

# Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Washington

Village Lane, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE38 7HU

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Inspection dates: 8 to 9 November 2023

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Maher. 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.

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

Pupils enjoy being part of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and they are proud of it. Pupils are happy and safe here. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievements. This reflects in the everyday life of the school, where pupils are well mannered and treat one another with kindness and respect. They take pride in their work and are keen to talk about what they have learned.

The school, with support from Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, has worked hard to ensure that pupils benefit from an aspirational curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well in most subjects. They are well prepared for the next stages of their education.

The school has strong links with the parish. Citizenship threads through all aspects of school life, underpinned by core faith values. Pupils make a positive impact within their community. They are involved in events and fundraising initiatives, including raising money through craft and hamper sales for harvest and Christmas.

Pupils say they enjoy the residential visits and the visits they take part in within their curriculum. They enjoy attending a range of clubs that are on offer. Pupils are currently working with the school council to develop an even more exciting range of clubs.

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

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has undergone a period of change over the last two years. This change has been carefully managed by the trust. There has been an executive headteacher in place managing the change and, more recently, a new headteacher was appointed. The impact of leadership at all levels can be seen in the development of many curriculum areas. For example, the curriculums for phonics, reading and mathematics, and provision for early years and for pupils with SEND, have all been revised and strengthened.

Across the school, there is high ambition for pupils with SEND. Leaders have accessed high-quality training to further their professional development. This reflects in the high-quality provision evident. A clear and consistent cycle to review and assess the provision, and its impact, ensures that pupils' needs are effectively met.

Children in early years get off to a good start. Clear routines have been established and children are confident learners. Early years provision is carefully planned. This is having a positive impact on children's communication and language development. Children happily take turns and engage in interesting conversations with each other, developing their vocabulary. Children are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

The school has put in place a well-planned and ambitious curriculum across most curriculum subjects. It is planned and sequenced in a way that provides pupils the opportunity to revisit and build on prior learning. From Nursery through to Year 6,

the school has carefully thought out what it wants pupils to know and understand.

Reading has been prioritised. The phonics scheme is well embedded. This supports pupils in the early stages of learning to read. It also ensures that those who have fallen behind catch up quickly and build their fluency so that they become more confident readers. Staff teach phonics each day in a consistent way. This is helping pupils to become fluent readers. Teachers ensure that pupils have access to a wide variety of books and stories. Pupils are keen to talk about the books they are reading. They say they love reading, and particularly enjoy story time at the end of the day when their teacher reads to them.

Mathematics is taught with rigour and pace and delivery is consistent across the school. The curriculum has been carefully sequenced and planned to enable pupils to effectively build on prior learning. Staff regularly check what pupils know, understand and can do. They use this information well to provide swift and targeted additional support to those pupils who need it. Expectations of the quality of pupils' work are generally high. This reflects in pupils' work in their mathematics books. However, sometimes the work pupils complete lacks challenge. This is particularly the case for the most-able pupils. Work is not effectively extended when these pupils have already shown their knowledge and understanding is secure. This hampers their ability to reach their full potential.

Leaders have focused on developing the knowledge, skills and expertise of staff in most subject areas, with focused and effective professional development and training. However, in some subjects the curriculum is relatively new and still developing. For example, in geography a new curriculum is in the early stages of implementation in key stage 2, but has not yet been implemented in key stage 1. Plans are in place to do so in summer 2024. This means that, as yet, there is not a fully cohesive plan of progression for pupils' learning as they move through the school. Leaders know that addressing this is an important next step.

Leaders at all levels, including governors, have significantly improved the quality of education for pupils. In doing this, they have paid careful attention to the well-being of staff in their decision-making. Staff are proud to work at the school and appreciate the care for their well-being and consideration of their workload. Strong relationships exist between the school, pupils and their families. Parents speak positively about the changes that have happened in the school and feel part of a cohesive school community.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, such as geography and history, the school is in the process of transitioning to new curriculums. The school has correctly identified that their priority is to ensure full and effective implementation of these new curriculums so that pupils' knowledge and understanding always builds well on what they already know and can do across all curriculum subjects.
- In mathematics, the work provided for most-able pupils is sometimes too easy. This hampers pupils' ability to make rapid progress and achieve their full potential. The school needs to ensure the curriculum provides effective challenge for the most-able pupils throughout lessons and in the activities they complete.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	147123
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268503
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Angela Boyle
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Maher
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.washingtonstjosephs.com">www.washingtonstjosephs.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Washington converted to become an academy in July 2019. When its predecessor school, St Joseph's Washington RC School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is now part of The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed by the trust in summer 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

## 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 school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, and representatives from the trust. They also met with members of the governing body including the chair, and with staff. Inspectors also spoke to a representative from the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' writing and their work in religious education.
- Inspectors listened to some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors examined the school's website. They reviewed documentation including curriculum plans, files relating to pupils with SEND, and behaviour and attendance information.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, formally and informally, about their learning and to gather their views.
- The inspectors spoke with a number of parents on the playground, reviewed the responses received through Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

### **Inspection team**

Debra Murphy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Emma Watson

Ofsted Inspector

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