

Inspection of St Pius X Catholic Primary School, a Catholic Voluntary Academy

Amersham Road, Park End, Middlesbrough TS3 7HD

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 January 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
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?

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils at St Pius X Catholic Primary School. They ensure that the positive ethos which focuses on knowing right from wrong is at the core of their work. Pupils say that they feel cared for by staff who listen and help them to always do their best. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), benefit from the emphasis leaders place on developing the curriculum and improving learning.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, pupils know that staff are quick to sort out problems. This helps pupils to feel safe. Pupils follow the rules that are in place, such as safely walking to one side of the corridor when climbing the stairs. There is a calm and orderly atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils are highly motivated to demonstrate the school's aims of 'Aspire, Resilient and Collaborate' (ARC). They look forward to seeing who has won a season ticket for Middlesborough Football Club by showing their ARC actions.

Pupils say they enjoy the clubs and experiences on offer. Visits to Blue Reef Aquarium, Guisborough Woods, Robinwood residential visit, the local cenotaph, Forbidden Corner and a visit from a geologist help to broaden their interests.

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

Leaders have recently adopted a new curriculum. The curriculum sets out the core knowledge and vocabulary leaders want pupils to learn as they move through school. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils revisit important vocabulary which they use to describe balancing with a partner in gymnastics. Subject leaders have strong knowledge of their subjects. Staff say they benefit from leaders' expertise. This includes teachers who are new to the school.

Leaders are determined that all pupils gain new knowledge across a broad range of subjects. Leaders know that the new curriculum needs embedding. In core subjects, changes to the curriculum are more established than in most foundation subjects. In mathematics, English and science, teachers explain new learning clearly. They are diligent in checking pupils' understanding. For example, in daily 'maths meetings', pupils revisit equivalent fractions, which helps them to remember prior learning as well as preparing pupils for new learning.

Leaders prioritise phonics and reading. In early years, children develop a love of reading. Teachers share stories and rhymes often, so pupils remember them. Staff teach the phonics programme well. Leaders ensure that staff are trained so that they have the expertise they need to help pupils learn to read. They ensure that children practise using the sounds they know when reading. Staff provide effective support for pupils who need to catch up. This helps children learn to read fluently. Carefully selected books help to develop pupils' understanding of how writers thread a theme through a story, such as 'Somebody Swallowed Stanley' by Sarah Roberts.

Older pupils read with confidence and fluency. Through ambitious text choices, pupils develop higher-level reading knowledge and skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 read Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' out loud and explore how the language Shakespeare uses engages the audience.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that teachers have the information they need to support pupils with SEND. Teachers use this information well when planning activities. As a result, pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as others. For example, in Year 2, science teachers break down knowledge about common animals, enabling some pupils to explain why mammals rather than amphibians are best equipped to survive in a drought.

Pupils behave exceptionally well. They are polite and considerate towards staff and each other. Staff encourage working collaboratively. Pupils support each other with their behaviour and their learning. Many pupils enjoy earning rewards for positive behaviours. Staff model how they want pupils to behave. They make sure that pupils behave consistently well. The few pupils who struggle to manage their emotions receive excellent support so that they can participate fully in all school activities.

Leaders ensure that pupils contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. Pupils talk proudly about being digital leaders, members of the school council and prayer leaders. Older pupils understand the importance of being 'Eco Warriors' and enjoy the opportunity to plant fruit trees and recycle plastic. They appreciate playing with younger children in their roles as peer mediators and play leaders.

Governors know the school well. Leaders provide detailed information about the school's effectiveness. Visits to school help governors to check that school leaders make the right decisions for the benefit of pupils. Most staff are proud to be part of the school community. They value the training and the support they receive from leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise pupils' welfare. They know pupils well. They make sure staff are well trained and receive regular updates to help them understand how to keep pupils safe. Staff are quick to report their safeguarding concerns. Records are clear and leaders work well with external agencies to get support for pupils who need it.

Pupils learn about online safety and healthy relationships. They know how to raise concerns with trusted adults in school.

Leaders make sure the required checks are carried out on all adults who work in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the curriculum are more recent in their development, including in the early years. Leaders and teachers have not had time to teach and evaluate the effectiveness of all the new curriculum units. Leaders should continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the new curriculum to ensure the changes are successfully implemented and enabling pupils to reach the ambitious curriculum goals which have been set.

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	146249
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10255655
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Joseph Hughes
Headteacher	Anna McClurey (executive headteacher)
Website	www.stpius.npcat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is one of 37 schools in the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school joined the trust in September 2018.
- The school's last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 for schools of a religious character took place in February 2019.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school appointed an executive headteacher in September 2022.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, and the SENCo. Inspectors also held meetings with subject leaders, the safeguarding team, the lead for teaching and learning

for the school, the senior standards officer for the trust and the chief executive officer. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with the chair of trustees and met with two governors, including the vice-chair of the local governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector met with leaders to look at curriculum documentation for teaching geography and history.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff about safeguarding. Inspectors also reviewed the school's policies and practices and met with safeguarding leads to evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding. Records of safeguarding incidents were scrutinised and discussed.
- Inspectors took account the views of parents on Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, and free text comments. An inspector spoke to parents as they dropped their children off at school. Responses to staff and pupil surveys were reviewed by inspectors.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Louise Mallin

Ofsted Inspector

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