

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Hertford)

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, North Road, North Road, Hertford, Hertfordshire SG14 2BU

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 November 2024

Outcome

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Hertford) has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher is Martin Maloney. This school is part of the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy 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), Andrew Celano, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Father Peter Harris.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this warm and inclusive school community. They look forward to attending each day, arriving promptly and ready to engage with their learning. The strong relationships between pupils and staff foster a sense of safety and belonging. Pupils know their voices are heard and valued here.

Staff take the time to build effective relationships with pupils and their families, ensuring individual needs are understood and met. This personal approach, coupled with high expectations for behaviour, results in a calm and orderly school environment, where relationships between staff and pupils are positive and respectful. Pupils feel safe and cared for.

The school's ambitious curriculum begins in the early years and lays a strong foundation for pupils' future success. Beyond academic learning, the school offers many opportunities for personal growth, such as rock band lessons and regular learning is fun together (LIFT) sessions, where children and families can join in reading and mathematics activities.

Pupils develop leadership skills through roles in the school council, eco-committee and as reading champions for younger peers. Interesting trips and clubs help to build pupils' confidence and broaden horizons.

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

St. Joseph's is a place where every pupil is nurtured, encouraged, and supported to achieve their best. With the trust's guidance, the school has developed a clear and focused curriculum that prioritizes the most important learning for pupils. Teachers use effective questioning and modelling to help pupils remember the things they have been taught, through a rich awareness of subject-specific vocabulary.

Reading is at the heart of St. Joseph's school. The ambitious phonics programme, along with staff training, ensures pupils quickly become fluent readers. Daily phonics sessions and targeted support for those who need extra help means every pupil has the chance to succeed. From Nursery upwards, pupils love listening to stories and develop a deeper understanding of texts and a love of reading for pleasure. This ensures they can apply their writing skills effectively in subjects. For example, pupils eagerly shared their writing on life during World War Two.

The school has developed an inclusive environment, providing well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are skilled at identifying any additional needs pupils have and quickly put in place support to help these pupils do well. However, on some occasions, support is not as precise as it needs to be. When this is the case, staff have to interpret how best they should support pupils, rather than following unified and agreed plans and techniques.

Good behaviour is the norm at this school. In lessons, pupils stay focused on their learning. Around the school, they show respect and kindness to adults and each other. The school has high expectations for attendance and works closely with parents to ensure that pupils make the most of their time in school.

The school's commitment to personal development means they prepare pupils for life beyond the classroom. Pupils broaden their horizons, learn about different cultures, and build ambitions for their future. They explore values like democracy and tolerance through real-world experiences, such as visits to places of worship and through 'faith weeks'.

Trustees are extremely knowledgeable about the school. They use their experience well to challenge and support the school in equal measure. Trustees check carefully that the school is taking the right actions in the best interests of pupils. The school and trust deliver effective support and professional development for staff at all levels. This support has a positive impact on workload and well-being for all staff. Staff are proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some support for pupils with SEND is not as precise as it could be. Staff sometimes do not use strategies or adapt their teaching for some pupils with SEND effectively. This results in the support for some pupils being inconsistent. The school should ensure that staff have the guidance and information needed to provide consistently effective support that meets pupils' needs precisely.

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 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 St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to be good for overall effectiveness in July 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' 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	148493
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345540
Type of school	Nursery and Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Peter Harris
CEO of the trust	Andrew Celano
Headteacher	Martin Maloney
Website	www.stjosephs255.herts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher was appointed in January 2022.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School (Hertford) converted to become an academy school in September 2021.
- The school has a religious character within the Roman Catholic tradition. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school took place in November 2024.
- The school uses two alternative provisions.
- The school is part of the St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust.

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.

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 of safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior staff, representatives of the governing body, parents and an improvement advisor from the local authority.
- The inspector also met with the CEO of the Trust and other members of the trust leadership team.
- The inspector visited several lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, individual learning plans, curriculum documents and attendance records, school development plans and school self-evaluation documents.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector gathered the views of pupils and staff through Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys, as well as discussions conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Neil Taggart, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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