

Saint Joseph's Primary Catholic Voluntary Academy

Rosecroft Lane, Loftus, Saltburn-by-the-Sea, North Yorkshire TS13 4PZ

Inspection dates

27–28 September 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher, governors and senior leaders have created an ethos of high expectations. The whole school community is determined to raise the aspiration for all. Leaders are doggedly determined to eradicate anything that is second best.
- Leaders expect the very best from all adults in school, and, as a result, teaching is highly effective in accelerating pupils' progress. Teachers routinely establish high expectations. They accept no excuses for failure and work collaboratively to address any issues that arise.
- Pupils gain excellent skills, knowledge and understanding in mathematics, reading and writing. The progress made by pupils in their learning over time has been rapid, resulting in high levels of attainment. Pupils' progress and attainment in writing, although high, is slightly behind that in reading and mathematics in school.
- All adults are committed to supporting pupils to be the best they can be. Adults know exactly how their contribution adds to pupils' experiences and achievements. Consequently, staff morale is very high.
- Pupils respond extremely well to the high expectations of staff and this is seen in their exemplary attitudes to learning in lessons. They produce an impressive quality of work and behave impeccably around school.
- Leadership, provision and teaching in the early years are excellent. Starting in the provision for two-year-olds, strong teamwork coupled with thoughtful learning activities ensure that children's curiosity is harnessed effectively to develop their learning.
- The comprehensive and exciting curriculum ensures that pupils access a range of visits that fires pupils' enthusiasm and engagement for learning. The school's tracking of pupils' progress in science, creative and foundation subjects is in the process of becoming embedded and refined.
- The governing body shares the vision and passion of the headteacher, playing a key role in the school's ongoing successes. They know the school extremely well and keep a sharp eye on ensuring that further improvements are made.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the writing skills of pupils in every year group, ensuring that a larger proportion are able to write at a greater depth.
- Embed and refine current systems to assess and track the progress of pupils in subject-specific skills across the curriculum so that it matches the robust systems for reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders have established a strong culture of learning. The headteacher's implacable determination that all pupils will achieve their full potential, regardless of any difficulties they face, is reflected in the high expectations teachers have for their pupils and that pupils have for themselves. As a consequence, pupils make rapid progress and develop a confident approach to learning.
- Staff and leaders at all levels work tirelessly to solve problems and make continuous improvements, teamwork being the catalyst for change. When concerns or difficulties arise, they focus on implementing and sustaining improvements. Working together collegiately, leaders and governors aspire to ensure that all staff and pupils succeed. Levels of trust in school are high.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed, regardless of the challenges they may face to achieving well. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that pupils' progress is tracked systematically and accurately and that any emerging concerns are acted on quickly.
- All adults are championing the needs of disadvantaged pupils in order to eliminate any differences between the achievement of this group of pupils and other pupils nationally. Additional funding is used to excellent effect to secure improvements for disadvantaged pupils. Detailed tracking of pupils' progress creates a vivid picture of an individual pupil's progress. The progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils exceeds that of other pupils nationally.
- Systems to check the quality of teaching are incisive, highly detailed and carefully planned week by week. Leaders and teachers act quickly to address any emerging underperformance, challenging and supporting staff to fulfil their potential. Teachers share responsibility for all pupils in school, sharing most-effective practice and supporting each other. Staff have targets closely linked to the school's improvement priorities and leaders hold them to account for the progress made by pupils in each class. Targets are thoroughly checked to ensure that pupils make speedy progress from their various starting points.
- The school's curriculum provides exciting, stimulating and relevant contexts through which pupils can develop their basic skills and become increasingly responsible citizens. It is tailored and adapted to meet the needs of pupils in this area of North Yorkshire. A large number of extra-curricular clubs are attended by many pupils at school. Activities such as art, mathematics, cookery and gardening support pupils' learning very effectively, in addition to many sporting opportunities.
- The curriculum is enriched and enlivened by a series of visitors to school and visits to places of local interest that hook pupils' imaginations and curiosity. These opportunities stimulate pupils' thirst for knowledge. For example, pupils talked animatedly about residential trips to Edinburgh and London, or recreating a Roman battle on Saltburn beach. The curriculum promotes a 'can do' ethos, within which everyone is accepted and expected to thrive. Pupils show great respect and tolerance of individual

differences and lifestyles, learning to work cooperatively with each other. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

- Leaders make effective use of the physical education and sport funding for schools. An external sports coach delivers lessons in school and has enhanced teachers' expertise and confidence. The number of pupils participating in inter-school competitive events has increased to over 93% of pupils. Pupils are very knowledgeable on how to live a healthy lifestyle.
- Parents are highly supportive, and the vast majority stated in the school questionnaire that they are happy with the school. The school maintains a positive and supportive relationship with schools in the Nicholas Postgate Academy Trust and East Cleveland Co-operative Learning Trust, and benefits from good-quality support from the Diocese.

