

Inspection of St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Academy

Wellington Road, Todmorden, Lancashire OL14 5HP

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024 and 16 May 2024

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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Lloyd. This school is part of Romero Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Des Callaghan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Angela Ager.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Academy has a palpable family atmosphere. This is a nurturing environment. The Catholic ethos runs through the life of the school. The well-being of pupils and staff is a priority.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Most pupils achieve well. The school teaches pupils in mixed-age classes. This is managed well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school has improved the curriculum in recent years. This has contributed to the strong progress pupils make by the end of key stage 2. In some areas, recent changes need more time to become embedded to provide the full impact of the curriculum that the school intends.

Pupils' behaviour is calm and purposeful. The school has high expectations of pupils' conduct. Bullying is not an issue. The school's systems to promote good attendance work well. Pupils are happy and safe.

The school provides a wealth of opportunities to develop pupils' character and positive mental health. The school ensures all pupils benefit from having a leadership position before they leave primary school.

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

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Academy is a smaller-than-average sized school. The well-chosen curriculum supports the teaching of the mixed-age classes. Teachers are clear about what pupils must know for each year group. Teacher expertise is well developed by the training offered by the trust.

Reading is prioritised in school. Children learn to read as soon as they join Reception. Children learn to read quickly and fluently. Staff's expertise enables strong progress in reading. The school meticulously checks pupils' reading progress. Weaker readers benefit from the timely and effective support that they receive throughout the school day. The recently introduced 'breakfast phonics club' is having a positive impact. The reading initiatives and stories shared in school create an excitement for reading. Pupils enjoy the wide range of books available for them to read.

By the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve very well. Lessons are ambitious. Pupils engage enthusiastically with the questions and activities presented in class. They want to do well. The curriculum prioritises pupils' understanding of important vocabulary. In lessons where this is well embedded, pupils discuss their learning confidently. The recent changes to the curriculum mean that, in some subjects, the systems to check that pupils have learned and remembered the knowledge they need are still being developed. In some subjects, teachers are not aware of the

knowledge that pupils are missing. This means that pupils struggle to integrate new knowledge as the curriculum intends.

Pupils with SEND are highly involved in the life of the school. Staff know their needs well. The school partners with specialist teams and local support to provide pupils with the help they need. Parents and carers are involved in a collaborative way. The progress and character development of pupils with SEND are a priority. They achieve well. They benefit from the adult support given in lessons and tailored interventions.

Children in the early years benefit from the ways the school develops their independence. For example, children help to serve snacks and use timers to tidy up. Children learn to use hand tools in regular 'forest school' sessions and begin to develop their understanding of the world. Relationships between children and adults are nurturing. Children enjoy joining in with familiar songs and rhymes. This develops their communication and language knowledge. Adults support children to develop their understanding of early number and mathematics effectively. In some areas of learning, adults are not clear enough about the precise purpose of some activities or the exact vocabulary that children should learn. This means that children sometimes do not secure the depth of understanding or level of skill that they could.

Pupils' behaviour is positive throughout the school day. They are motivated by the reward systems in school. There are high expectations for pupils' attitudes to learning. The school's routines to create calm classrooms are effective. Pupils work well together in lessons. Friendships across year groups are delightful. Pupils at St Joseph's are polite and friendly.

The school provides regular lessons teaching pupils the science behind how the brain works. Pupils discuss this with impressive eloquence. Their knowledge of brain chemistry helps them to manage their emotions and positive well-being. Pupils are proud of the many leadership opportunities on offer to them. The school carefully checks that all pupils will have a role contributing to school life and initiatives. The variety of extra-curricular clubs and visits develops pupils' talents and interests. Some pupils lead lunchtime clubs and the school introduces after-school clubs following pupils' requests.

Those responsible for governance work well together to ensure the school benefits from the support and development available. The long-standing governing body know the school and community well. They are well aware of their statutory responsibilities. Governors demonstrate a high level of understanding and commitment to the improvement journey of the school. The school benefits from the development opportunities and networks provided by the trust. Staff workload and well-being are well managed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of learning, the curriculum in the early years is not specific enough about the knowledge and precise vocabulary that pupils should learn and remember. As a result, some activities and adult interactions are not sharply focused on exactly what children need to learn. The school should focus on developing the full early years curriculum to provide high-quality learning opportunities for children in the early years across all areas of learning.
- The school's systems to check what pupils know and remember are more developed in some curriculum subjects than in others. In some subjects, teachers do not have a clear understanding of what older pupils know and can do. The school should continue to refine how they check pupils' knowledge and understanding in these subjects so that they can quickly identify any misconceptions and plan future work accordingly.

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	147583
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10323114
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Ager
Chair of governing body	James Livesey
CEO	Des Callaghan
Headteacher	Elizabeth Lloyd
Website	www.st-josephs-tod.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Academy converted to become an academy in November 2019. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's RC Primary School, Todmorden, as last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The school is part of Romero Catholic Academy Trust.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The school's last Catholic Schools Inspectorate (CSI) inspection took place in November 2022.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school does not currently use alternative education 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. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection was carried out on 23 and 24 April 2024. Inspectors returned on 16 May 2024 to gather additional evidence in line with [Ofsted's 'Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence'](#) policy.
- The inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including a representative from the board of directors, members of the governing body and the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, science and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspectors listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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. The inspectors also spoke to leaders, teachers, governors, and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspectors analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They reviewed answers from the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

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