

# Inspection of St Aelred's Catholic Primary School - a Catholic Voluntary Academy

Fifth Avenue, York, North Yorkshire YO31 0QQ

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Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

<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 Claire Hughes. This school is part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Hugh Hegarty, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joseph Hughes.

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

St Aelred's Catholic Primary School is a welcoming school. Pupils are proud to attend. They know and understand the school values of friendship, courage and respect. Pupils demonstrate these values in their attitudes to learning and relationships with each other and with staff.

Leaders and those responsible for governance are highly ambitious for the pupils who attend the school. Recent changes to leadership and to the school curriculum ensure that pupils are rising to these expectations. Pupils enjoy their learning. They know how they are getting better and learning more.

Classrooms are calm and focused places to learn. Pupils benefit from clear school rules. Their positive attitudes and hard work are rewarded in different ways. School leadership roles such as school councillors and anti-bullying ambassadors are celebrated. Pupils in these roles enjoy the positive contribution that they make to school. Pupils remember their learning beyond the classroom, such as school visits, with enthusiasm. Various after-school activities, such as dance and art club, help pupils to socialise and learn beyond the school day.

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

The high expectations set by new leaders are shared across the school community. The school has a rigorous and well-planned curriculum for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Senior leaders ensure the curriculum helps pupils to build key knowledge and skills in readiness for their next stages in learning. Pupils benefit from teaching that helps them to build the small steps of knowledge that they need to be successful. Outcomes for 2023 do not reflect the recent and positive changes in the curriculum offer. Leaders take prompt action to ensure that the gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and addressed. Assessment is well used in mathematics to ensure that pupils can remember previous learning. This also happens effectively in history and phonics. Staff use subject-specific training well to ensure that the curriculum is implemented as intended. Where this is most effective, pupils remember and connect their learning. In subjects like art, this is less well developed.

Making a prompt start to reading is a high priority for the school. Pupils receive consistent and focused phonics lessons. Pupils who need to catch up with their reading access timely intervention. Focused training means that teachers are skilled in teaching phonics. In phonics lessons and when supporting pupils with reading, staff use the same language, gestures and structures consistently. This means that pupils succeed and apply the sounds that they know confidently. Older pupils show interest in reading through reading challenges in school and through work with the local library. A love of reading starts in early years, where children enjoy story time and explore key language linked to texts.

Pupils with SEND receive timely and focused support so that they can access the curriculum alongside their peers. Teachers make careful adaptations to support pupils with SEND in the classroom. The school uses the advice of additional professionals to meet the needs of pupils with SEND effectively.

Rapid progress is evident in the pace of change to strengthen the curriculum and improve behaviour in school. Senior leaders lead this effectively. Leadership roles beyond senior leaders are less well developed.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils benefit from consistently applied routines. This allows pupils to focus on their learning. Pupils know and understand the clear and effective school rules. Pupils can see how recent changes to behaviour have improved the school. Children in early years are well supported to work in familiar routines and structures. They play and learn together well. Older pupils have experienced previous poor behaviour. This has improved significantly, although some worry that it can still happen. Leaders have well-considered procedures to support pupils where issues arise. Pupils know that adults will sort out any challenging behaviour.

Pupils show maturity and confidence when talking about a range of issues. Equality and fairness are a key part of school life. Pupils understand some of the risks that they may face online and in the community. They understand what healthy relationships look like. School leadership responsibilities include established roles like the school council and new initiatives such as head boy and girl. Pupils recognise that voting for these roles is democracy in action.

Stakeholders, such as governors, trustees and trust leaders, are proactive in holding leaders to account. They have the same high expectations as leaders. While there have been recent changes to the school, stakeholders maintain a sharp focus on the well-being of staff.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some areas of the wider curriculum are newly developed, and pupils are in the early stages of developing their knowledge and skills in line with these changes. The implementation of these subjects is not always consistent across key stages, impacting on the ambition of the intended curriculum. The school should ensure that the implementation matches the expectations of the curriculum intent closely so that pupils build and connect knowledge over time.
- Behaviour incidents that do not match the high expectations of the school still occasionally occur. This means a small number of pupils worry about the

behaviour of some pupils. The school should continue to embed the newly implemented behaviour policy to build upon the improvements in behaviour.

- Leadership, beyond senior leaders, is not as well developed. Some aspects of the school's work to improve further are not as effective as they might be. The school should develop opportunities and training to develop leadership at varying levels further.

## 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>	147416
<b>Local authority</b>	York
<b>Inspection number</b>	10297480
<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>	195
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Joseph Hughes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Claire Hughes
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.staelreds.npcat.org.uk">www.staelreds.npcat.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust. It joined the trust in September 2022.
- The headteacher joined the school in April 2023.
- The school is a member of the Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough and has a Christian character.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection was in June 2022. The school was judged good. The school's next section 48 inspection is expected to be within five school years.
- The school uses one registered alternative education provider.
- The school offers breakfast and after-school wraparound support.
- The school has a nursery provision.

## 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.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design and history. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons and spoke to staff. They spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to pupils at the early stages of reading with a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 gathered views of parents, informally, in person and formally, through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils' views were considered through pupil meetings and the pupil survey.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the governing body, the diocese and the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classes, at breakfast club and during breaks and at lunchtime.

## **Inspection team**

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Frances Turner

Ofsted Inspector

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