

Inspection of St Joseph’s Catholic Primary School, SWF

Trinity Square, South Woodham Ferrers, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 5JX

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to school. They are attentive and resilient learners. Pupils talk excitedly about what they have learned and remembered. Pupils rise to the high expectations of achievement set by the school. Therefore, most pupils achieve highly.

The school is a calm and orderly environment. This includes when pupils are learning in class and playing with their friends at social times. There are clear expectations and routines. Pupils are motivated to learn and have positive attitudes to their work. They enjoy each other's company. They are polite and respectful to adults and their peers.

Pupils are extremely respectful. They embody the school ethos, 'as we learn together, we love, value and welcome everyone'. Pupils adopt roles to nurture younger children, such as play leaders. They are active in their roles as head pupils and as eco-councillors within the school and community. Pupils are confident that they are safe and well cared for by adults.

To enhance classroom learning, pupils enjoy various visits, theatres trips and residential. Regular visitors to the school, such as virtual reality science workshops, bring pupils' learning to life. Pupils attend a range of clubs, including choir, chess, netball and art.

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

The school fulfils its aim to develop pupils to be 'gentle, caring and hardworking' through its ambitious curriculum. This involves giving pupils experiences that relate to 'aspiration, inspiration and environment'. These experiences prepare pupils to be independent and responsible learners who are ready for their next steps.

The school has carefully constructed the curriculum to ensure that pupils are able to build on key parts of knowledge as they progress. In most subjects, there are a range of opportunities for pupils to write at length and consolidate the skills they have learned. In mathematics, there are many opportunities for all pupils to develop their fluency, reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils' writing in some subjects. Pupils do not routinely apply the grammar, punctuation and structural skills that they already know. This means that pupils do not always get the practice they need to consolidate their writing skills.

The school has made learning to read the highest priority. Parents and carers are well prepared to support their child's reading progress. This involves the provision of workshops and parents attending phonics lessons. The focus on oracy within the morning pre-school helps prepare children for the Reception Year. However, the pre-school curriculum is not closely aligned to the phonics and early mathematics

programmes that children will follow in their Reception Year. As a result, children are not as prepared as they could be for the Reception Year.

Children begin their formal phonics learning immediately they start in the Reception Year. Teachers skilfully deliver interactive phonics lessons. They quickly address any misconceptions and ensure that pupils remember the sounds they learn. Teachers carefully track pupils' progress. This means that children who fall behind are quickly identified. These children receive expert support to help them become fluent and confident readers

The school has inclusivity at its heart. Staff quickly and accurately assesses individual pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils receive the most appropriate support. Pupils can therefore access the full curriculum through carefully considered adaptations in lessons. Skilled adults provide effective additional support. Parents are fully involved in planning and review processes. They value the support provided by the school. Leaders are proactive in securing support from external agencies. As a result, most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well.

In all aspects of school life, pupils behave well. Most pupils attend school regularly. A few pupils do not attend school as often as they should. The school has secured appropriate support for these families to help pupils attend more regularly.

Within its broad curriculum, the school actively promotes pupils' understanding of other countries, faiths and cultures. Pupils show a clear understanding of democratic processes. They comment maturely about inequalities in society. The school encourages pupils to take part in public speaking competitions. Pupils debate topical themes, which helps prepare them for their future lives. Pupils are active in running business enterprise projects. For example, pupils introduced Toast Tuesday to raise money for playground equipment.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel well supported and know that the actions leaders take prioritise staff well-being. The experienced governing body plays an active and visible role in holding school leaders to account.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' writing. They do not insist that pupils apply the grammar, punctuation and structural skills they already know. This means that pupils do not always get the practice they need to consolidate their writing skills. Leaders must ensure that

teachers set high expectations of writing and that pupils always apply the skills that they have learned when writing across the curriculum.

- The pre-school curriculum covers the key aspects of early learning through oracy and mathematics. However, this does not precisely align to children's learning in the Reception Year. This means that children are not as prepared as they could be. The school must ensure that the curriculum in the pre-school is much more aligned to the early mathematics and phonics programmes that children will be learning in the Reception Year.

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	115201
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10323626
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	180
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Mills
Headteacher	Tracey North
Website	www.christthekingfederation.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 July 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is part of a federation with St Francis Catholic Primary School. A single governing body serves both schools in this federation.
- The school is a member of the Diocese of Brentwood. The most recent inspection of its religious character under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 took place in July 2022. The next section 48 inspection is due by July 2027.
- Until December 2023, an executive headteacher led both schools in the federation. The current headteacher joined the school in January 2024.
- The school runs a daily before-school club and a pre-school which operates between 9.30am and 12.30pm each day.
- The school does not currently use any alternative educational provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the governing body, a representative of the diocese, the local authority and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions with curriculum leaders, visited samples of lessons accompanied by school leaders, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- 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 culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- A range of records relating to behaviour and attendance were reviewed.
- Consideration was given to the views of 71 parents through the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the 68 free-text responses. The views of staff were considered from meetings held with them and from the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. Pupils' views were gathered from their responses to the Ofsted survey and from discussions with the inspectors.

Inspection team

Rowena Simmons, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Shadbolt	Ofsted Inspector

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