

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Hillcrest Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 7PW

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The principal of this school is Samantha Chapman. This school is part of The St John Bosco Multi Academy Company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Helen Parkes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Phil Hancox.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since April 2015. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

At St Joseph's Primary School, the school's mission to 'work, learn and grow together' shines through. Pupils rise to the high expectations set for them. This shared commitment creates an environment where pupils flourish.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The 'St Joseph's way' is deeply understood by all, ensuring that every pupil models the school's values. As a result, pupils are consistently highly respectful, responsible and ready to learn. These positive attitudes are evident throughout the school day.

All pupils benefit from the school's carefully planned, high-quality and incredibly effective approach to personal development. This means that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, cultural exchanges, including singing Christmas carols to friends in Poland, foster a sense of global citizenship. Pupils show deep-rooted compassion for others and know that they can make a difference.

St Joseph's is a nurturing school where pupils are equipped to excel and to make a positive contribution to the world. Everybody involved in school life refers to St Joseph's as a 'family'. One pupil, perfectly summarising the view of all stakeholders said, 'We work together because that is what families do.'

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

Leaders have an unwavering determination for every pupil to succeed. This vision is shared by all.

The school has ensured that an ambitious curriculum is in place for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In the early years and beyond, the curriculum is designed to prepare pupils with the knowledge and skills they need for their next stage. The school has also identified important life skills and built these into the curriculum. For example, pupils learn how to tie shoelaces and how to converse politely over lunch while using cutlery correctly.

In each subject, the curriculum identifies the knowledge and vocabulary for pupils to learn. This is carefully ordered so that pupils can build on what they already know. For example, in art and design, pupils develop their skills when creating depth and texture using an impasto painting technique. Older pupils use subject-specific vocabulary such as 'perspective' with confidence. In the early years, children correctly use shape names in mathematics when learning about tangrams.

The school ensures that there are opportunities for pupils to practise new concepts and recall previous learning. Some recently introduced teaching strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on learning. However, sometimes, pupils' learning is not checked effectively enough. Teachers do not always know when pupils have not understood or when pupils have gaps in their learning.

The school ensures that learning to read is a high priority. Staff are trained to deliver phonics lessons, and pupils enjoy reading books that are matched to the sounds they know. Regular checks ensure that pupils at risk of falling behind in learning to read are quickly identified. Effective support is put in place, including for pupils with SEND. As a result, pupils learn to read effectively. Across the school, pupils enjoy, and benefit from, listening to their teachers read books to them.

The school knows pupils and families extremely well. Strong relationships are built as soon as children enter the early years. This means that any pupils with needs can be quickly identified. Very effective, targeted support ensures that pupils with SEND make very good progress, whatever their starting points.

The school's work to promote pupils' wider development, excellent behaviour and attitudes to learning is exemplary. The 'St Joseph's way' and the sense of family mean that pupils show high levels of respect for staff, the school and each other. They benefit from a wide range of carefully thought-out opportunities. Pupils relish taking on leadership roles in school, where they make a real difference to school life. For example, the school council and 'mission team' use suggestion boxes to gather ideas from everyone. Members of the pupil 'SAS' ('safeguard and safety') team know what to do to help their peers, if needed.

Pupils benefit enormously from initiatives such as 'Brilliant in Britain week' and the 'sustainability summit'. They raise money for charities, learn how to keep themselves fit and healthy and learn about inspirational people and aspirational careers. They learn about different faiths and show deep levels of tolerance and understanding.

The school is well supported by the multi-academy company. Robust systems and the use of external quality assurance mean that leaders' checking of what works well is effective and supportive. Staff speak incredibly highly of the school and leaders. They value the exceptional consideration given to their well-being and the focus given to staff's training and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Strategies for checking pupils' understanding are not always applied consistently. This means that misconceptions or gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified or addressed effectively. The school should ensure that routines for checking understanding and addressing misconceptions and gaps in learning are applied effectively across the curriculum.

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	140147
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10344023
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	239
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Phil Hancox
CEO of the trust	Helen Parkes
Principal	Samantha Chapman
Website	www.st-jo-dud.dudley.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 and 15 April 2015

Information about this school

- This Roman Catholic school is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in November 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of The St John Bosco Catholic Academy trust.

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 years and/or sixth form 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 first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors spoke with the principal, the assistant principal, the special educational needs coordinator and other leaders in school. The lead inspector met with the chair of the board of trustees and other representatives from the multi-academy company. The lead inspector also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.
- 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 carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also discussed the curriculum and looked at pupils' work in some other subjects.

Inspection team

Rachel Henrick, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Philip Hamilton

Ofsted Inspector

Tony Bradshaw

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025