

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

Front Street, Stanley, County Durham DH9 0NP

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 February 2024

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Jill Burgess. 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?

St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Stanley is a welcoming school. Pupils are happy and safe. They are proud to be a part of this school community. Staff have high expectations of pupils. They want the best for them. The Catholic ethos of the school encourages pupils to look after each other. Pupils are kind and friendly towards each other.

The school has introduced an ambitious curriculum throughout all year groups. Pupils are motivated to do well. The school provide a breadth of educational visits and extra-curricular activities. These expand pupil's interests. The Trust provide ongoing development of staff expertise. This helps the school in meeting pupils' needs. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from the nurturing nature of the school.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful towards their teachers. They meet the school's expectations of behaviour and conduct. The school teaches pupils to use the internet safely. Bullying is rare. If it happens, staff deal with it quickly. The school provides a range of pupil leadership positions. This develops pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The school recognise that pupils' attendance could be better. Leaders are working towards improving this.

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

Leaders have prioritised embedding a rich curriculum across school. They have carefully managed the introduction of new curriculums. The school benefits from the comprehensive professional development and expertise the trust provides. This contributes to pupils' accessing an ambitious curriculum.

The school prioritises pupils' exposure to, and understanding of vocabulary. Teachers introduce new vocabulary in novel ways. Pupils are articulate when discussing their learning. They use new vocabulary confidently. Pupils have regular opportunities to revisit prior learning across all subjects. This helps pupils remember their learning. Pupils want to do well in their lessons. They try hard and encourage each other.

Pupils with SEND benefit from tailored support and well-timed interventions. Their needs are identified quickly. They are included in lessons and receive the exact support they need to succeed. The school liaises closely with external agencies, so pupils benefit from the right provision. Parents of pupils with SEND appreciate the helpful support and communication they receive.

The reading curriculum is highly effective. The school has embedded a well-structured reading curriculum. Staff are expert at teaching children to read. The school has made this a high priority as soon as children start Reception. As a result, children learn to read quickly and fluently. Highly skilled staff regularly check children's progress in reading. This means that children receive additional support in a timely and effective manner. Older pupils benefit from the daily lessons to improve their reading skills. Pupils confidently discuss their 'whole class reads'. These encourage pupils to read more widely in their free time.

Children in the early years make a positive start in this school. The interactions between children are delightful. They are kind and considerate towards each other. They have wonderful manners. The school has introduced systems to promote children's independence. In nursery, children manage turn taking by using the sand timer provided when using the indoor climbing frame. As a result, they share and wait for their turn well. Children enjoy the variety of high-quality resources available for role play activities.

Pupils enjoy contributing to the local area through community arts projects and the school choir. The close partnership with St Joseph's church provides several opportunities for the school community and parents to join together for spiritual reflection. The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education develops pupils' confidence, understanding of identifying risks and staying safe. Some pupils have a very limited understanding of other religions, aspects of equalities and British Values. Pupils know it is important to treat others fairly, but the school has not provided them with enough knowledge and understanding to demonstrate the respect they intend to.

Staff feel well-supported by leaders. Workload is not a concern. The Diocese, trustees and governors have an accurate picture of the school. Governors provide effective support and challenge to school leaders. The school's systems to improve the attendance of some pupils is yet to have the impact leaders intend. Although many parents have positive

views of the school, a small group of parents do not feel that the school communicates effectively with them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils have a very limited understanding of other religions and some aspects of equalities. This means some pupils do not have enough knowledge and understanding to demonstrate the respect they intend to. The school should ensure they are preparing pupils for modern Britain effectively through developing their understanding of diversity, British Values and understanding difference in the world.
- A small number of parents feel the communication from the school could be improved. These parents do not feel that the information the school provides helps them to support their child's education as effectively as it might. The school should continue to work with parents to increase the relevance and effectiveness of existing communication.

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 Catholic Primary, to be good in February 2017.

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	148412
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10297522
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	225
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Boyle
CEO of the Trust	Nick Hurn OBE
Headteacher	Jill Burgess
Website	www.stanley-pri.durham.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Stanley is part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after school care.
- The school does not currently use alternative education providers.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke to senior leaders, including the chair of the board of trustees, chair of governors, the deputy CEO of the trust, the trust senior director of performance and standards, and the diocese.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. 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 listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector 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. The inspector also spoke to leaders, teachers, governors, and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They reviewed answers from the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text responses.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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