

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Garburn Place, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, DL5 7DE

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2022

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

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a happy and caring community. Pupils enjoy playing with each other in the well-resourced grounds. Pupils use the space outside in creative ways, building dens and making up games in the orchard.

Leaders are passionate that all pupils have the best possible start in education. Staff know all pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and adapt the teaching to meet individual needs.

There are high expectations of behaviour. Pupils respond well to the routines and directions set by the teachers. The school is calm and has a learning 'buzz' as pupils do their work. Pupils say that if bullying were to happen their teachers would act swiftly to stop it. Pupils feel safe in school.

Pupils spoken with are appreciative of the chapel in school and the time spent there. One commented, 'The chapel is really good. When we want to do collective worship, we have a chapel we can all gather in. It feels like we are more with God and praying with Him than when we are in the hall.' Pupils view this as a unique space where they can be still and reflective.

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

There has been a period of rapid change in the last academic year to improve standards in all areas of the school. Senior leaders from the trust are very involved in making sure the curriculum is fit for purpose and that staff have the skills and resources they need. A new ambitious curriculum is in place.

Leaders ensure there is a strong focus on reading. Nursery children are introduced to rhymes and stories. They happily join in with refrains and ask questions about the books. In Reception, children begin the phonics programme. They learn how to read and write the sounds. Staff make sure children know the routine for phonics lessons. Children learn these quickly and are keen to please their teacher. In Years 1 and 2, staff continue with the highly structured phonics scheme. The books that pupils take home are matched to the sounds they are learning in school. Staff regularly check how well pupils are reading. Those who need extra support are given the help they need to catch up quickly. The wide range of class reading books celebrate different cultures. Older pupils love to read new books and enjoy listening to stories.

The mathematics curriculum is well structured, so that pupils build on their prior knowledge. Leaders have identified the gaps in learning in mathematics and target what will make the biggest difference for pupils. There is a focus on instant recall of number facts, including multiplication tables. The regular recaps at the start of lessons help the pupils remember more.

New curriculum plans are in place in subjects, such as modern foreign languages and geography. These are also highly structured with clear end points for pupils to

achieve. Subject leaders work with secondary school colleagues, so that they understand the foundations needed for key stage 3. Teachers are skilled in adapting lessons to make sure pupils understand key concepts. However, gaps remain in pupils' knowledge and understanding stemming from the previous curriculum and the COVID-19 pandemic. There are too few opportunities for pupils to experience geography fieldwork skills. This limits their understanding of physical processes.

The early years staff make sure that children can independently access all areas of the curriculum. They model the expected language to be used and how to complete learning activities. Children respond well to this and enjoy joining in with their key adult.

Pupils, including the youngest in school, show positive attitudes towards learning. They are attentive in listening to staff, share resources well and take turns in conversation. Attendance is improving. Leaders are tenacious in following up pupil absence and work with families to highlight the importance of coming to school.

Leaders encourage pupils to develop a strong sense of the wider world. Staff teach pupils to be respectful to all, including those of different backgrounds and faiths. Pupils are highly knowledgeable about the protected characteristics. They have a strong sense of justice. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as becoming a member of the 'Mini Vinnies' or the 'Class Council'.

Subject leaders are developed by the trust. They are knowledgeable about their curriculum areas and supportive of staff. Trust officers work alongside senior leaders and hold them to account. Governors have a good understanding of their role and are proactive in challenging senior leaders on issues, such as equality.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure all staff are trained to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. There is a clear process in place to report any concerns. Leaders work with partner agencies and other schools to provide pupils and families with the support that they need.

Leaders follow a rigorous recruitment process to make sure any new member of staff is fit for their role. This includes criminal record checks.

Pupils learn how to recognise risks, particularly online risks. Online safety is threaded through the computing curriculum. Pupils are taught strategies to use if they are ever concerned when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A new curriculum has been recently introduced into school. There are gaps in pupils learning from the previous curriculum, which means the pupils are not fully prepared for their next stage in education. Leaders should ensure that the ambitious school curriculum is fully embedded and any gaps in learning are identified and addressed.
- In geography, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to collect, analyse and communicate with a range of data gathered through experiences of fieldwork. This limits their understanding of geographical processes. Leaders should ensure that fieldwork is built into the geography curriculum and that teachers are suitably trained to teach fieldwork.

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	143515
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10241394
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	93
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Maria Matthews
Headteachers	Michael Tiplady /Joanne Wilson
Website	https://stjosephsna.bhcet.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust.
- Two headteachers took up their posts as co-headteachers on 1 September 2022.
- An executive headteacher worked alongside the previous headteacher for the 2021-2022 academic year.
- There have been significant changes to staffing and the local governing body in the past year.
- This is a Catholic school. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in July 2018. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of that date.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

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

- 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 has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, co-headteachers and the early years leader.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and modern foreign languages. To do this they met with curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils. Inspectors also looked at curriculum documentation.
- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector scrutinised the single central record, reviewed safeguarding paperwork and systems. The inspector spoke to leaders, teachers, support staff, governors and pupils. The lead inspector met representatives of the local governing body.
- The lead inspector met with the trust representatives and the diocesan representative who support the school.
- Responses to the pupil, parent and staff surveys were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Stephenson

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022