

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Joseph's Specialist Trust

Amlets Lane, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 7DH

Inspection dates:

28 February and 1 March 2023

Outcome

St Joseph's Specialist Trust continues to be an outstanding school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils receive a warm welcome when they arrive at school, and this sets them up for a positive day. They are delighted to greet their friends. Pupils form exceptionally trusting relationships with staff, who know them well. Adults create a nurturing environment where pupils can flourish. Parents are overwhelmingly positive in their praise of the school. They value and appreciate the dedication of the staff team.

Pupils are supported to manage their behaviour exceptionally well. Staff understand pupils well. Sensitively, help is provided to pupils to help them regulate their behaviour. Consistent and established routines mean that learning environments are purposeful, and pupils can concentrate on their learning. Highly skilled staff care deeply about pupils' well-being. They have an in-depth understanding of how to help each pupil achieve their full potential. Consequently, pupils feel happy, safe, and well supported to manage any difficult situations successfully.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils to achieve everything of which they are capable. Academic learning is seamlessly interwoven with therapeutic interventions. This embedded approach enables pupils to develop firm foundations for learning. Alongside a rich personal development offer, this powerful combination prepares pupils to be successful in the future.

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

Leaders have designed and implemented a carefully organised curriculum. This makes sure pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next steps in education or employment. The flexible 'learning pathway' approach means the curriculum is tailored to meet individual needs. Each pupil has personalised targets based on their education, health and care plan outcomes. These longer-term outcomes are broken down into smaller steps to form personal targets. These ensure that pupils make excellent progress. Teachers, therapists, and support staff all work together to help pupils achieve these. They collaboratively review the targets and adapt them as needed. This approach keeps

everyone well informed about the progress pupils are making. Alongside these personalised targets, pupils learn through subject-specific lessons. This is organised so that prior knowledge is regularly revisited and consolidated. Staff ensure that pupils are working on their personal targets alongside the national curriculum subject. As a result of careful planning, the combining of therapists' expertise, and teachers' subject knowledge creates a highly effective curriculum.

An unwavering commitment to developing pupils' communication underpins all learning. Pupils successfully learn to read or recognise symbols or words at a level that is appropriate for them. For pupils who are able to recognise letters, and the sounds they make, leaders have established a consistent approach to help them confidently learn to read. Therapists and skilled staff combine their expertise to adapt and create bespoke programmes. These support pupils to become more fluent readers. Pupils enjoy books, and they excitedly discussed plans to celebrate World Book Day.

A focus on pupils' personal development fortifies the curriculum offer. Leaders ensure that pupils enjoy a range of interesting and engaging experiences. Local trips help to develop pupils' social skills and independence. Pupils are empowered through the school council to have a say on how their school is run. Pupils benefit from a wealth of cultural opportunities through art, music and dance. For example, pupils can work with the artist in residence or create audio books in the school radio station studio. Leaders have formed links with local schools. This helps pupils develop new friendships within the wider community.

Pupils are encouraged to learn about the wider world. Throughout the year, pupils take part in a range of special events to learn about different faiths or cultures. Carefully planned sessions help pupils explore aspects of pupils' well-being, such as healthy relationships and mindfulness.

The school's 'Five Years to Departure' transition plan forms a clear route to future success. Leaders have coordinated an array of local community work experience placements. There are also a range of in-house enterprise opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work. Pupils run a popular in-school café and prepare tasty snacks and meals. Through taking part in these activities, they grow in confidence as they discover their talents and interests. Transitions to college or other placements are managed sensitively. As far as possible, leaders track pupils to ensure that they get the right support as they embark on the next stage of their lives.

Staff work collaboratively, with a strong ethos of teamwork. Those responsible for governance work strategically. They are knowledgeable and active in their work in supporting school leaders to achieve their ambition for all pupils. This ensures that they carry out their statutory duties effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise keeping pupils safe. Staff are well trained, and they report all concerns, no matter how small. They understand the needs and vulnerabilities of the pupils and are clear about their responsibilities to safeguard all pupils. Leaders work as an effective team across the organisation. They are proactive and liaise effectively with other agencies as needed, to make sure that pupils get the right support.

Through carefully considered and specialist approaches, pupils are taught about positive and healthy relationships, consent and how to keep themselves safe online.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in June 2013.

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' 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	125456
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10256560
Type of school	Special
School category	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils	5 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	73
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	19
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Father Jonathan How
Headteacher	Simon Jaggard
Website	www.st-josephscranleigh.surrey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Specialist Trust is a non-maintained special school and a registered children's home. It provides education for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder, moderate learning difficulty, speech language and communication needs and severe learning difficulty. All pupils attending the school have an education, health and care plan. Most pupils attend as day pupils, and St Joseph's also provides some boarding provision.
- The school is managed by the full governing body on behalf of the St Joseph's Trust board of trustees.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the executive principal, senior leaders, therapy leaders, subject leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and therapy assistants.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the full governing body and the board of trustees, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum planning in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and outside during social times.
- Inspectors reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records and policies, speaking to staff and trustees and discussing this with pupils.
- The inspection team considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. They gathered the views of pupils and staff through surveys and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including school improvement documentation and trust board minutes.

Inspection team

Jo Petch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Linda Jacobs

Ofsted Inspector

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