

# Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic School

Church Road, Laverstock, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 1QY

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Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 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

**Good**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

Pupils feel welcome and included at St Joseph's. Kindness, tolerance and respect permeate all aspects of school life. Pupils know that they are valued as individuals, whatever their faith or background. Most pupils attend well and are keen to learn. However, the way the curriculum is taught does not always enable pupils to achieve well.

The harmonious, inclusive atmosphere is underpinned by warm relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils have trusted adults to whom they can speak if they have any worries. They are confident that staff will respond swiftly to the rare incidents of bullying. Most pupils feel well supported and cared for. Many parents comment positively on the strong pastoral support that helps their children to flourish.

The trips, visits and clubs that the school offers help pupils to develop a range of talents and interests. The leadership roles that pupils take on help them to learn about democracy and the importance of being an active citizen. Pupils value the many opportunities to discuss important issues. This helps them to think for themselves and develop their own 'moral compass'.

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

The curriculum is clear about what pupils need to learn, and when. There has been an increase in the proportion of pupils who continue to follow a strongly academic curriculum in key stage 4. Leaders have made changes to ensure that the key stage 3 curriculum stays broad for longer.

The 'St Joseph's Way' sets out the school's approach to teaching the curriculum. However, the activities and work given to pupils do not always help them to learn effectively. Some pupils struggle to remember what they have learned before. Consequently, they are not able to build their knowledge and deepen their understanding. Pupils' gaps in knowledge, as well as any misconceptions, are not always identified. This is particularly evident for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. As a result, they do not achieve as well as they could. Recent changes in SEND provision mean that the school is now better meeting the needs of pupils who have an education, health and care plan.

Pupils who are not fluent readers get the support they need to catch up with their peers. Staff have received training in how to support pupils to develop their vocabulary through reading in tutor times and lessons. However, this is at an early stage. It is not done consistently well enough to ensure that all pupils benefit.

Pupils behave well. Learning is rarely interrupted by poor behaviour. The atmosphere around school is calm and harmonious during social times, as well as in lessons. Pupils show high levels of respect for staff and for their peers. They are usually

courteous, cooperative and friendly. Leaders' actions have rapidly reduced instances of poor behaviour in lessons.

Pupils learn how to stay safe and healthy. The school uses its knowledge of the local area to ensure that pupils are well prepared for the particular risks they may face.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is integral to all that the school does. Pupils show tolerance and respect to those from different faiths and cultures. They exemplify the school's message that they are 'all God's children'. Pupils know how to stand up to intolerance and support others who may experience discrimination in society.

Governors hold leaders to account and provide the support necessary to ensure the school improves. They have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school's leadership is well supported by the local authority and diocese. After a period of turbulence, the school is now beginning to bring about rapid improvement to the quality of the education that pupils receive.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Teaching does not always check effectively what pupils know. Consequently, some pupils have gaps in their learning, or misconceptions that persist. This is particularly evident for pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged. The school needs to ensure that pupils' learning is checked effectively and that the curriculum is successfully adapted to meet pupils' needs so that pupils know and remember more.
- Some teaching activities do not focus closely on the learning that the curriculum intends. This means that the activities pupils complete do not always enable them to gain the knowledge and skills that they need for future learning. The school should ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to acquire sufficient knowledge over time.

## **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>	126473
<b>Local authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10288166
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	603
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Local authority
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Graham Maher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Ridley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.sjcs.org.uk">www.sjcs.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	16 and 17 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision and four registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- During the inspection, the headteacher was absent. The interim headteacher, John McParland, had been in post since November 2023.

## 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 first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the 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: history, mathematics, English and art. 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.
- 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.
- An inspector contacted some of the alternative provision used by the school.
- An inspector met with members of the local governing body and representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses of staff and pupils to Ofsted's online surveys. Inspectors also spoke to pupils and staff in meetings and around the school site.
- Inspectors also visited further lessons beyond the deep dive subjects and a school assembly.

### **Inspection team**

Sarah Favager-Dalton, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Collins	Ofsted Inspector
Tom Hill	Ofsted Inspector

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