

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Ushaw Moor

Durham Road, Ushaw Moor, Durham, County Durham DH7 7LF

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5
of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy spending time with their friends and attending the clubs and visits on offer in school. Leaders are making changes to the curriculum because pupils do not develop knowledge as well as they might. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The curriculum in the early years does not prepare children well enough for future learning. Experiences in the early years do not give children a strong start to their education.

Positive relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to feel safe. Pupils know that staff will help them if they have a problem. Bullying is rare. Leaders make sure that any issues are resolved. Pupils follow the school's 'BE-haviours'. These rules help pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning. Staff ensure that expectations are clear and fair. Pupils are well cared for by staff. This helps them to learn how to care for each other. The 'worry monsters' help pupils to make sense of strong emotions.

Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to develop personally through the range of clubs that pupils attend. For example, pupils enjoy planting and growing vegetables at the gardening club. Pupils learn to become good citizens. They enjoy baking cakes to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support and collecting tins of food for the County Durham Foodbank.

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

With support from leaders and staff from the multi-academy trust, leaders have started to make changes to most subjects in the curriculum. This includes the curriculum for mathematics. The previous curriculums were not designed well enough to ensure that pupils built on their prior learning from year to year. The new curriculums show the sequence of learning and how pupils should reach clear end points. The curriculums specify important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn. Leaders have recently started to support staff to gain the expertise to teach the new curriculums. However, in most subjects, curriculum implementation of the new curriculums is at an early stage. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND receive effective support to access the same curriculum as their peers.

Leaders have not planned a curriculum for the early years that links well enough with the curriculum for the rest of the school. Leaders have not identified the sequence of knowledge that they want children to know. This means that children in the early years do not experience learning that prepares them well enough for learning in Year 1 and beyond. Staff do not have expert knowledge of the early years curriculum and how children learn. This means that activities and interactions between staff and children do not support children's learning well enough.

The school's phonics programme is taught from the start of school, in Reception. There is a consistent lesson structure. However, staff give pupils too much help in

lessons. When staff listen to weaker readers, they orally blend unfamiliar words for pupils. This makes it difficult for pupils to practise reading books to help them gain fluency and confidence. Pupils who are struggling to read receive support to catch up with their peers. Pupils who are learning to read are supported with books containing the phonics they have been taught. Leaders have introduced a library of books to ensure pupils experience different types of texts during their time in school. Pupils enjoy reading authors such as Michael Morpurgo.

Pupils' behaviour is good. Most pupils focus well on their learning. They are polite and caring. Pupils strive to become 'caring, confident and accomplished members of the community'. This school mission is enacted through the activities and experiences that leaders provide in support of pupils' personal development. Pupils understand democracy. They participate in activities to enhance this understanding, such as voting for house captains. Pupils know that house captains represent their views. For example, house captains make suggestions for school visits, such as the recent visit to the beach. Pupils have a strong understanding of the importance of respecting the rights of others. They know that all children have the right to food and education. Pupils participate in charity activities, such as collecting tins for the County Durham Foodbank. They value the opportunities for all pupils to engage in sports such as football. Pupils learn about other faiths and religions through school assemblies, religious education and by attending prayer groups. This helps pupils to understand their own and others' faiths, which in turn prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

Governors ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duty to keep children safe. They check that the actions that leaders are taking are in the best interests of all pupils. Governors and trustees know that there is much to do to improve the quality of education in the school. They are taking action to tackle the weaknesses in the school. Staff feel well supported by leaders and governors.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise the safeguarding of pupils in the school. Staff know pupils and their families well. Leaders ensure that staff attend training so that they can recognise any signs that may indicate pupils are at risk of harm. Staff understand the systems for reporting concerns about pupils. Leaders are prompt to follow up on any concerns. Leaders ensure that checks are made on all adults who work in the school.

Staff make sure that pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. This includes when online. Pupils learn how to stay safe in the community through activities such as 'Bikeability', and they learn about water safety in swimming lessons.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The early years curriculum in all areas of learning does not set out the knowledge that children must learn to ensure they are well prepared for future learning. Staff do not enact appropriate activities to meet children's needs or support children effectively. As a result, children are not well prepared for future learning. Leaders, including governors, must act swiftly to ensure that the early years curriculum defines the sequence of knowledge and skills and that staff are supported to create an environment that supports the curriculum and prepares children for future learning.
- Pupils are given too much support in phonics lessons and reading practice. This makes it difficult for pupils to practise decoding and to read as fluently as they should. Leaders must ensure that staff listen to pupils read so that they gain independence and fluency.
- The curriculums for many subjects, including mathematics, are at the early stage of implementation. Some teachers do not consistently help pupils to build on what they already know. This means that pupils, including pupils with SEND, are not learning and remembering the important knowledge they need to prepare them for future learning. Leaders should ensure that staff are supported to teach the new subject curriculums effectively. Leaders, including governors, should check that the new subject curriculums are helping pupils to remember the knowledge for future learning.

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	148208
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10269147
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christine Coxon
Headteacher	Louise Keenan
Website	www.olqmstj.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is one of 47 schools in the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Ushaw Moor converted to become an academy school in November 2020.
- The school's religious character has not been inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 since it converted to academy status.
- The school is federated with Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Catholic Primary School, Esh Winning. Both schools have the same governing body and headteacher.
- A private provider runs a breakfast club and after-school club on the school site for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.

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 headteacher and deputy headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator. The lead inspector met with the deputy chief executive officer and representatives from the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector also spoke to one of the trustees on the telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, French and history. 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. The lead inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors scrutinised a range of safeguarding documents, including the school's policies, records and single central record of recruitment checks. The lead inspector met with the school's designated lead for safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school and at breaktimes. Inspectors considered the views of pupils about their learning, behaviour and safety.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils and Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View. An inspector talked with some parents to gain their views of the school.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stephen Fallon

Ofsted Inspector

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