School report

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Withnell

Bury Lane, Withnell, Chorley, Lancashire PR6 8SD

Inspection dates: 8–9 October 2019

Overall effectiveness	**Outstanding**
The quality of education	**Outstanding**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Outstanding**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish socially, academically and emotionally in this school. This is due to the exceptional standard of education and care that they receive.

Pupils are fiercely proud of their school. They appreciate the work of teachers in helping them to succeed. This is illustrated in comments such as, 'When you enter the school you are like a caterpillar. The school helps you to become a butterfly and do all that you can.'

Pupils relish the opportunities that the meticulously designed curriculum provides. Teachers are knowledgeable. They are ambitious for the pupils in their care. They deliver the agreed curriculum very well, capturing pupils' interests and helping all pupils to achieve extremely well.

Teachers greet parents, carers and pupils at the start each day with genuine warmth. Parents are overjoyed at the support that staff provide for their children. Parents appreciate how well the school prepares pupils for secondary school.

Pupils' conduct around school and their attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils work hard, listen carefully and pay attention.

Pupils told me that they feel safe and that bullying is a rare occurrence. They are confident that teachers will sort out any concerns that they have.

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

Pupils achieve exceptionally well in this school. Pupils' progress and attainment in the national tests for reading, writing and mathematics have been well above average over a number of years. The outstanding education that they receive means that they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils are caring, respectful and tolerant youngsters. Their excellent attitudes to learning and their exemplary behaviour stand out in this highly successful school.

Leadership at all levels in the school is exemplary. Leaders are highly ambitious for their pupils. Governors have high expectations of school leaders. They know what is going on in school because they ask questions and they are well informed.

The curriculum on offer to pupils is exceptionally well designed. Precise curriculum plans sequence learning carefully to build pupils' knowledge in depth. The curriculum helps all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve highly across a broad range of subjects. Leaders and teachers know exactly what they want pupils to know by the end of each year and by the time they leave the school. They make sure that pupils build on their learning with each new topic and as they move from class to class. All of this leads to pupils' successful learning. For example, in art, pupils develop an excellent understanding of colour, tone and perspective. This is achieved through well-planned small steps.

As a result, by the end of key stage 2, pupils produce extremely high-quality artwork.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This is because leaders have provided expert training for them. Teachers use their subject knowledge to select the right activities to move pupils' learning forward. Teachers allow pupils to practise what they have learned. This deepens their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, the quality of pupils' work in books, such as the in-depth geographical study of Catalonia, is stunning. Teachers' excellent use of technical words improves pupils' vocabulary. For example, in the Reception class, children grouped different creatures using the terms amphibians and mammals.

Leaders believe that the key to pupils' success is their ability to read. Well-trained staff ensure the expert teaching of phonics. As a result, nearly all pupils meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Leaders' swift actions make sure that anyone who falls behind gets the help that they need to catch up. Pupils told us that they love to read. They spoke confidently of their favourite authors and the reasons for their choices.

In the early years, children get off to an excellent start from the outset. A warm and purposeful welcome, which includes letters written by Year 6 buddies, helps the youngest children to settle and quickly become part of the school family. Early years staff maintain excellent communications with parents through the daily 'meet and greet'. Teachers and parents also make superb use of electronic systems to share children's academic and social successes.

The teaching of early reading and mathematics is the cornerstone of the highly successful curriculum offer. During their time in Reception, children build the skills that they need to succeed. For example, the 'Forest Friday' events develop children's self-confidence and help them to work with others. Children make excellent progress from their starting points and they achieve well. They are certainly ready to move into Year 1.

The promotion of pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils take part in an excellent range of clubs and cultural visits. Club activities link to the learning that pupils study in class. For example, when 'rhythm and pulse' is taught in music, the choir club focus on creating and performing rhythmic rap music. Pupils have many positions of responsibility in school. These include librarians, lunchtime helpers and reading buddies. School councillors create manifestos and deliver speeches to their classmates during the hustings. These precede democratic school council elections.

Leaders enrich pupils' cultural understanding through links with an ethnically diverse city-based school. Pupils in both schools visit each other and share in each other's cultures. Leaders use the school curriculum as a vehicle to enhance pupils' cultural experiences and deepen their knowledge of the world around them. Pupils not only learn to converse in French, but they also learn about French culture. This includes studies of Bastille Day and the work of Gustave Eiffel. Some pupils told me about how they had translated the story of Goldilocks and the three bears into French.

They explained that they had then performed it as a play for parents and other pupils.

Leaders look after their staff exceptionally well. They carefully review and refine school procedures to ensure that the pressures of staff workload are carefully controlled. As a result, staff feel very well supported and their morale is very high.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and all staff at St Joseph's Primary School are committed to keeping pupils safe. They receive up-to-date training and they are vigilant. All appropriate checks are completed to ensure the suitability of staff. Leaders keep meticulous records that are fit for purpose. They share information with the right people to protect pupils who may be at risk of harm. Governors make sure that the school's internet connection is subject to appropriate monitoring and filtering to keep pupils safe from online threats.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can complain to Ofsted.

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	119680
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10110945
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	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Cath Jones
Headteacher	Simon Lawman
Website	www.stjosephswithnell.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	September 2018

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary has a Roman Catholic Christian faith-based ethos.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out by the Archdiocese of Liverpool in July 2019.
- Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During the inspection, we looked in detail at reading, mathematics, history and science. This involved discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with teachers and discussions with pupils. We also listened to pupils reading.
- We spoke with members of the governing body, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. We also met with the teacher responsible for the early years and the special educational needs coordinator.

- We reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and the checks carried out during the appointment of staff. We also looked at records of pupils' attendance.
- We considered the 40 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. We also considered the six responses to the online staff survey and the 17 responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

John Nixon, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jennie Platt	Ofsted Inspector

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