

# Inspection of a good school: Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary

Thorpe Road, Horden, Peterlee, County Durham SR8 4AB

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Inspection dates:

28 November 2019

## **Outcome**

Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are polite and welcoming. They were keen to tell us about all they like about their school. We saw them socialising and working together happily. They told us that they feel safe at school.

Pupils respect their teachers' efforts to make lessons interesting and rewarding. Pupils behave sensibly, both in class and around school. They respond well to their teachers' high expectations and work hard.

Teachers' subject knowledge sometimes does not help them plan learning to build on what pupils know and can do well enough.

Pupils are at the heart of this inclusive, friendly school community. The school promotes pupils' personal, social and emotional development very well. Pupils show high levels of respect for each other, their school and their local community.

Through the curriculum, pupils develop an understanding of the importance of tolerance and fairness. As a result, they do not put up with any bullying between each other. If any bullying occurs, adults make sure that it stops. This shows how well leaders put the school's values into practice. Pupils are kind and supportive towards each other. Parents and carers are typically happy with the school and would recommend the school to other parents.

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

Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are very positive. Pupils across the school behave well. They try hard in lessons and work well with others. Pupils play happily together at playtimes. They understand the importance of respecting difference.

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils. They want pupils to achieve well across the curriculum. They have worked on improving the planning of work in most subjects. Teachers know what to teach pupils and in which order ideas should be taught.

Mathematics is taught well. Teachers make sure that pupils understand the most important ideas and can use their knowledge to solve problems. Teachers use images and equipment well to help pupils understand mathematics.

Early years children enjoy the plentiful indoor and outdoor activities available. They are able to concentrate for long periods. They feel happy, safe and secure. Leaders work with parents, involving them in their children's learning. They also offer parents' workshops, such as on how to read to their children.

Children get lots of opportunities to listen to stories and rhymes. This gets them off to a good start with their early reading. In Reception, children grasp initial letter sounds and use them to read and spell simple words. Teachers plan activities in the outdoors to support pupils' learning further.

Pupils continue to improve their phonics knowledge as they move into key stage 1. Teachers structure the programme for phonics well. The words in pupils' reading books match the sounds they know. Assessment information is used to make sure that pupils get the right support at the right time. However, some lower-attaining pupils in Year 2 struggle to decode some basic words. Leaders know this and have put in place support programmes to help them catch up.

Leaders and teachers have a good understanding of pupils' needs. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers plan learning well. This meets pupils' personal, medical and learning goals.

Pupils are generally eager to learn. They have positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. They are keen to take part in all that the school has to offer. Pupils are rarely distracted in lessons. When necessary, teachers remind pupils of the need to behave and learning continues.

Lots of well-planned experiences support pupils' personal and social development. Pupils learn about and respect all people, no matter their faith, race or lifestyle. Pupils embrace the school's shared values and mission statement of 'We are growing in God's love...achieving our dreams'.

Staff, pupils and parents are positive about the school. They describe it as 'a community more than a school'. Staff are fully committed to the school's aims. They say that leaders support them well and make sure that they have a good work/life balance.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work with parents and other agencies to promote a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Records of pre-employment background checks of staff are clear and well organised. There are well-understood systems in place for staff to report any concerns. Leaders, governors and the staff successfully implement the school's procedures to safeguard pupils including children in the early years.

Parents and staff agree that pupils are safe here. Pupils are happy at school. Parents' views of the school's work are also positive. Pupils learn how to use the internet safely and the potential dangers of social media. Staff maintain high levels of supervision to protect pupils' safety and well-being.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, such as history the curriculum is not as well sequenced as in other subjects. This means that leaders do not always know what is being taught and teachers do not always have sufficient guidance on what to teach and when. Pupils' knowledge in history does not build as well as in other subjects. Leaders should further develop the curriculum so that it is well sequenced, has guidance for teachers and builds pupils' knowledge effectively over time.
- Leaders should further improve teachers' subject knowledge so that they are able to use this to help pupils to build on their prior learning and remember more. Stronger subject knowledge will help teachers to respond better to pupils' needs.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary to be good on 10–11 February 2016.

## **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 Ofsted Parent View information 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. If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114281
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10110783
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	104
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Daniel Dunleavy
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Joanne Jones
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.olsots.durham.sch.uk">www.olsots.durham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10–11 February 2016

## Information about this school

- Our Lady Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary Nursery School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school works closely with the local authority.
- The school offers before and after school provision.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through pupil premium funding, is well above average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage.

## Information about this inspection

- We held meetings with the executive headteacher and senior leaders, middle leaders and other staff. We met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.
- We discussed SEN support plans chosen by the school, scrutinised pupils' work, saw pupils at work in the school and talked to the SENCo.
- Throughout the inspection, we looked at how well school leaders provide safeguarding

training and updates for staff, and create a culture of vigilance. We talked to the designated lead for safeguarding, and reviewed the school's documents and records relating to safeguarding.

- We carried out curriculum deep dives into reading, mathematics and history. The deep dives consisted of visits to lessons, review of documents, scrutiny of pupils' work, and discussions with senior leaders, curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Geoffrey Seagrove, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andrew James

Ofsted Inspector

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