

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Priory Road, Chalfont St Peter, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire SL9 8SB

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 May 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Caroline Lovegrove. This school is part of the St Thomas Catholic 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), Joe Richardson, and is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Catherine Davies.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's is a school that goes above and beyond for its pupils. The school ensures that pupils feel valued and that their individual talents are harnessed. Pupils are happy, and they keenly attend school. They welcome people from different backgrounds with open arms and treat each other with respect. Pupils trust the dedicated and caring staff to look after them.

Pupils lead the way. They enthusiastically take on positions of responsibility that the school community holds in high regard. The pupil leadership team is heavily invested in school life. Its actions lead to meaningful and positive changes. The Friends of St Joseph's School proudly brings the community together.

The school provides extensive opportunities for pupils. Consequently, they make great strides in their personal development. They are ready to take their place in society, recognising the positive impact they can have on the world.

Pupils become articulate, respectful, well-rounded young people. The school has high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Pupils work hard to meet these expectations. They behave exceptionally well and demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning. As a result, they make exceptional progress through the curriculum.

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

The school has gone from strength to strength in recent years. Every member of the school community makes sure that pupils receive the highest quality of education. Pupils attend school well, but this does not stop the school from expecting more. Pupils are under no illusion that they are at school to learn. Staff rightly expect a lot from them, and pupils rise to the challenge. Pupils consistently follow firmly embedded routines.

The school embraces equality and diversity. Well-trained, skilled staff waste no time quickly identifying pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils and their families appreciate this help. Pupils care about each other. They learn about healthy relationships and how to be kind to others. Prominently placed in the school hall, the 'wall of kindness' provides ample evidence of this, a wall featuring hundreds of positive messages written by and for pupils. Pupils learn about a wide range of religions and faiths. They learn to respect everyone regardless of background or beliefs. Pupils are thankful for the many clubs and visits the school organises for them. They particularly enjoy African drumming and often perform in the community.

Early reading is expertly taught. Children get off to a flying start with reading as soon as they join the school. The school makes regular checks on pupils' reading. This helps staff to provide timely support. The books pupils read are carefully matched to the sounds they have learned. Staff are enthusiastic readers. This rubs off on pupils, who enjoy reading a range of books as part of the curriculum and for pleasure. Older pupils are trained in phonics teaching. They support younger pupils effectively as reading buddies. The writing programme helps pupils transfer their phonics skills into the written word. Mathematics is taught precisely. Pupils learn number facts, including multiplications. They learn to solve problems and give detailed reasons that explain how they have worked out their answers.

The school's curriculum is ambitious, exciting and engaging. It is meticulously designed and delivered. The school has precisely identified what knowledge and skills pupils need to learn and when. The school delivers the curriculum effectively. Careful checks on pupils' learning mean that staff have an accurate understanding of how well pupils remember what it is they have learned. Teachers use this information effectively to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils. Pupils have a thirst for learning, immersing themselves in tasks and discussions. They produce high-quality work. Pupils have an exceptionally detailed knowledge and understanding of what they learn. Consequently, they achieve highly and are prepared very well for the future.

Leaders have a highly accurate picture of the school's strengths and priorities for further development. High-quality support from the trust and effective partnerships with the local authority and diocese help the school continuously refine aspects of its work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2017.

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	148671
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10341895
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	400
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Davies
CEO of the trust	Joe Richardson
Headteacher	Caroline Lovegrove
Website	www.stjosephschalfont.school
Date of previous inspection	11 July 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in December 2021. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2021. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in 2026.
- The current headteacher took up her post following the school's last Ofsted inspection.
- The school has a pre-school, which caters for two-year-olds.
- There is before- and after-school and holiday club provision on the school site, which uses part of the school building. However, this provision is not run by the school and is privately owned and operated by a separate company.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and special educational needs coordinator and some of the extended leadership team. He also met with the chair of the board of trustees, the CEO and members of the local academy committee. He held a telephone discussion with a representative of the Catholic Diocese of Northampton.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record; took account of 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 considered the views of parents submitted via Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He spoke to several parents in person. He also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff and pupils. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Jarvis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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