Governance of the school

- Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school that enhance their effectiveness and impact. They share the passion and commitment of the headteacher and senior leaders. Governors challenge and question school leaders well, holding them to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for the outcomes for pupils, as seen in statutory tests and school assessment information.
- Governors make it their business to know about the work of the school and have an accurate and incisive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured, along with the headteacher and senior leaders, that the school's priorities are intrinsically embedded in the performance management of all adults, thus ensuring that all adults know exactly how their work contributes to the work of the school. Governors participate in monitoring activities, such as analysing work in pupils' books and making short visits to classes, alongside senior leaders.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a tangible ethos that is positive and caring, putting the welfare and well-being of each pupil at the heart of all that it does. This is clearly seen in the friendly, happy and confident manner of the pupils in school. The curriculum supports pupils very well in maintaining their own safety and assessment of risk, including keeping themselves safe online.
- Policies, procedures and records are of exemplary quality and are up to date. Staff training is thorough and up to date, including training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from the risk of extremism and online dangers. Registers of staff training are completed. Staff have access to well-written policies and guidance and, as a result, have a very secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding.
- The long-established culture of keeping pupils safe remains very evident. Leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff, and they leave no stone unturned in their duty to keep pupils safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- The school's assessment information, teaching observed on this inspection and pupils' work in books demonstrate that teaching over time is outstanding. Teachers have consistently high expectations of the work and behaviours expected of pupils. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils currently in the school are achieving highly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have strong subject knowledge and structure learning effectively. This helps them to intervene and further challenge pupils in a consistent and imaginative manner, so that pupils develop a deeper understanding of the subject or topic. For example in a Year 6 class, pupils were able to identify the key features of a biography of Alexander Selkirk as a result of the targeted questioning by the class teacher and purposeful peer discussion.
- Work is pitched accurately according to pupils' abilities, including for the most able pupils, enabling them to succeed in school. For example, in Year 3, most-able pupils were challenged in their work on the perimeter of shapes to find different solutions for the length of sides of a rectangle with a given perimeter. Pupils were able to demonstrate their reasoning for deciding whether statements such as 'perimeter can be measured inside or outside a regular shape' are true or false.
- Assessment is detailed and accurate. Teachers are well aware of what pupils can do and what they need to be able to do to fulfil their potential. Teachers' high expectations result in pupils making rapid progress in improving their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Teachers are becoming adept at assessing subject-specific skills across all curriculum subjects as systems become embedded.
- Teachers are vigilant in spotting opportunities to deepen pupils' learning and, because of their success in promoting pupils' excellent attitudes to learning, are able to respond flexibly when they see the chance to stretch understanding. In Year 4, the teacher skilfully used the moral dilemma of whether Captain Cook was justified in beating his sailors if they did not eat fruit to allay the deadly threat of scurvy, to extend pupils' thinking and speaking skills. Pupils were asked to explain if this action was justified.
- Teachers have worked hard to implement a rigorous and systematic programme of the teaching of phonics, in order to allow pupils to get off to a fast start in their early reading skills. Pupils can move fluidly between groups when extra challenge or support is required. As a result, nearly all pupils reached the required standard last year.
- Teachers know pupils well and are sensitive to their needs. When there are potential difficulties emerging, teachers and skilled teaching assistants help to make a substantial contribution to securing pupils' learning. As a result, disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly strong progress to others in school.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school works tirelessly to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. Adults work closely with pupils and families in a supportive and sensitive manner. Pupils said that they feel extremely safe in school. Pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions and work happily and cooperatively in lessons.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary, and most are very keen to succeed and to always produce their very best work. They grow in confidence during their time in school, acquiring an assured and resilient approach to developing their own learning. They take their roles of responsibility in the school community very seriously. They are proud to be school councillors, an anti-bullying ambassador, a play leader, part of the eco-committee or working alongside East Cleveland Council in environmental work.
- Bullying or racist incidents or incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare. If they do occur, they are promptly challenged, recorded and tracked to ensure that underlying causes are understood and resolved. Pupils have full confidence in staff to resolve any issues of poor behaviour.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The strong relationships in school and high levels of trust between adults and pupils ensure that pupils' conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary. Pupils are polite, caring, considerate and friendly to each other and to visitors. Playtimes are harmonious occasions when pupils play happily together.
- Pupils enjoy their learning, and most work conscientiously. They have a clear understanding of which aspects of behaviour help them to learn and which behaviours get in the way. In classrooms, pupils listen to adults attentively, and respond immediately and without fuss to instructions. They collaborate with peers when asked and motivate themselves to complete tasks and challenges on time. Lessons proceed in a calm and studious atmosphere highly conducive to learning.
- The relationships pupils have with adults and with each other are warm and trusting. Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school, as can be seen in their attendance, which is above average. The school does all it can to ensure pupils attend, including providing a minibus service for some pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- As a result of consistently high expectations, high-quality teaching, pupils' positive learning behaviour and an unwavering determination to succeed, outcomes for pupils are outstanding.
- Evidence from the high-quality work in pupils' books, matched by detailed information from the school's assessment system, shows unequivocally that pupils currently in the school are making rapid progress from their starting points and from the outset in early years. Pupils' progress in writing and particularly in reading and mathematics is extremely strong.
- Most pupils gained the expected level of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 in 2017, with a large proportion working at a greater depth in mathematics and reading. Consequently, pupils were well prepared for their move into key stage 2, where they continue to make rapid gains across a broad range of subjects.
- Based on accurate and reliable school assessment information, which matches closely the work found in current pupils' books, current key stage 2 pupils' progress and attainment in reading, mathematics and writing remains extremely strong in every year group. The high levels of attainment in 2016 for pupils at the end of key stage 2 were matched and exceeded in 2017, including for disadvantaged pupils. Pupils' progress measures were above those found nationally, especially in reading and mathematics.
- The most able pupils are given support which fully challenges them to achieve the levels of which they are capable and make sustained progress. This progress, including that of the most able disadvantaged pupils currently in the school, matches the progress of their classmates and is continuing to accelerate. The school supports the achievement of its most-able pupils very well. The proportion of Year 6 pupils who achieved a high score in 2017 was well above that found nationally.
- As a result of the effective and strategic use of the pupil premium funding, the very small number of disadvantaged pupils in each year group are making extremely strong progress in English and mathematics and are achieving well. The achievement of disadvantaged pupils outstrips that of other pupils nationally.
- The school is quick to identify any pupils who may be at risk of falling behind. Teachers make effective provision for these pupils through activities that are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where needed, individual support plans are in place, with challenging targets. As a result, the progress made by these pupils is as strong as that of their peers.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The majority of children start the early years with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. As a result of incisive leadership, outstanding teaching and provision, robust assessment, careful observation and good questioning, current

