

Inspection of a good school: St John's Catholic Primary School

Innage Gardens, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 4HW

Inspection dates:

7 to 8 March 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils and children in the early years are happy, safe and secure. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school because teachers make them feel wanted and cared for. Pupils simply do not want to miss school. As a result, they attend school regularly. From the early years onward, pupils enjoy learning and try their best. They learn to be resilient, to see mistakes as another opportunity to learn and to be confident that they can achieve.

All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils and children in the early years quickly learn the values of 'ready, respectful, safe and forgiving'. Bullying is rare because pupils try to be kind to one another. They are very confident that when bullying does happen it will always be dealt with quickly. In classrooms, around the school and on the playground, pupils are respectful to adults and each other. They welcome visitors and are eager to share their pride in their school.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of visits, visitors and activities provided to broaden their experience and understanding of the world around them. They talk with excitement about their experiences on residential visits and the things they learned.

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

Leaders provide a broad and ambitious curriculum for children and pupils. There are clear and appropriate end points identified for each year group in all subjects. However, in too many subjects, learning is not organised in the best way to help pupils to build on what they already know. In these subjects, learning is not broken down carefully enough into the smaller steps that children and pupils need to reach the end goals. In addition, the learning of children in the early years is not always taken into account. As a result, pupils do not always learn and remember as much as they could.

Leaders have made sure that reading and learning to read is a priority in the school. As a result, all pupils and children quickly develop a love of reading. The recent change to a new phonics curriculum has been very successful. Teachers and teaching assistants are well trained and skilful in supporting pupils to become fluent, confident readers. Those who struggle are well supported to catch up. Leaders have ensured that pupils have many opportunities to read for pleasure as well as for learning. The reading club, reading buddies and the read and stay sessions for parents and carers are all well attended and thoroughly enjoyed. Leaders have worked very effectively with parents to promote the importance of reading at home.

Children and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders make sure that they visit local nursery schools to gather information about any learning needs that children may have before they join the school. They have ensured that within school, there are clear, well-understood routes for teachers and parents to raise concerns. This means that pupils' needs are identified quickly. Leaders make sure that teachers and other staff are well informed and have high-quality guidance about how to meet those needs.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and they often use this well to help pupils make links across subjects. However, occasionally teachers do not closely follow the agreed curriculum. When this happens pupils do not always learn what they should.

Assessment of pupils' learning in lessons is regular. Skilful questioning helps teachers to quickly see where extra help may be needed. However, in those subjects where the smaller steps of learning are not clearly set out, formal assessment is not as useful as it could be. This is because, in these cases, assessment strategies are not designed to accurately identify where there may be gaps in learning or misconceptions that need to be addressed.

Leaders are keen to ensure that children and pupils have every opportunity to develop their understanding of the wider world around them. Pupils learn about difference and about respect and tolerance. The school's values are part of everything they do and pupils know and practise what these mean on a daily basis. There are many ways in which pupils can become leaders and they relish undertaking responsibility. Over their time in school pupils learn to be caring and curious about others.

The vast majority of staff say that leaders care about their well-being and take their workload into account. All staff say that they are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. No stone is left unturned to ensure that pupils and their families receive timely help and support when they need it. All staff who have contact with children are trained. They know what to do if they have a concern and actively support the ethos that no concern is too small.

Leaders work with parents and a range of external agencies effectively to ensure the right help is provided at the right time.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Too many foundation subjects are not designed sufficiently well to identify how pupils will work towards securing the end goals. This means that pupils cannot build and connect their learning over time as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum design for all subjects considers how and when pupils will learn, as well as what they will learn.
- Not all subject leaders think carefully enough about curriculum progression from early years to Year 1 and beyond. This means that opportunities are missed to ensure that children in the early years are as well prepared as possible for their next steps. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders identify precisely what children need to know by the end of the early years, so they are ready for learning in Year 1.
- Assessment in the foundation subjects is not always well targeted enough. As a result, it does not provide teachers with the information they need to inform the next steps for pupils. Leaders should ensure that assessment strategies always identify gaps and misconceptions.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

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	123551
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10256975
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Edward Beards
Headteacher	Jessica Buzzing
Website	www.sjrc.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 October 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St John's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school with a Christian ethos.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in March 2018. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the SEND coordinator, subject leaders, the chair of the governing body and other governors, teachers, a representative from the local authority, parents and pupils.
- Deep dives in reading and mathematics and geography were carried out. These included discussions with subject leaders and teachers, visits to lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work.

- The inspector met with pupils to discuss their learning in these subjects. The inspector also listened to pupils read.
- The inspector also reviewed the curriculum design documents for modern foreign languages and computing.
- The inspector spoke to leaders about the personal, social and health education curriculum and about relationships education.
- The inspector spoke to leaders about the wider development of pupils.
- A range of documentation was reviewed, including leaders' plans to improve the school, their self-evaluation of the school's effectiveness, curriculum plans, minutes of governors' meetings and the school's website.
- The inspector also discussed records of attendance and behaviour logs.
- As part of the inspection of safeguarding, the inspector considered the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe, the checks made to ensure safer recruitment and staff training.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the end of the first day of inspection. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments, and responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Mel Ford, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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