovan
CEO of trust	Zoe Batten
Headteacher	Jacqi Stephens
Website	www.stjosephsprimaryschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Plymouth Cast multi-academy trust.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in June 2019.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school operates its own nursery provision for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector met with leaders from the school and the trust.
- The inspector gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and by talking to parents before and after school. The inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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