

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

Chester Road, Bedford MK40 4HN

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Gemma Otter. This school is part of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Tony Bishop, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christopher Donnellan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Joseph's and St Gregory's like coming to school. They feel part of the school's caring community. Following a recent reorganisation of all pupils into one building, older and younger pupils welcome the opportunity to mix together. They have formed warm, positive relationships.

Pupils understand the school rule, 'be kind, proud and safe'. This helps them to behave considerately towards each other and adults. Pupils and staff have clear, shared expectations for pupils' conduct. Any incidents that occur are usually minor and quickly dealt with by staff. Pupils feel safe and well looked after. There is always someone to talk to about any worries.

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning start in the early years. Children in Nursery and Reception are happy and enthusiastic learners. Children in Reception are well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils expect to work hard. They do their best to meet the high standards set by teachers. Pupils produce much work that is of high quality.

Pupils are keen to share their views with school staff through groups such as the school council and junior mission team. They know that adults will listen. Older pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as being an 'eco-warrior'.

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

The school has made substantial improvements to the quality of education since the previous inspection. The ambitious new curriculum is markedly improving pupils' achievement, which has historically been low, especially in English and mathematics.

The school has broken down into small, logically ordered steps the knowledge that children must know by the end of Reception. This means that children can use what they know to make them ready to learn new knowledge and skills. Building on what is taught in the early years, subject leaders have identified the knowledge, skills and vocabulary they want pupils to learn in older year groups.

In a few subjects, the school has not provided the specific guidance teachers need to ensure that pupils retain and build complex knowledge over time. This means that, in these subjects, pupils do not gain and remember important knowledge as quickly as they should.

The school ensures that reading is at the centre of the curriculum. As soon as children start in Reception, they start to learn the sounds they need to decode words. They practise their reading regularly. Many pupils quickly develop fluency. Those falling behind receive help to ensure that they catch up quickly. The wider curriculum ensures that pupils encounter a rich selection of books. Pupils love to hear their teachers reading to them. They develop a love of reading.

In most subjects teachers have strong subject knowledge. They plan appropriate activities that help pupils to achieve well. Teachers provide clear explanations and present tricky concepts effectively. They ensure that pupils get regular opportunities to revisit and reinforce important knowledge. Teachers routinely check for any gaps in pupils' knowledge. If pupils begin to fall behind, they receive appropriate extra help.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the full curriculum and make good progress. Teachers successfully adapt learning activities to help pupils access the same lessons as others. A small number of pupils follow effective bespoke programmes that support their learning.

Children in Nursery and Reception settle well each day. They benefit from the clear routines and calm environment established by staff. Children learn to use new words and communicate confidently. Staff plan purposeful, motivating activities. They know, and meet, children's needs extremely well.

The school has made significant improvements to pupils' behaviour since the previous inspection. Pupils learn in lessons without interruption. Staff apply the school's behaviour policy effectively. Pupils are well supported to deal with emotions such as anger.

Pupils' personal development is supported well through the curriculum and wider opportunities. Older pupils learn a range of musical instruments, such as keyboard and ukelele. Pupils learn about fundamental British values such as democracy. They learn to keep themselves and others safe, including when online. Pupils are taught to respect each other's differences.

The trust and leaders ensure that the school's actions to improve the quality of education for all pupils are effective. The school invests in high-quality staff training. Staff share the school's vision for improvement. They welcome the support and training they receive from leaders. They appreciate the school's consideration of their workload.

Most parents and carers value the school, especially the extra support given to families and pupils at times of need.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, the knowledge pupils need to learn is not broken down into precise enough, well-sequenced steps. In these subjects, the curriculum does not specify when important knowledge should be revisited. This

slows down the rate at which pupils learn more complex knowledge and remember what they are taught. The school should ensure that important knowledge is broken down, logically ordered and revisited in all subjects, so that pupils' knowledge and skills build in complexity and depth in the full range of subjects they study.

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	139547
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10288522
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	309
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Donnellan
Chief executive officer of trust	Tony Bishop
Headteacher	Gemma Otter
Website	www.stjosephsandstgregorys.com
Dates of previous inspection	19 and 20 November 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Joseph's and St Gregory's Catholic Primary School was originally part of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy Trust (Bedford Catholic Schools). In February 2020, this trust merged with St Thomas of Canterbury Academy Trust and St Luke's Academy Trust to form Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust.
- The school has previously been inspected by Ofsted twice as an academy school.
- Members of the board of trustees are referred to as directors by the trust, and the chief executive officer as the strategic executive lead.
- The school has provision for three- and four-year old children in the school's Nursery class.
- The most recent inspection of the school's religious character under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 was carried out in March 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due within eight years.

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.
- The lead inspector held discussions with members of the trust, including the chief executive officer, the director of school improvement, the vice-chair of the trust and two governors, including the chair of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, art and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, staff and pupils, visited a sample of lessons and reviewed samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors reviewed pupils' work and curriculum plans and held discussions with pupils in a further range of subjects.
- Inspectors met with pupils to understand their views about the school.
- An inspector held discussions and visited lessons with the special educational coordinator to consider the support for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils during lesson visits, around the school and in the playground. Inspectors looked at behaviour, bullying and attendance records, and leaders' analysis of these.
- The lead inspector reviewed school documentation, including school development plans and governing body minutes.
- Safeguarding records were scrutinised by the lead inspector, including the single central record of pre-employment checks, and the school's log of safeguarding incidents. A meeting was held with those in the school who have oversight of safeguarding arrangements.
- The inspectors considered 36 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the 22 free-text comments. They also considered 26 responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Judith Sumner, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lucille Pollard	Ofsted Inspector
Georgina Nutton	Ofsted Inspector

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