

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

Hazell Avenue, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire HP21 7JF

Inspection dates: 7 and 8 May 2025

Outcome

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Ann Taylor. This school is part of the St Thomas Catholic Academies 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 overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Catherine Davies.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's Catholic Infant School is a warm and inclusive community. This is centred around the belief that everyone is special. Pupils enjoy coming to school each day and attend regularly. The school is ambitious for all pupils and has high expectations of their learning. Pupils respond well to this, and as a result, pupils achieve well.

Pupils are kind to each other. They play and learn together harmoniously. Although pupils say that bullying is not common, they are rightly confident that they can talk to an adult if needed and any issues will be resolved. The school celebrates those who demonstrate the school's motto of all learning together. Pupils feel safe in school. They form strong and trusting relationships with their class teachers.

Pupils are taught the importance of playing their part in the school community. They benefit from roles and responsibilities such as being in the prayer group. Pupils enjoy participating in a range of extra-curricular activities, including sport, music and creative clubs. Pupils also benefit from fundraising at a local and national level. This helps them to think more deeply about the needs of others.

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

The school acts decisively to raise standards and embed change. Thus, the school continues to improve. There is a shared vision of excellence. Staff are positive about the school's ongoing journey of improvement. Everyone works well together to make sure

that changes impact positively on pupils. Staff value the actions taken to help them to manage their workload and well-being. The trust and governing body carry out their duties effectively to support the school's vision being realised more and more.

The school's well-sequenced curriculum sets out the steps of knowledge that pupils need to learn from Reception Year to Year 2. Staff have secure subject knowledge. This helps them to explain and model ideas well to pupils. Staff support pupils to address any mistakes or misunderstandings they may have. The school prepares pupils well for their next steps in learning. However, in some subjects, the school does not check if pupils have understood what has been taught well enough. This means that sometimes staff do not identify and address pupils' knowledge gaps and misconceptions. Consequently, some pupils in these subjects do not achieve as well as they could.

There is a clear ambition for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to achieve well. The school quickly identifies pupils' individual needs. This means adaptations in lessons for pupils with SEND are precise across the curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Teaching of reading is prioritised highly. Books used for practising are well matched to the sounds pupils have learned. Staff are well trained to help any pupils who struggle. Catch-up activities give pupils the valuable practise they need. Pupils learn to become fluent and confident readers, enjoying a range of fiction and non-fiction books. The school ensures that staff show pupils how to use their reading knowledge in their writing. This work starts in the early years. Pupils learn to develop their language skills and develop an enthusiasm for writing. As a result, pupils now produce more accurate and confident writing across the school. Similar improvement is also seen in mathematics. The school has revised its approach to ensure that pupils master essential mathematical concepts more securely.

Pupils focus well on their learning. Staff apply the shared school routines and procedures consistently. This begins in the early years. Staff ensure that pupils understand the rules of the school through the school's behaviour curriculum. Pupils learn to work together and communicate well with each other. Pupils then apply these skills across the school. The school works effectively with parents and carers and external agencies. This helps pupils who need support to improve their behaviour. For example, pupils learn how to adapt their behaviour in different situations effectively. The school checks pupils' attendance rigorously. When attendance dips, it acts swiftly to address this. As a result, pupils' attendance is in line with the national average.

During personal, social and health education lessons, pupils learn about important issues such as what makes a relationship healthy or not. They understand about protected characteristics and the importance of not discriminating against others. For example, they know that discrimination based on race is unacceptable. Pupils also benefit from the wide range of visitors to the school. This helps pupils to understand more about the world around them. For example, people from different faiths and cultures come in to talk to the pupils about their lives and beliefs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some wider curriculum subjects, the school does not check effectively whether pupils have understood what has been taught. This means that sometimes pupils' misconceptions are not identified and addressed, and they do not achieve as well as they could in these subjects. The school needs to ensure that systems are in place to check pupils' understanding so that teachers can help pupils to build and connect knowledge over time.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Joseph's Catholic Infant School, to be good for overall effectiveness in May 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 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	148672
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10341896
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	223
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Davies
CEO of the trust	Joe Richardson
Headteacher	Ann Taylor
Website	www.stjosephsrcinfant.bucks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school uses no alternative provision.
- This school is a part of the St Thomas Catholic Academies Trust. The school joined the trust in October 2021.
- The school is an academy converter school in the Diocese of Northampton. The most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in September 2021.

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 their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector spoke to senior school staff, subject leaders, members of the local academy committee, members of the board of trustees and the CEO.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' books.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. He also took into consideration the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Neil Pilsworth, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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