

Inspection of St Josephs Catholic Primary School

Macklin Street, Covent Garden, London WC2B 5NA

Inspection dates:	23 and 24 April 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at this exceptionally happy and welcoming primary school. They benefit from highly positive experiences, including a broad, rich and exciting curriculum. Staff have the very highest expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff care deeply for the pupils they teach, which helps ensure pupils' well-being and academic success are secured remarkably well.

Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Children in the early years enjoy a calm and stimulating place to learn. Pupils enjoy numerous opportunities to celebrate who they are and to be successful. They have trusting relationships with each other and with staff. Pupils say they feel safe. Bullying is never tolerated and, if it happens, pupils are rightly confident that staff will deal with it quickly. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils respond well to clear and consistently applied routines.

Pupils learn to be resilient and adopt a positive mindset. This results in them seeing challenges or setbacks as an important part of learning. Staff encourage pupils to take on responsibilities effectively, for example, as class monitors or reading buddies. Pupils appreciate the huge range of extra activities they can choose to attend. These include many creative and sports clubs.

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

The school has a very ambitious curriculum. It is well sequenced, enabling pupils to build up their knowledge as they move through the school. For example, in mathematics, older pupils enjoy grappling with more complex problem-solving activities. Across subjects, the quality of pupils' work in their books is exceptional. In science and geography, the school has included practical activities in the curriculum. This results in pupils being highly engaged with their learning and enthusiastic to experiment and learn more. The school provides opportunities to learn about equality and social justice. The curriculum in the early years is well structured, with a strong focus on building relationships. However, sometimes staff do not check pupils have understood what they need to know, before they move on to new learning, as closely as they could.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Phonics lessons begin in Reception and, over time, pupils learn to read fluently. Staff are very well trained in the teaching of reading. They ensure that the phonics programme is delivered consistently. Pupils who need help to catch up get swift support from knowledgeable staff. This results in pupils, including those with SEND or who are new to English, becoming confident and enthusiastic readers. This love of reading continues throughout the school. The school exposes pupils to a diverse range of high-quality texts and authors. These link intelligently to what pupils are learning across the curriculum.

Teachers have expert subject knowledge. They deliver the ambitious curriculum very effectively. Teachers present and explain information and new vocabulary exceptionally well. Pupils appreciate how teachers break down learning. Teachers check that pupils have learned and remembered what they have been taught. This means that pupils can

make connections between new learning and what they have learned before. This deepens their understanding. Teachers ensure that any misconceptions are corrected straight away. The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND with precision. The school is ambitious for these pupils and ensures that they follow the same curriculum as their peers, with adaptations to teaching where needed. As a result, these pupils achieve exceptionally well. The school ensures that the many pupils who join school at a later point catch up and achieve the same high standards as their peers.

The school has established a very well-planned and age-appropriate programme to support pupils' personal development. Teachers explain sensitive topics, such as healthy relationships, with care. The school encourages pupils to debate a wide range of topics and consider other points of view. The school is rightly proud of this aspect of its work. Pupils are taught explicitly how to keep safe, including online. The school ensures that all pupils can take part in clubs and visit many exciting places that enrich their understanding of the curriculum. Full use is made of living in London and all the cultural opportunities on offer.

The school works hard to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and on time. They communicate with families and wider agencies to improve individual pupils' attendance very effectively.

The school is particularly skilled in engaging proactively with staff, parents and carers and making the most of the strong 'family' ethos. They ensure that staff feel cared for as individuals. Staff are proud and exceptionally positive about working at St Josephs. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They hold leaders to account for the quality of education at the school and consider staff welfare. Parents are very positive about their child's experiences at school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, in the early years, the checks made by staff working with children do not sharply identify whether children have learned the curriculum as intended. This means that, occasionally, children move on to new learning or tasks before they have a secure grasp of important foundational knowledge. The school should ensure that all staff working in the early years check children's learning regularly and accurately before they move on.

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	100041
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	10381683
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Harvey
Headteacher	Moya Richardson (executive headteacher) and Natalie O'Donovan (head of school)
Website	www.stjosephs.camden.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 February 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character. The school had its last section 48 inspection by the Diocese of Westminster in June 2019.
- The school works in close partnership with three other Roman Catholic primary schools in Camden.
- The school runs its own breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 year 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 second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. They met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke to the school improvement partner.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to teachers. They spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in other subjects.
- 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.
- The inspectors spoke to a range of staff members and reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys. They also considered the views of parents who made responses to the parent online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Susan Maguire, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Russell Bennett

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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