

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

Prince Consort Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE8 1LR

Inspection dates:

26 and 27 September 2023

Outcome

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

The executive headteacher of this school is Sonia Fraser. This school is part of Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Nick Hurn OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Angela Boyle (interim chair).

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff, school leaders and trust leaders are hugely ambitious for pupils. Pupils learn well as a result of a continually improving, well-taught curriculum. Pupils are building impressive knowledge in a range of subjects.

Pupils enjoy school. They like learning and find the school to be a friendly place. Pupils are welcoming and kind. They respect others and treat them well. Pupils say that bullying is 'very, very unusual', and they are confident that staff will deal with any issues if they occur.

Pupils behave well in class and around the school. They play well together and listen to the guidance adults give them. This makes the school a calm and pleasant place to be.

Pupils are safe. Adults look after them well. They know there is someone they can talk to if they are worried about something.

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

The school's curriculum, which is clearly mapped out, and the resources that support it are of high quality. Leaders have developed effective teaching approaches to support pupils' learning. These include regular repetition of information, frequent opportunities to recall what has been taught and a consistent focus on using vocabulary well. Teachers help pupils to learn small pieces of information bit by bit, ensuring that pupils build secure knowledge.

Pupils build their understanding in incremental ways. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) value this approach because it enables them to access the curriculum as fully as their peers. The curriculum supports learning for all pupils.

In key stage 2, the curriculum and its associated teaching strategies are embedded across many subjects. In subjects such as history, pupils demonstrate a high level of understanding. In other subjects, curriculum changes are more recent. In these areas, pupils can recall what they have been taught in the past, but not to the same impressive degree as in more established subjects. The school has adopted similar approaches to curriculum design in key stage 1, but teachers here have not had the same level of training to support its implementation.

In early years, children are taught well. They quickly learn routines and follow a planned curriculum, which helps them to learn important knowledge and skills. However, the early years curriculum is not sufficiently aligned to the deep knowledge that pupils are building in subsequent years.

The school is determined that every pupil should learn to read well. Leaders and staff have revamped their approach to teaching phonics to achieve this. Staff who teach the programme have all been trained in how to do so. They teach it as it is designed to be taught. They match the books pupils read to the sounds they have learned. They step in quickly to ensure that pupils who struggle keep up with their peers. Pupils learn to read well and enjoy reading.

Staff are determined to broaden pupils' horizons. They are overcoming the restrictions previously caused by the pandemic by creating an exciting timetable of clubs and activities that are valued by pupils and parents. The school has devised a plan of trips, such as to the council chamber, to support pupils' wider development. These complement a detailed personal, social and health education curriculum that helps pupils learn about themselves and others.

The trust has effective systems, through the work of trust leaders and the local governing committee, to ensure the school is well run. The trust has brought support and stability that has enabled the school to move forward confidently for the benefit of pupils. Staff value the direction in which the school is heading. While they are busy, they can see the benefit of their work and note that, in some ways, the new curriculum approach reduces their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers in key stage 1 have not had the training they need to teach the curriculum as effectively as it is taught in key stage 2. As a result, pupils in key stage 1 are not

developing as rich a web of knowledge as pupils in key stage 2. The school should ensure that all teachers have the training they need to teach the curriculum as effectively as possible.

- The early years curriculum is not sufficiently aligned to the knowledge-rich curriculum that pupils are following at key stages 1 and 2. As a result, children are not being prepared for leaders' very high expectations of what pupils should learn after Reception. The school should ensure that the early years curriculum is better aligned to the ambitious curriculum that pupils study in subsequent years.

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 predecessor school, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Gateshead, to be good in September 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148604
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10297547
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	190
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Boyle (interim chair)
Headteacher	Sonia Fraser (executive headteacher)
Website	www.stjosephsrcvprimary.org/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Gateshead converted to become an academy school in June 2021. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Gateshead, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school joined Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust in June 2021.
- The executive headteacher is employed directly by the trust.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school has a Roman Catholic religious character. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in February 2018. Its next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the executive headteacher, other leaders, the deputy chief executive officer of the trust, the vice chair of the trust, members of the local governing committee and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, 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 spoke with leaders and reviewed curriculum plans for modern foreign languages and science.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed the responses to Ofsted's staff and parent surveys and spoke with a range of staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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