

# Inspection of St Joseph's and St Gregory's Catholic Primary School

Chester Road, Bedford MK40 4HN

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Inspection dates: 19–20 November 2019

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Requires improvement**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

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

Pupils are happy and feel safe. Staff provide well for pupils' well-being and personal development. Pupils feel that adults have high expectations of them. Children in the early years work and play together well.

There has been a decline in the quality of education in key stage 2 since the previous inspection. This is particularly the case in the teaching of writing and mathematics. Leaders are taking action to bring about the necessary improvements.

Pupils told us that they enjoy most of their learning but sometimes find it too easy, especially in mathematics. They find science and French more difficult. One junior pupil summed up the views of others in saying that, 'It's better if learning is hard because you learn from your mistakes.'

Pupils are usually kind to each other in lessons and on the playground. Pupils know about types of bullying and what to do when bullying occurs. Pupils are confident that on the rare occasions when unkindness or bullying takes place, adults help pupils to resolve any problems.

In some classes, teachers have established positive relationships. Pupils have good attitudes to their learning and work well. In other classes, some pupils misbehave. This stops them and their classmates from learning as much as they could.

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

Children learn well in the early years. The leader of early years quickly notices when adults could do things better to help children learn as much as possible. Changes are made without delay. Adults in Nursery and Reception are determined to give children the best possible start with their literacy. Staff model speaking and writing so that children can see how to use English well. By the time children are in Reception, they are beginning to chat about their learning.

There has been a decline in the quality of education in key stage 2 since the school changed from a middle school to a primary school. Leaders, governors and the trust are acting to stop this decline. They have been successful in offering a wide range of subjects and in improving pupils' reading skills, but they have not identified all the areas that need to improve. For example, pupils' writing and higher-level mathematics skills are still not good enough.

There are classes in which some pupils' behaviour interrupts their learning and that of others. Pupils told us that this low-level disruption happens often. Some staff do not follow the school's policy for behaviour management. They do not act quickly enough to stop learning being disrupted. Where routines are well established, pupils listen to adults and work well. Pupils generally behave well and follow rules at playtime and lunchtime.

Curriculum leaders know what and how they want pupils to learn in each subject. Leaders visit lessons to check that teachers are doing what is planned. Leaders have not, however, checked that teaching is helping pupils to learn.

The teaching of writing is not good enough. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can write. Teachers do not regularly help pupils to correct poor punctuation, grammar and handwriting. Teachers do not give pupils the chance to write often enough.

Teachers follow the school's mathematics programme, which is helping younger pupils to learn well. The programme is not similarly well adapted to meet pupils' needs in key stage 2. Pupils who are capable of doing more difficult mathematics say that the work is too easy. They rarely have the chance to try work that would make them think hard. This is also the case for lessons in physical education (PE) and art.

The teaching of reading is a strength of the school. Staff pronounce sounds correctly and offer a clear sequence of learning in phonics. As a result, pupils make strong progress with their reading. Reading books are carefully matched to what pupils can read. Junior pupils told us that they enjoy reading books by a range of favourite authors.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make better progress than other pupils. Teachers adjust tasks to help pupils learn what they need to know next.

Leaders and staff support disadvantaged pupils and vulnerable pupils well. These pupils develop confidence in their learning and play. The nurture room is used by pupils of all ages to meet a variety of their needs. Leaders ensure that all pupils can go on outings and learn from activities outside school.

There is a wide range of clubs after school and at lunchtimes. Many pupils take advantage of these activities and enjoy them. Pupils enjoy lunchtime, where the food is healthy, flowers decorate the tables, classical music plays and table manners are expected.

When pupils experience friendship problems or feel unhappy, staff provide suitable support. Staff listen to pupils and suggest strategies to help them to develop good friendships. Pupils are being well prepared for life in modern Britain.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise the safeguarding of pupils. Leaders ensure that staff have regular safeguarding training. Staff know the signs that might raise concerns about pupils'

welfare and know what actions to take. Leaders work with other organisations when it is appropriate.

Records of the checks leaders carry out on adults working in the school are thorough.

Pupils are aware of dangers and risks that they may face online and in person. They know what the school does to keep them safe. They told us that they practise fire drills. Pupils also know how to stay safe when they are in science lessons or on school trips.

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

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

- The quality of pupils' writing is not as good as it should be. This is because teachers have low expectations for the presentation, quantity and quality of pupils' work. Teachers need to raise their expectations of what pupils can do, including the use of basic grammar and punctuation, and joining handwriting correctly. Teachers need to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to write so that writing and communication skills can develop.
- Teachers do not meet the needs of pupils in key stage 2 consistently well, especially the needs of pupils who are capable of reaching higher standards. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that teachers provide suitably demanding learning activities so that pupils learn well.
- Curriculum leaders are developing their leadership skills so that they can carry out some parts of their roles independently of senior leaders. Curriculum leaders need to ensure that their monitoring focuses on whether the curriculum and how it is delivered is impacting on pupils' progress as intended.
- In some classes, too much learning time is lost through pupils' low-level disruption. Leaders need to ensure that teachers do not allow poor behaviour to continue. Teachers should use the school's behaviour management policy consistently so that pupils do not lose learning time as a result of their own behaviour or that of others.

## **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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 139547   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Bedford  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10110325   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 445  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of governors</b>                  | Christopher Donnellan, QC  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Lisa Sumpter   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.stjosephsandstgregorys.com">www.stjosephsandstgregorys.com</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 20–21 January 2015   |

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, St Gregory’s Catholic Middle School has become St Joseph’s and St Gregory’s Catholic Primary School. St Joseph’s Catholic Lower School closed at the same time. These changes took effect in 2017.
- Both St Gregory’s Catholic Middle School and St Joseph’s Catholic Lower School were graded as good in their last inspections in 2015.
- The school is part of the St Francis of Assisi Academies Trust, which is also known as Bedford Catholic Schools.
- The school’s most recent section 48 inspection was on 27 March 2019.

## Information about this inspection

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

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher, the executive principal of the trust, the senior assistant headteacher and the other assistant headteachers. An inspector spoke with the chair of governors on the telephone.

- We focused on the following subjects: reading, writing, mathematics, art and PE. To determine the quality of education we spoke with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, spoke with pupils and staff, and scrutinised pupils' work.
- We held meetings with the designated safeguarding leader, held meetings with pupils and spoke with staff to check the school's safeguarding arrangements. We also checked the school's processes for checking the suitability of adults who work with pupils and of adults who are regular visitors to the school.

### **Inspection team**

|                               |                  |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Paula Masters, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Linda Bartlett                | Ofsted Inspector |
| Ahson Mohammed                | Ofsted Inspector |

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