

Inspection of St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary School

Highview Crescent, Hutton CM13 1BJ

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph the Worker is a warm and inviting place to learn. Pupils show excitement when arriving at school. They enjoy the learning that staff prepare for them. The school has high expectations for pupils to achieve in all aspects of school life. Pupils achieve highly as a result. They benefit from studying a well-balanced curriculum.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities that they experience beyond the curriculum. They work with the local community and fundraise for the local care home and other charities. Pupils are positive about their extra-curricular activities and events such as choir, netball club, music lessons and the annual talent show.

Pupils share the school values of 'we learn, we care, we listen, and we share' with pride. They behave well. They know the high expectations that staff set and strive to meet them. Pupils who need help meeting expectations are supported well.

Pupils are confident to be themselves. Staff encourage pupils to share their ideas and respectfully debate their views. If pupils are worried about something they know who to talk to. They trust the adults in the school to help them and feel safe as a result.

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

The school has high expectations for pupils to achieve well. The curriculum is well sequenced and begins from Reception. Pupils build on what they already know and can do and apply this to more complex learning. In most subjects, the curriculum is well established. However, in some subjects, recent changes have led to staff not being well trained in the new content they teach. This means that opportunities are missed to check pupils' gaps in learning, and staff do not always teach the curriculum effectively to ensure pupils remember more over time.

The school has implemented a systematic synthetic phonics programme that begins from Reception. Staff are confident in teaching the programme. From Reception, they ensure that children quickly learn the sounds that letters make. Children who do not grasp the sounds are supported during the day to revisit the sounds. Pupils in other year groups who need help to catch up and keep up are identified quickly. They are well supported by the staff. Older pupils develop their reading skills across the curriculum. Pupils confidently discuss and debate ideas about author choices. They develop their understanding of what being an author means and use this in their writing.

Teachers use effective questioning to check pupils' understanding. Staff explain learning clearly and concisely. In some subjects, teachers are unfamiliar with the new curriculum content and do not always check that pupils are ready for new learning. This means that staff do not always check what pupils have learned and remembered. Staff know pupils well. They adapt learning so that pupils can achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) are supported effectively.

Pupils are excited to attend school. They thrive on the fun learning activities that staff prepare for them. Pupils want to be in school, and as a result, attendance is strong. The school closely monitors pupils' attendance. The school works closely with external agencies and families to improve pupils' attendance where needed.

Pupils are proud to share their school's values. In lessons, pupils are focused on their learning. They know the importance of being resilient and 'not giving up if it gets hard, but to keep trying your best'. Pupils know what bullying is, and they trust staff to deal with issues if, and when, they arise.

From Reception, children learn about helping others and looking after their classroom. Pupils talk passionately about the roles and responsibilities that they are given. They look forward to the 'SJW' roles that include playground games leaders, lunchtime helpers and reception helpers. Pupils know that they have an important role in making their school a kind and caring place to be. Pupils benefit from the range of sports opportunities and look forward to representing the school in competitions.

Governors know the school well. They are committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve. However, they do not always ask questions to ensure that they are holding leaders to account effectively. Staff feel well supported by leaders, and they are proud to be a staff member at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a culture of vigilance. Staff know the processes for reporting and recording concerns. However, in some instances, leaders' actions are not always clearly recorded. This means that some information is not always easy to locate and share. The school must ensure that all actions taken by leaders following a concern are recorded effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some instances, the school's actions to keep pupils safe are not always recorded clearly. This means that information is not easily located and does not concisely show the actions that leaders have taken to keep pupils safe. The school needs to ensure that actions are captured effectively in records so that information can be shared and accessed quickly.
- In some subjects, staff do not always have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum well. This means that they are not checking on what pupils already know before moving on to new learning, and pupils develop gaps in their learning as a result. The school needs to ensure that staff have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum effectively.

- Governors do not always ask questions to hold leaders to account effectively. This means that governors do not have the knowledge they need to ensure that pupils are achieving well and the school is improving. The school should ensure that governors always provide effective support and challenge to leaders and can assure themselves that pupils achieve as well as they should and that improvements are being made.

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	115183
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345153
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Linda McSweeney
Headteacher	Kathryn Poulter
Website	www.st-josephworker.essex.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	2 and 3 October 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one alternative provision.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
- The school has undergone significant changes in staffing over the last academic year.
- The school has a Catholic character and ethos. It is part of the Diocese of Brentwood. The last section 48 inspection was in March 2022. The next inspection will take place within four years.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and art. 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 also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects, including science, English, history and personal, social and health education.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders.
- Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour and attendance and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the local authority and the diocese and members of the school improvement board.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Shadbolt

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024