

Inspection of a good school: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Murton

Church Lane, Murton, Seaham, County Durham SR7 9RD

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 May 2023

Outcome

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Murton continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at St Joseph's, Murton. They enjoy coming to school. There are warm relationships evident throughout school between pupils and staff. Pupils trust the adults in school. At social times, pupils enjoy reading in the book shed, writing stories together and hula hooping alongside staff. Children in the early years enjoy playing together in outdoor spaces. During the inspection, key stage 2 pupils were enjoying hymn practice.

Pupils confirm that everyone treats each other kindly. They understand what bullying is and why it is wrong. Pupils do not feel that bullying is a problem in their school. They are confident that teachers would take it seriously if it happened.

Leaders are ambitious for what they want pupils to achieve. Staff reinforce these high expectations in classrooms. Pupils enjoy the challenge of meeting these expectations. They value house points as recognition for their achievements. Leaders have prioritised developing pupils' resilience in a range of ways. This focus is evident in pupils' attitudes towards their learning and each other. They are encouraged to problem-solve and collaborate. Pupils of all ages do this successfully.

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

Leaders have carefully considered what they want pupils to learn. This key knowledge is mapped out in knowledge organisers for all subjects. Pupils value these. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their knowledge across a wide range of subjects. There is a love of learning evident in the culture of the school. Pupils are proud of their knowledge and achievements.

Leaders have ensured that gaps in knowledge are addressed through curriculum design. Leaders have introduced extra 'morning maths' lessons to build pupils' confidence and consolidate what they have learned. Children in the early years engage in number

activities with enjoyment. They enjoy being challenged to demonstrate their mathematical knowledge.

In classrooms, teachers ensure that pupils are engaged and attentive. Staff have high expectations of pupils and what they can achieve. Pupils work together effectively and encourage each other, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are supported to learn alongside their peers. They participate in lessons, and most achieve well. Teachers write support plans for pupils with SEND. However, sometimes, the targets on the support plans are not precise enough.

Leaders have introduced a new phonics programme to ensure that pupils are getting off to a strong start with learning to read. Staff have been trained, supported by leaders, to ensure that they are well prepared to deliver phonics effectively. Pupils are able to use their phonic knowledge to read unfamiliar words. Pupils who find reading more difficult receive regular and effective support to help them keep up. Pupils of all ages enjoy discussing the books they are listening to in story time. They are excited by new incentives to read, including rewards from the book vending machine.

Pupils conduct themselves well throughout school. They behave responsibly and cooperate with each other. They frequently remind each other about expectations and routines. Pupils are focused and engaged in lessons. At social times, pupils explain that 'nobody is left out'.

Pupils learn about important topics through their relationships and sex education lessons, which is underpinned by the school's religious values. Pupils talk clearly about equality, respect and tolerance. They understand the importance of being treated fairly. These values are evident in relationships throughout school. Pupils are involved in the local church and wider parts of the community. They sing at the local nursing home and engage in a range of other community events.

Despite many staff being new to the school, they explain feeling well supported and welcomed. They feel that leaders are approachable and considerate of their workload. Longstanding members of the governing body are closely involved in the life of the school. They attend school trips and run after-school clubs. They are able to offer leaders both challenge and support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe in school and have trusted adults. They feel confident to report any worries they have. They are taught how to keep themselves safe online. They also learn about how to stay safe in the community.

Staff, including governors, are well trained in how to keep pupils safe. They are clear about what risks pupils might face. They know what signs to be alert to. There are clear systems in place for reporting any concerns they have. Staff are vigilant in their duty towards pupils' welfare. Logs of actions taken to keep pupils safe are detailed and

thorough. Leaders work with external agencies to make sure that pupils and families receive support when they need it.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some support plans for pupils with SEND are not precise enough to help pupils learn more and remember more. This includes targets for those pupils with more complex needs. Leaders should ensure that staff have further training around how to support and monitor pupils with SEND most effectively.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2013.

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	114276
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10255838
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elaine Matterson
Headteacher	Joanne Jones
Website	www.murton-st-josephs.durham.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	29 November 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher is also headteacher of another primary school.
- The school has a religious character. The school was last inspected under section 48 in 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the school leadership adviser from the local authority. They met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. They also spoke with a representative from the diocese by telephone.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspector also looked at curriculum plans for some other subjects, including relationships and sex education.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, as the designated lead for safeguarding. They looked at records of actions taken by leaders to keep pupils safe.
- The inspector checked the single central record and documentation regarding safer recruitment.
- The inspector spoke with a range of staff and pupils, formally and informally, throughout the inspection.
- The inspector observed pupils at social times.
- The inspector spoke with a number of parents.
- The inspector considered the responses to staff, pupil and parent questionnaires.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation throughout the inspection, including the school's self-evaluation, development plan and minutes of governor's meetings.

Inspection team

Katie Spurr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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