

Inspection of St Mary & St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Folly Lane, Wool, Wareham, Dorset BH20 6DS

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Mary & St Joseph's Catholic Primary School have positive attitudes to their learning. The school is welcoming and highly inclusive. Most pupils behave respectfully towards one another and staff. Pupils' emotional well-being is prioritised. Recent work to reduce bullying has had a positive impact on pupil behaviour. Issues are dealt with effectively by staff. Most pupils behave well in lessons.

The curriculum is undergoing changes. This means that pupils learn better in some subjects than in others. Pupils achieve well in phonics, English and mathematics. Pupils learn a broad range of subjects, but they learn better in some subjects than in others. There have been recent changes to leadership and staffing, but this is now more settled. For example, changes to the curriculum in Reception are beginning to have a positive impact on children.

All pupils have a variety of opportunities to participate in clubs and activities. Pupils who are 'Bronze Ambassadors' and prefects are proud of being able to support younger pupils and the school community. In addition, links within the local and international communities support pupils' understanding of what it means to be a good citizen.

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

The curriculum is mostly well planned. It is ambitious and broad. In many subjects, the school has identified the most important knowledge that pupils should learn. However, in some subjects, the school has not identified the subject-specific skills it wants pupils to develop. Much of the school's work on the curriculum has happened recently. Some subject leaders are new. This means that not all teachers have a shared understanding of what needs to be taught in each subject. The school has not established how teachers can check that pupils have understood what has been taught in these subjects.

Pupils get off to a strong start in reading and mathematics. In these subjects, they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school's phonics programme ensures that pupils learn to read quickly. The books that pupils read are matched to the sounds they know. Those who struggle to keep up are given extra help by well-trained staff. Reading has been prioritised at the school, and older pupils read a range of thought-provoking texts.

In the early years, activities are not yet precisely matched to key areas of learning. This work is being developed. Children have daily opportunities to develop their fine motor skills, learn about the wider world and express themselves with arts and crafts. There are clear routines in place, but not all children respond positively. Ongoing work to improve the learning environment in the early years has begun but is yet to provide a rich set of learning experiences for children.

Pupils enjoy talking about their learning, and this reflects the positive attitudes they have towards school. Older pupils are proud of the quality of their written work, which is nearly always of a high standard. Some pupils are less positive about occasional disruption to learning and the behaviour of their peers. However, the school's new behaviour policy has started to have a positive impact on pupils. The school works effectively with families to improve attendance, when needed.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are accurately identified. In most cases, these pupils are supported to work alongside their peers. Teachers adapt the curriculum for pupils with SEND when needed. Additionally, the school's improved pastoral provision has helped a number of pupils with SEND, and others, with their social and emotional skills. The drive to increase pupils' resilience and confidence has had a positive impact.

The school teaches pupils about other cultures and religions effectively. Pupils remember important messages about how to keep themselves safe online and offline. They understand what it means to be a good friend. This learning starts in Reception. There is a strong culture of tolerance, and pupils respect difference. The GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) team values opportunities to help with assemblies and organise food collections. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

There have been changes to the leadership of the school over the last few years, and this has unsettled members of the school community. The trust has supported the school to monitor the curriculum and ensure that there is a substantive headteacher with a clear vision. Improvements have been made, but much of this work is in the early stage, particularly in relation to the school's curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of some areas of the curriculum is not consistent, including in the early years. There is not yet a shared understanding of precisely what all pupils should know and be able to do in these subjects and areas of learning. As a result, assessment is not being used effectively to check what pupils know and can do. The trust must ensure that the curriculum is consistently implemented.
- Leadership is new in several areas. The school has not ensured that the planned curriculum is delivered as intended or its impact checked. As a result, pupils are learning less well in some areas and are less well prepared for the next stage of their learning. The trust must ensure that the curriculum is monitored strategically for its impact in all subject areas.

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	140770
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10288195
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	137
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
CEO of trust	Zoe Batten
Headteacher	Sarah Terrey
Website	www.smsjwool.dorset.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is designated as having a religious character. The school is in the Diocese of Plymouth. During the most recent section 48 inspection of the school, carried out in February 2017, the school was judged to be outstanding.
- The school has been part of Plymouth Cast, a multi-academy trust, since 2014.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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: early reading, mathematics and history. 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.
- Inspectors also looked at pupils' work in art and geography.
- Inspectors analysed responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors also considered the responses of staff to Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils during lessons and social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector: 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 met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and discussed how pupils with SEND are identified and supported.
- Inspectors met with staff who oversee the personal development and behaviour of pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the interim academy board, the director of education and director of primary education for Plymouth Cast multi-academy trust.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michelle Williamson

Ofsted Inspector

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