

Inspection of St Francis of Assisi Church of England Primary School

Lowfields Avenue, Ingleby Barwick, Stockton-on-Tees, Teesside TS17 5GA

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 November 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

The headteacher of this school is Louise Probets. This school is part of Dales Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Damian Chubb, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Ferguson.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Francis of Assisi Church of England Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this school and are very keen to learn. They demonstrate exceptional attitudes both in the classroom and around school. Pupils know that staff expect them to behave well. They make great efforts to meet these expectations. Pupils are very welcoming; they hold doors open for others in school and talk politely to visitors.

Pupils concentrate well in lessons. They work with enthusiasm; many raise their hands to answer questions. They enjoy contributing and proudly demonstrate what they know.

Pupils have a clear understanding of diversity. They study interesting topics linked to this, such as Black Lives Matter in English. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of a variety of communities and the lives of the people in the communities.

Staff have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants to access the curriculum. Many pupils achieve well because of the school's emphasis on pupils knowing and remembering more of the curriculum.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to become responsible leaders. Pupils in Year 4 and above are members of the school council and peer mentors. Pupils in lower year groups are responsible class monitors. Pupils who hold these roles of responsibility discuss the impact they have had confidently. For example, pupils who hold roles of responsibility explained that they support local food banks and help with community engagement on car parking near the school.

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

The school has carefully designed the curriculum. For all subjects, there has been careful consideration of what pupils should know and the order in which they should know it. Learning builds on what pupils have done and learned previously. Pupils demonstrate that they can remember their previous learning when discussing their subject knowledge. Pupils with SEND also demonstrate that they can remember important concepts that have been taught previously. Pupils produce high-quality work in some subjects. On occasion, the intended curriculum is not delivered with consistency. Sometimes, pupils are not given every opportunity to progress rapidly with their learning. Some staff do not accurately assess when it is time to move learning on as a matter of routine. In mathematics, some pupils do not have enough opportunities to explore reasoning and problem-solving skills.

The curriculum is planned to begin in the early years. Staff in the early years model spoken language well to help develop children's vocabulary. They create many opportunities for children to learn and explore. At times, the rationale for some of

these tasks is not as clear as it could be. For example, there are times when staff are not able to say how particular tasks link clearly to the planned curriculum.

Staff identify pupils with SEND quickly. These pupils get appropriate support to help them to access the curriculum. Teachers and teaching assistants are provided with strategies to support pupils with SEND adequately. Staff implement these strategies consistently.

Pupils learn to read well. The school has developed its own phonics programme. Staff are well trained to deliver this. In Nursery, children are taught to identify the sounds they can hear in the learning environment. This prepares them well for formal phonics lessons in the Reception class. Pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. Staff are quick to identify any pupils who may have fallen behind in their reading. These pupils have additional reading sessions to help them catch up and keep up. Older pupils discuss their reading books with enthusiasm. Pupils read a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. Older pupils are aware of the purpose of their reading books. These pupils discuss how regular reading helps them to develop reading fluency.

The school's behaviour system is well understood by pupils. It is exceptionally rare for learning to be disrupted. There are very few significant behaviour incidents. Staff act promptly to deal with the very rare incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils are very respectful of each other's individual differences. They demonstrate a mature understanding of how others may live their lives. Pupils attend school regularly. The school has a sharp focus on swiftly identifying pupils who are at risk of falling behind because of low attendance. Effective strategies are quickly put into place to prevent pupils' attendance from slipping.

The curriculum for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well considered. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, staying safe both on and offline, and different faiths and cultures. Fundamental British values are embedded into the PSHE curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They benefit from the educational visits on offer to such places as Saltholme and Robin Hood's Bay. The clubs and activities on offer, such as football, yoga and art, are mostly well attended.

Governors and trustees are ambitious for all pupils to be happy and achieve well at the school. The vast majority of staff are very happy to work at the school. Staff are well supported by leaders. The trust provides many opportunities for staff development, such as the subject network groups. Many parents and carers value the work of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasion, teachers do not precisely assess when pupils are ready to move on from a task. As a result, there is some variability in how the intended curriculum is delivered. The school should ensure that teachers implement the intended curriculum to ensure that all pupils progress rapidly through the planned curriculum.
- In the early years, there is not enough clarity around the rationale for some tasks. This means that some tasks do not build on the curriculum knowledge as set out in the school's planning. The school should ensure that staff plan tasks that link to meaningful learning for children.

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	147275
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10290367
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
CEO of the trust	Damien Chubb
Chair of trust	Paul Ferguson
Headteacher	Louise Probets
Website	www.stfrancispri.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Dales Academies Trust.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is a Church of England school. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in March 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders; staff; pupils; representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors; and representatives of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board. The lead inspector also spoke with the CEO of the trust. The lead inspector spoke to a representative from the diocese by telephone.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, design and technology and science. They discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; 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.
- Inspectors met with pupils and spoke with them about their views on learning, safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff questionnaire, as well as the views of pupils that were gathered throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

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