

Inspection of St Therese of Lisieux Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Catholic Academy

Lamb Lane, Ingleby Barwick, Stockton-on-Tees TS17 0QP

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Therese of Lisieux Catholic Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Therese of Lisieux Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as St Therese of Lisieux Catholic Primary School as a result of conversion to academy status. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened in St Therese of Lisieux Primary School's effectiveness before it closed. Changes in the effectiveness of St Therese of Lisieux Catholic Primary School may have happened at any point since it opened.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Therese of Lisieux is a school where all pupils feel valued. Pupils feel happy and safe because of the care they receive from all staff. Pupils are courteous and polite. Pupils show a keen interest for those around them. Teachers have built a climate where kindness and respect for others are celebrated.

Teachers encourage pupils to speak in class, in assemblies and in church. They show a keen interest in what pupils have to say. From Nursery to Year 6, pupils are welcoming, confident and articulate.

Pupils are encouraged to try new things. This builds their confidence and widens their experience. Pupils plan charity and fundraising work, supporting a range of local and international causes. Staff encourage pupils to care for others. This shines through in what pupils do and say.

Pupils' learning flourishes in a positive and supportive atmosphere. Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils are confident in teachers' willingness to address any concerns they may have.

Parents are delighted by the close relationships leaders have developed. They appreciate the support provided by all teachers. One parent wrote: 'St Therese of Lisieux is so much more than a school. It is a community and my sons feel as though they belong and are part of something special. Their overall well-being is at the heart of all the school does.'

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

Leaders have achieved excellence in many aspects of the school's work. With trust leaders, they have managed a period of change extremely well. They have worked with staff to build subject expertise. Staff value the high-quality guidance and support they receive. Leaders' actions are helping pupils to acquire deeper knowledge across the curriculum.

Parents appreciate the visibility of teachers and leaders. They say communication has never been better. They like talking to staff at the start and end of the day. They are highly confident that their children will flourish in a caring and vibrant learning community.

Leaders have placed reading at the centre of the school's work. Children in the early years receive an excellent start to reading. Leaders have carefully selected a phonics programme that builds on existing strengths. Teachers have taken great care to match books to the sound pupils know. Adults are extremely well trained in teaching phonics. Excellent support enables all pupils to mature into fluent, perceptive readers. This love of reading continues throughout the school. Pupils are attentive readers who are keen to share their interest in books.

Pupils benefit from a coherent mathematics curriculum. Learning in mathematics is planned step by step to build carefully on what pupils already know. Teachers assess pupils' understanding carefully. They provide timely support for any pupils who fall behind.

Pupils benefit from an ambitious curriculum across many subjects. Leaders ensure that pupils access important knowledge. In subjects such as science and history, teachers have mapped out the knowledge and skills that pupils will need to know. However, on occasions, pupils do not acquire the knowledge needed to complete complex tasks. Assessment does not always identify where foundations need to be stronger. Leaders are aware of this and are already working to deepen pupils' knowledge across the curriculum.

Leaders make pupils' personal development a priority. Pupils take responsibility as class ambassadors and house captains. They learn about parliamentary democracy and question their local MP. Pupils develop a deep respect for all forms of equality. Leaders link this work through assemblies, lessons and the books pupils read. Pupils recently met female pilots and fire officers to widen their awareness of gender equality. Pupils value the planned range of activities on offer. They develop an interest in sport, the arts and the environment. Teachers build pupils' confidence and self-esteem in exceptional ways.

Pupils attend extremely well. Their behaviour is exemplary. Bullying is extremely rare. Pupils support and care for one another. Leaders have developed a joyful and caring place for pupils and adults.

Leaders have considerable expertise in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their work allows pupils to learn effectively across all subjects. Parents appreciate the support their children receive.

Children benefit from an exceptional curriculum in the early years. Adults have a clear idea of what they want children to learn. They have built a purposeful environment where children learn and play. From the earliest days of Nursery, children are encouraged to talk and share their thoughts. Children concentrate on activities in sustained ways. Adults ask meaningful questions and respond intelligently to what children say and do. Children benefit from an excellent start to early reading and number work. They develop a curiosity about the world around them. This means that children are extremely well prepared for Year 1.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders ensure that staff are thoroughly trained in how to keep children safe. They update staff on safeguarding issues in a timely manner. Staff are highly attentive to pupils' needs. They know what to do if they have concerns over pupils' welfare. Leaders pursue any concerns over pupils' safety in a thorough and sensitive manner. When necessary, they work with external partners to support pupils and

families. Leaders have developed a curriculum that helps pupils to be mindful of risks and how to manage them. Leaders carry out thorough checks on the suitability of adults working at the school. Governors are well trained on safeguarding issues. Senior officers from the trust provide additional guidance and assurance on safeguarding practice.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The implementation of the curriculum is variable in some foundation subjects. In some cases, teachers ask pupils to complete complex tasks before they have acquired the necessary knowledge and skills. This contributes to gaps in pupils' understanding. Leaders should further enhance the curriculum so that pupils build deeper subject knowledge over time. They should also refine assessment practices so that teachers have a clearer picture of pupils' understanding of core knowledge and concepts.

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.

If you are the school and 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

Unique reference number	142280
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10199429
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joseph Hughes
Executive Headteacher	Mark Ryan
Website	https://sttherese.npcat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 May 2007

Information about this school

- There have been significant changes in leadership. A new executive headteacher and head of school formally took up their posts in September 2021. They were joined by new senior leaders in key stage 2 and the early years. Senior leaders worked with staff throughout the summer term 2021 in preparation for the new academic year.
- Three new teachers also joined the school in September 2021.
- A new chair of the local governing body took up post in March 2021.
- The school joined the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held several discussions with the executive headteacher and head of school. They talked to senior leaders with responsibility for different phases of the school. They also talked to subject leaders and teachers in the early stages of their careers.
- Inspectors looked in detail into the curriculum in reading, mathematics, history and science. They talked to leaders and teachers about their curriculum plans. They also talked to pupils about what pupils knew and remembered in these subjects. They looked at pupils' work and visited lessons.
- Inspectors talked to members of the local governing body to find out how they support and challenge school leaders.
- The inspectors talked to the chief executive officer of the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust. They talked to the trust's senior director of standards for primary and the primary reading leader. They also talked to the director of education for the Diocese of Middlesbrough.
- Inspectors considered 55 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire, 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 46 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including 34 free-text responses.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they dropped their children off at school.
- Inspectors talked to a wide range of pupils to gather their views on school life.

Inspection team

Malcolm Kirtley, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ian Dawson

Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Birch

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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