children, including disadvantaged children, make extremely strong progress and are well prepared to start Year 1, both academically and socially.

- Children are eager to explore and learn. They enjoy the opportunities provided to investigate and they learn happily together. Leaders are highly skilled in developing areas of provision to maximise learning opportunities for all children, based on accurate and ongoing assessments.
- Children's behaviour is consistently of a very high standard. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is excellent and results from the climate of high expectations promoted by all adults. This accounts for the strengths seen in children's behaviour and in their relationships with adults and each other. They are encouraged to take turns and to consider others, which they do very successfully.
- Children based in the provision for two-year olds are developing rapidly in their social and emotional skills as a result of skilled adults, high-quality resources and interesting and engaging activities. Adults know the individual needs of the children very well, and their supporting and encouraging manner allows children to explore and learn at their own pace. Children showed great maturity in washing plates, cups and their hands after snack time.
- The indoor and outdoor areas are stimulating and offer a wealth of opportunities for children to develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills. Children readily help themselves to resources such as clipboards and, consequently, they develop confident writing skills. Two Nursery children enthusiastically completed a science investigation trail outdoors, speaking confidently and articulately using phrases such as 'we need to find a tree with no leaves on'. There are quiet corners where children happily handle books and develop a love of reading and stories.
- All adults are adept at talking with and questioning children, which develops children's understanding and their confidence in speaking and listening. Adults observe children carefully and build on their interests. They carefully support children's learning through prompts and they work alongside children during imaginative and creative play sessions. Teachers provide a highly stimulating and exceptionally well-resourced environment where children are inquisitive and curious and mainly show excellent levels of concentration.
- The experienced and highly skilled early years team, led exceptionally well by the early years leader, understands the learning needs of young children and shares the same passion and drive to see children thrive. The team members have a clear understanding of the strengths in early years and identify key areas for improvement.
- All teachers monitor children's progress rigorously and record this accurately. Learning journals across Nursery and Reception show that children make excellent progress from their starting points. Teachers have an accurate picture of children's abilities and learning needs and adapt teaching and learning opportunities skilfully to further their development.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are highly effective. Children are taught how to manage risks from an early age and the robust safeguarding culture that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. There are no material breaches of statutory welfare requirements, as children are safe and well supported.

School details

Unique reference number	141457
Local authority	Redcar and Cleveland
Inspection number	10036524

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary academy
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Smith
Headteacher	Alison Toward
Telephone number	01287 640 613
Website	www.stjosephsloftus.co.uk
Email address	office@st-josephs.rac.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish on their website.
- The school became a convertor academy in October 2014 and joined the Nicholas Postgate Academy Trust. It is also part of the East Cleveland Co-operative Learning Trust. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement.
- The school is a smaller than the average-sized primary school in which the vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and speak English as their first language.

- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for support from the pupil premium and the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school offers a part-time provision for two-year-old children.
- The school's part-time Nursery operates in the morning and afternoon with a number of children on site for 30 hours per week. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and made some short visits to classrooms. The headteacher joined the lead inspector for some of the observations.
- On the first day of the inspection, Year 2 pupils attended a sports event out of school.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and reviewed the work in pupils' books across all year groups. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktimes and lunchtimes was observed.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils in lessons and during the day, and held a formal meeting with a group of pupils from Year 1 to Year 6. The lead inspector attended a school council meeting.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other school leaders. In addition to this, inspectors met with members of the governing body, staff responsible for safeguarding and attendance, and a group of teachers.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information relating to pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current pupils and the school's view of how well it is doing. Inspectors also reviewed the school improvement plan, documents relating to safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 38 parental responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. There were no staff responses to Ofsted's online survey.

Inspection team

Phil Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gillian Nimer

Ofsted Inspector

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