

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

Pot Hall, Wilton Grove, Heywood, Lancashire OL10 2AA

Inspection dates:

18–19 February 2020

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's is a welcoming school where pupils feel happy and well supported. Parents and carers appreciate the warm, calm and peaceful atmosphere of the school.

Pupils are positive about all aspects of school life. They attend regularly because they are inquisitive and like finding out new things. Pupils told me that teachers and their friends make them feel safe. They also said that on the rare occasions that bullying happens, it is dealt with swiftly. The pupils that I spoke with told me that there is never any racism or discrimination in school.

Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. This encourages pupils to try their hardest and supports their strong achievement in a wide range of subjects. Staff help pupils to be good citizens. Pupils plan fundraising events, donate food items to the local food bank and enjoy singing in the community.

Pupils like to play football and basketball and have gained recognition for their excellence in sports such as cross-county, tag rugby and athletics. Pupils attend painting, origami, gardening and cooking clubs and enjoy playing musical instruments. Pupils relish their visits to places such as Jodrell Bank and the Eureka science and technology museum.

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

Leaders want pupils to acquire the knowledge and skills that they need to become successful learners in high school and beyond. Leaders also want pupils to be responsible and caring citizens. The curriculum that senior leaders have designed is carefully planned. It engages pupils, stimulates their imagination and helps to ensure that they make strong progress in their learning.

Comprehensive curriculum plans are in place for all subjects. This helps to ensure that teachers know exactly what pupils need to learn and in what order. However, in some subjects, aspects of the curriculum are still developing. For example, in French few

opportunities are available for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills. In art, procedures for assessing what pupils know and can do have only recently been implemented. In these subjects the curriculum is not delivered as effectively as it could be.

Published data shows that pupils in key stage 2 achieve well in writing. Their performance in mathematics and reading is especially strong. In reading, this is because the curriculum enables pupils to become confident and competent readers. All pupils read daily in school and are encouraged to read at home.

Pupils who find reading difficult use their knowledge of letter sounds well to read unfamiliar words. Children in the early years start learning phonics as soon as they join the Reception classes. This creates a solid foundation for developing their reading fluency.

The school's work to help pupils to know and remember more about history is paying dividends. Pupils told me that civilizations in the Indus Valley started about 4,500 years ago and that the Vikings travelled great distances to trade with other countries. Older pupils know that historians use different sources of information to build up a picture of past events.

Children in the early years enjoy mathematics and have strong calculation skills. They also enjoy developing their knowledge and skills in computing. For example, during the inspection, children were creating instructions to form a simple algorithm. Children's excellent behaviour makes a strong contribution to their good achievement. This was evident during story time as children listened to a superhero story. They were keen to join in with the actions and movements. They also demonstrated their good comprehension, speaking and listening skills.

Pupils are highly skilled at using various software packages. They have good coding skills and know how to 'debug' programmes. Computing is linked to other subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils recently animated a scene from the book 'Stone Age Boy' which was also part of their learning about ancient civilizations.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are exceptionally well catered for. The curriculum is tailored to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND. In addition, teachers ensure that pupils do not miss out on any aspects of the curriculum. As a result, pupils with SEND make the same gains in their learning as other pupils.

The school's curriculum extends beyond developing pupils academically. Pupils enjoy undertaking roles that develop their leadership skills, for example, as school council members. Older pupils enjoy mentoring and looking after their younger peers. Pupils enjoy planning and delivering assemblies. They also lead worship and mass in school and in the community.

Staff feel valued. They told me that senior leaders are considerate of their work-life balance. Newly qualified teachers said that the mentoring support that they receive from senior leaders is helping to improve their teaching practice.

Safeguarding

Leaders and governors responsible for safeguarding are trained well. They are highly vigilant when it comes to pupils' welfare. The school has effective systems in place for passing on and recording safeguarding concerns.

Pupils said that they always feel safe in school. Staff are alert to any possible signs of neglect or abuse and know exactly what to do if they are worried about a pupil. Leaders make careful checks on all adults who work in the school to make sure that none pose a threat to pupils. Teachers help pupils to understand how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Comprehensive curriculum plans, which carefully sequence what is to be taught and when, are in place for all subjects. These plans are implemented well in most subjects, but this is not the case for all. Leaders should ensure that in all subjects, pupils are given the opportunity to revisit what they have already learned to help them to develop their skills and knowledge further. Leaders should also ensure that in all subjects assessment is used well to check what pupils know and can do.

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/outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale to be good on 27–28 April 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	105833
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10122095
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	387
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Winifred O'Neill
Headteacher	Caroline Dunne
Website	www.stjosephsrcprimary.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 April 2016

Information about this school

- Several staff have been appointed since the previous inspection, including four newly qualified teachers. A new teacher took up her post in the early years in September 2019.
- Most governors, including the chair of the governing body, have been appointed since the previous inspection.
- St Joseph's is a Roman Catholic school. Its last section 48 inspection took place in November 2016.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and senior leaders responsible for the curriculum. I met with the special educational needs coordinator and staff responsible for safeguarding and pupils' welfare.

- I met with six governors, including the chair of the governing body. I held telephone conversations with the director of education from the diocese and with a representative from the local authority.
- I took account of the 47 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire. I also considered responses to the questionnaires completed by 35 members of staff and 29 pupils.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, history and computing. For each subject, I met with the subject leaders and teachers. I visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. I also listened to pupils read.
- I met with pupils, leaders and staff to talk about pupils' safety, personal development and behaviour. I checked the school's records of the suitability of staff to work with children. I also talked with parents about matters relating to safety and scrutinised the school's safeguarding policy and related documentation.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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