

# Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Scratton Road, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex SS17 0PA

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Inspection dates: 5 and 6 June 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Ruth Saul. This school is part of Christus Catholic Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Joanna Seymour, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Bertrand Okechukwu Emecheta.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

St Joseph's is a calm and nurturing place to learn. Pupils are happy and enjoy school. However, they experience an inconsistent curriculum. Pupils, including children in the early years, do not always receive the teaching and support they need to achieve as well as they should.

Pupils are courteous and respectful towards their peers and adults. They have strong relationships with adults, which helps them to feel safe. Pupils know what it means to be a good friend and to look after one another. They are proud of their friendships.

Pupils focus well in lessons. They follow the school's learning behaviours that include curious crocodile, resilient rhino, teamwork tiger and the newest addition, which is the focused fox. Pupils are keen to learn and share what they have learned with others.

Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities on offer. The well-organised playtime activities help them to stay physically active. Pupils enjoy the visits that deepen their understanding of the local area.

Pupils benefit from the leadership opportunities available, such as through the school council and being mental health champions. This helps them to play an important part in their school community.

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

The school has a strong, aspirational vision to ensure that it prepares pupils well for their next stage of education. However, these aspirations are not being met consistently. The school has been through a period of staff instability. Changes of leadership and high staff turnover have hindered the school's ability to improve provision.

The school has developed a curriculum that builds up pupils' knowledge over time. Where the curriculum is planned and taught effectively, pupils learn well. In mathematics and phonics, well-structured lessons follow a clear sequence of learning. Pupils build on previous learning when they encounter new concepts.

However, in other subjects and in the early years, the curriculum is less well established. Teachers do not have the knowledge they need to teach these areas successfully. This includes adapting the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers do not make the connections with pupils' prior learning as precisely as they should. This leads to pupils having weak recall of the knowledge they need to access new content. Consequently, pupils do not build their knowledge sufficiently over time.

The school does not monitor how well pupils are learning the planned curriculum. Subject leaders do not have the knowledge they need to check how effectively the curriculum is taught. This leads to variability in the teaching of some subjects. As a result, some pupils have long-term gaps in their knowledge. The school has not adapted the curriculum to ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are being addressed.

Staff teach phonics well. They identify precisely the gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. Pupils secure the letter sounds they are learning in lessons. This has a positive impact on how well pupils learn to read. Pupils apply their learning to books that are well matched to the sounds they know. However, the reading curriculum for older pupils is not well established. Teachers in key stage 2 do not teach reading well. Consequently, pupils do not develop as quickly as they should into confident readers.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is calm. Staff reinforce the high expectations for behaviour. The school monitors behaviour and attendance closely. Staff ensure that where pupils are not attending regularly, they provide support to families to improve attendance.

The school promotes pupils' wider development well. Pupils learn about local safety issues, for example how to stay safe in the park. Pupils understand how to be safe online. They learn about being healthy, including why physical activity is important for mental health. Pupils share any worries and concerns. They feel safe to talk to adults and know that they will be looked after. Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular clubs that they attend. They are proud of their sporting achievements where they represent the school.

School leaders and trustees know what needs to improve. However, on some occasions, they have not acted as quickly as they should have. The trust is providing support in securing necessary improvements. The school has had difficulty in recruiting teachers, and this has affected the consistency of the quality of education. Trustees have not always ensured that they are supporting the school to deploy staff effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The reading curriculum for older pupils is not well established. The school has not set out precisely what pupils will learn in the reading curriculum or been clear with staff about how it will be taught. This means that some pupils do not develop the skills to become confident readers. The school should ensure that

staff in key stage 2 receive the support they need to teach the reading curriculum effectively.

- In many areas, including early years, the curriculum is at an early stage of implementation. Staff are developing their expertise in teaching the intended curriculum. This has led to inconsistency. As a result, pupils, including pupils with SEND, have work that is not well matched to their learning needs and do not do as well as they should. The school should ensure that staff have the skills needed to adapt the curriculum for all pupils.
- The monitoring of the curriculum is not fully effective. The school does not always know how well subjects are implemented and so is not aware of inconsistency in the delivery of the curriculum. The school should ensure that subject leaders can carry out their roles effectively and check that the curriculum is enabling pupils to learn more and remember more over time.
- The school has been through a period of staff instability. This has hindered the school's ability to secure consistency in the quality of education. The school and the trust need to stabilise and develop the staff body so that pupils have teachers that can deliver the curriculum as leaders intend and pupils can make good progress in their learning.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146300
<b>Local authority</b>	Thurrock
<b>Inspection number</b>	10323786
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Bertrand Okechukwu Emecheta
<b>CEO of trust</b>	Joanna Seymour
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Saul
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stjosephscatholicprimaryschool.co.uk">www.stjosephscatholicprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	28 and 29 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Christus Catholic Trust. The CEO of the trust is known as the Catholic School Executive Lead (CSEL).
- The school is within the Diocese of Brentwood. The school's last inspection of its denominational education and collective worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in December 2023. The school's next inspection is expected in the next five years.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and design and technology. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum information in some other subjects including personal, social and emotional 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, including those from the trust. Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour and attendance and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with representatives from the trust board, the CSEL of the trust and members of the school intervention board.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Nutman

Ofsted Inspector

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