

Inspection of a good school: St John's Catholic Primary School, Trowbridge

Wingfield Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 9EA

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 November 2022

Outcome

St John's Catholic Primary School, Trowbridge continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their warm and caring school. They live out the school's strong Catholic values in the way they treat one another and how they behave. Pupils are polite. They make sure that everyone is made to feel welcome. Pupils say teachers support them to learn new things every day.

Leaders are ambitious for their pupils to receive the best education they can. Pupils are motivated and live up to the high expectations teachers have of them. Pupils, including those with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well.

Pupils behave extremely well. They feel safe and are adamant that bullying is not a problem. If it does happen, they know a trusted adult or an anti-bullying ambassador will quickly sort it out.

Pupils explore their individual talents and interests through a wide range of clubs and activities. For example, pupils take part in a dance festival and sing in the school choir. Leaders provide a wide range of opportunities such as trips, visitors and visits that enhance pupils' learning. Pupils relish leadership opportunities, such as being a reading or chapel champion, a house captain or a digital leader. They say this helps them to feel ready for secondary school.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum from early years to Year 6. They have carefully thought about the most important knowledge pupils need to know. Leaders have organised in a coherent way the essential content pupils need to learn. Lessons build upon what pupils have learned before. For example, in mathematics, children in the Reception Year develop a secure understanding of number. By the end of key stage 2, pupils confidently use what they have learned before to solve complex mathematical problems.

Leaders and teachers check what pupils know and can remember. They use this information to address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This helps pupils, including pupils with SEND, to build their knowledge effectively over time. In a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified the prior knowledge pupils need to help them learn well. Where this is the case, pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they could.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND accurately and quickly. Teachers adapt their teaching so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their classmates. For example, in mathematics, pupils with SEND use practical resources to help them access the same learning as their peers.

The teaching of reading has been carefully considered. Staff are well trained to deliver the phonics and reading curriculum. Pupils receive targeted support if they need extra help. In Reception Year, children quickly learn the sounds they need to read simple words. Books they read match the sounds they know. However, in key stage 1, books do not match the sounds pupils know well enough. This means that pupils do not always practise the sound they need to improve their reading. Time is set aside for classes to enjoy a book together. Pupils are proud of their library. Older pupils benefit from well-planned reading opportunities, using high-quality texts. As a result, pupils become confident and fluent readers.

Leaders set clear behaviour expectations as soon as children start school. Pupils behave well in and around school because of these high expectations. Pupils know what is expected of them and constantly strive to meet these standards. Lessons are calm and purposeful. Pupils work harmoniously together and listen carefully to their teachers.

Leaders place great importance on pupils' wider development. There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils as respectful, responsible and active citizens. Pupils understand British values and gain valuable experience from their membership of the youth parliament and school council. Pupils recognise and celebrate difference.

Leaders and governors have a clear and ambitious vision for the school. Governors know the school well and support and challenge leaders effectively. Staff are proud to work at St John's. They feel well supported by leaders because their well-being is prioritised and their workload is carefully considered.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and their families well. As a result, they are quick to notice and respond to pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders work effectively with external agencies so that pupils and families receive timely support when needed. All staff are well trained and receive regular safeguarding information. Leaders carry out the necessary checks to ensure that adults are safe to work with children.

Pupils feel safe in school. The curriculum provides pupils with a clear understanding of how to stay safe online. Pupils know who to go to should they need help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In key stage 1, sometimes pupils' reading books are not matched to the sounds they know. This means that those pupils who struggle to read are not always able to use their phonic knowledge to decode words accurately. Leaders need to ensure that the books pupils read are well matched to their reading ability.
- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not clearly identified prior knowledge that pupils should learn. This means it is difficult for pupils to learn new content. Leaders need to ensure that essential knowledge is clearly identified in all subjects so that pupils know and remember more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2017.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	126429
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10227161
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mike Simmons
Headteacher	Tracey Sessions
Website	www.st-johnstrowbridge.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2018.
- The school uses one alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, other leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, and members of staff. He spoke with pupils about their work and their school. The inspector met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. The inspector held discussions with teachers, pupils and

subject leaders. The inspector visited a sample of lessons and reviewed pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including employment checks and the school's single central record. He spoke with staff about the school's procedures and systems for safeguarding pupils. The inspector discussed with pupils how the school teaches them to keep safe, including when on the internet.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in the classrooms and at social times.
- The inspector met formally with groups of pupils and spoke to others informally throughout the inspection.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke with parents at the school gate. The inspector took account of the responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Richard Lucas, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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