

# Inspection of a good school: St Helen's Catholic Primary School

West Street, Hoyland, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S74 9DL

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Inspection date: 4 May 2023

## **Outcome**

St Helen's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

This friendly and welcoming school is at the heart of the community. Pupils, staff and many parents describe it as a family filled with kindness. The Christian values are a tangible part of everything that this school does to ensure that pupils grow together and flourish. Pupils model these values well. This is seen in the support and care that pupils show to others.

Leaders have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils receive a good quality of education that begins from the moment they start school. Pupils behave well. They know that they are well looked after by kind adults who will always help them. Instances of bullying are vanishingly rare. This is testimony to the culture that leaders, staff and pupils have crafted together.

Following the pandemic, leaders ensure that there are increasing opportunities for pupils to benefit from extra-curricular activities. Leaders know how important these experiences are to develop pupils' understanding of the world around them. Year 2 pupils told inspectors that when they went on a trip to Worsbrough Mill, they learned how wheat is used to make flour. Many pupils enjoyed meeting Moose, the Newfoundland rescue dog, when he visited school. They found out about his role in helping people in trouble. At the time of the inspection, Year 6 were excitedly looking forward to their forthcoming residential trip.

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

Leaders have strengthened the curriculum to ensure it is ambitious and starts from the early years. They have given careful thought to the precise knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. There is an emphasis on building pupils' vocabulary in each of the different subjects. In the majority of subjects, this knowledge carefully builds on what pupils have learned before. Pupils develop their understanding of subject-specific

concepts as they progress through the mixed-age classes. In a few subjects, the curriculum is less well developed.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They bring the subject to life for pupils. The great majority of pupils enjoy their lessons and listen carefully to their teachers. Teachers check that pupils have learned the important knowledge that leaders have identified. In many subjects, teachers identify and swiftly address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This is particularly strong for those pupils who are at the earliest stages of learning to read. Leaders have taken the right steps to ensure that learning to read is a priority. This is now an area of strength. Teachers promptly identify any pupils who need additional help to catch-up with their peers. Leaders check carefully that all pupils receive the help they need to quickly learn to read with increasing fluency and confidence.

Teaching staff know their pupils well. Leaders have provided staff with detailed support plans to help those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, leaders have not trained staff to consistently use these support plans effectively. This means that some pupils with SEND do not always get the help that they need. This limits their progression through the curriculum. New leaders have rightly identified the need to train staff better as a priority.

Pupils know that they have a role to play in the culture of the school. Even the youngest children are kind and respectful towards others. Pupils are keen to make the right choices and to support others to do so. Pupils have a strong knowledge of Christianity. However, pupils struggle to recall what they have been taught about other faiths and beliefs.

Governors have a breadth of experience and knowledge that helps them to guide and challenge leaders. Leaders, including governors, consider the workload and well-being of staff. Staff know that leaders have their interests at heart. Staff are well supported and enjoy working here. Recent changes in school leadership need time to embed. Governors are mindful of supporting new leaders, while also knowing that they need to check and challenge to ensure that the curriculum continues to strengthen and deliver for all pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that all staff know how to keep pupils safe. When staff first join the school, they receive appropriate safeguarding training. Leaders provide staff with regular safeguarding briefings. As a result, staff know the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff promptly report any concerns they have about the safety or well-being of a pupil. Leaders take swift action and promptly make any referrals to safeguarding partners. This ensures that pupils and their families receive the help that they need.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They know to report any concerns that they may have to a trusted adult.

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

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

- Some pupils with SEND are not always sufficiently supported in class. As a result, they struggle to access new learning. This is because teaching staff do not always work together to use the strategies set out in support plans. Leaders should ensure that teaching staff have the training and support so that pupils with SEND are able to access the curriculum alongside their peers.
- Pupils struggle to recall important information about different world religions. This is because they have not had sufficient opportunity to return to this information over time. As a result, pupils have gaps in their knowledge. Leaders should ensure pupils learn about different faiths in more sustained ways so that they remember important knowledge.

## 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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually, this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2018.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106640
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10255855
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	124
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sheila Marren
<b>Executive Headteacher</b>	Jo Wray
<b>Head of School</b>	Adam Ainsworth
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.federationcc.org.uk">www.federationcc.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	9 and 10 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Corpus Christi Federation of three schools. The federation shares an executive headteacher, middle leadership team and a governing body.
- The head of school has recently taken up post. The previous head of school has become the executive headteacher of the federation.
- The school is a voluntary-aided school with a religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school was in June 2017. Due to the pandemic, section 48 inspections were suspended and the inspection window was extended by up to eight years. Therefore, the next section 48 inspection is due between June 2022 and December 2025.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with the head of school and executive headteacher. They also met with the chair of the governing body and another governor. Telephone conversations were held with a representative of the local authority and a meeting was held with a representative of the Diocese of Hallam.
- To evaluate the quality of education, inspectors did deep dives in mathematics, early reading, and history. This entailed meeting with subject leaders; visiting a sample of lessons; scrutinising pupils' work; talking to pupils about their work and talking with teachers. Inspectors heard pupils read. Further curriculum documents for science, geography and technology were reviewed.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation. This included safeguarding records, and leaders' school improvement plans. Inspectors reviewed a range of school policies, including those for behaviour, safeguarding and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils through the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey and through conversations held with pupils. Inspectors considered the views of staff through meetings and conversations with different members of staff and from the responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Eleanor Belfield, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gill Holland

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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