

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Hartlepool

Musgrave Street, Hartlepool TS24 7HT

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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 Debra Hargreaves. This school is part of Bishop Hogarth 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, Mike Shorten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Yvonne Coates.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone belongs at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. Pupils learn to celebrate diversity. They do this with great pride. Pupils are eager to show visitors their 'Global Map'. This displays the heritage of pupils across the school. Pupils enjoy coming to their school. They are happy and safe in this caring environment.

Pupils benefit from high expectations for their achievement. Children in the early years get off to a great start. They learn in a high-quality environment. This helps them to develop their social interaction and knowledge. Children in early years leave the setting well-prepared for Year 1. Older pupils study a broad curriculum. They enjoy their lessons and read widely for pleasure.

Pupils are clear about the rules in the school. They try hard to live up to leaders' high standards. As a result, instances of poor behaviour are very low. Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying. They are clear that it does not happen in their school. Pupils appreciate the rewards they receive. This includes recognition for academic achievement and for displaying good character. Trust values, such as compassion, underpin these character awards.

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

Leaders have reviewed and improved the curriculum at the school. Trust leaders have supported this well. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders are ambitious about what pupils should learn. However, the ambitious vision is not embedded across all subjects. Leaders are not clear on where subjects need improving. This is because they do not check the curriculum carefully enough.

Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They present information clearly. They ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the support they need. However, teachers do not use assessment consistently well to check pupils' understanding. Some pupils, including those with SEND, develop gaps in knowledge or misconceptions as a result.

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum in early years. Children make good progress in the setting. Outdoor learning is carefully constructed to support physical development. Staff enhance the planned provision with activities linked to children's interests. For example, children learn about toys in the past such as the Jack-in-the-Box. Staff build on children's fascination with this object in future activities. Children then recall their learning about the past while completing a new task.

There is a sharp focus on ensuring pupils learn to read. This begins in early years. Young children learn sounds from the summer term of Nursery. Phonics lessons begin as soon as children enter Reception. Children show high levels of concentration in these lessons. This sets them up well for further learning. Adults

are well trained to support the phonics programme. Pupils read suitable books with increasing fluency. Staff address gaps in phonic knowledge. Leaders have put a comprehensive catch-up programme in place. Leaders help parents to support reading at home.

Pupils attend well and on time. Leaders act swiftly when there are barriers to pupils' high attendance. The family support officer has built strong links within the community. This has helped pupils to improve their attendance. There have been no recent suspensions or exclusions at the school. Staff support pupils to make the right choices. This leads to a warm and respectful culture within the school. If pupils do make mistakes, the response by staff is fair and appropriate. Pupils reflect on their behaviour with a trusted adult.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe. Pupils are clear about risks both on- and offline. They enjoy assemblies from local police that focus on how to behave well in the community. Pupils engage with activities beyond the academic curriculum. These include sporting clubs led by a professional coach. They also engage with their community. Pupils collect for a food bank and learn about local events such as the Tall Ships Races. However, the range of opportunities beyond the academic curriculum is not wide enough. Pupils do not have access to a sufficiently varied enrichment programme. For example, opportunities linked to art and music are limited.

Several leaders are new in post across the school. They have an ambitious vision for the pupils. Trustees and governors know the school well. They ensure they provide effective challenge and support to school leaders. Staff appreciate the teaching materials the trust provides. This positively supports their workload. Parents are positive about the school. One parent represented the views of many by saying that the school feels like 'home'. Parents are proud of the school's approach to cultural diversity. They feel the school embraces the local community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment is not used consistently well in the school. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge or misconceptions. Leaders should ensure staff are supported to use effective assessment strategies that are carefully matched to the aims of the curriculum.
- The school does not have a clear understanding of how the curriculum is being implemented across the school, including for pupils with SEND. There are inconsistencies within subjects and across the wider curriculum. Leaders should

sharpen the monitoring systems that underpin their action plans for improving the quality of education even further.

- Opportunities beyond the academic curriculum are not as broad as they could be. This hampers pupils' ability to discover their talents and interests. Leaders should intensify actions to broaden the wider curriculum offer.

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	148366
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10297511
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	123
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Coates
Headteacher	Debra Hargreaves
Website	https://stjosephshartlepool.bhcet.org.uk/
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The headteacher of the school took up post in September 2022.
- The school is part of the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The most recent section 48 inspection of this school was in October 2016. The school's next religious character inspection will take place before October 2024.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in February 2021. When it's predecessor school, St Joseph's RC Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

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 the headteacher and deputy headteacher over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also met with executive leaders from the trust, including the chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the trust board and the chair of the governing body, one trustee and one governor. The lead inspector reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from trust meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors held discussions about additional subjects and reviewed wider curriculum planning documentation.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and considered the support given to pupils with SEND during lesson visits.
- 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 leaders responsible for personal development.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents including the school's self-evaluation and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires, including Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents during pupils' arrival to, and departure from, school.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Murray

Ofsted Inspector

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