

Inspection of St John Boste Catholic Primary School, Washington

Castle Road, Oxclose Village, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE38 0HL

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Denise Cushlow. This school is part of the 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.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St John Boste Catholic Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St John Boste Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School to be good in 2012, before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils in this school thrive. Adults expect pupils to achieve excellence. The curriculum is ambitious and stimulating. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 ready for the next stage of their education. They are well-rounded individuals who contribute to wider society. Pupils can take on a variety of leadership roles, including on the eco-committee, well-being committee and buddy jobs. Through their work as global citizens, pupils achieved the CAFOD 'Live Simply' award. They learn how charities help people across the world. Parents and carers are extremely positive about the care and education that their children receive.

Young children joining the school benefit from the warm and nurturing environment. Adults have created a culture of respect. They model the behaviours that they expect from pupils. As a result, pupils are polite, confident and very well behaved. This includes the children in the early years. Pupils are kind to each other and help each other in lessons. They accept people who are different to themselves. Pupils are mature and articulate when talking to visitors. They feel safe and say there is no bullying at their school. One pupil, representing the views of many, said, 'Our school is like a family.'

A variety of extra-curricular opportunities, both during and after school, allows pupils to develop different interests and skills. Pupils enjoy netball, dance and gymnastics clubs, among others. They can also learn to play musical instruments. Staff make the most of the local area to enhance learning opportunities. A range of visitors to school adds depth to the curriculum.

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

Reading in this school is at the heart of ensuring that all pupils achieve well. Phonics begins in the first week of children starting school. Teachers have regular staff training and become experts in the teaching of early reading. They deliver lessons with confidence and consistency. Any pupils needing additional help receive carefully planned support and quickly catch up. Pupils have developed a love of reading and talk enthusiastically about the books they choose.

Some areas of the curriculum are new. The school boldly chose to introduce a unique and rigorous curriculum to ensure pupils achieve well. The content includes highly ambitious vocabulary in all areas. Pupils respond well to this. For example, they learn how to be a historian or scientist while remembering key knowledge and vocabulary that they will need in future. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is carefully constructed and sequenced so that pupils make links between subjects. For example, pupils use graphs and charts they have learned about in mathematics when recording science investigations.

The school has recently added a nursery for the first time. Children are settling in well and making fast progress through high-quality teaching and clear routines. The early years curriculum has been adapted to ensure that the provision for three-year-

olds prepares children well for Reception. Pupils learn the sounds that underpin phonics. This gives them a strong start when learning to read.

Leaders ensure that staff receive high-quality training. Teachers deliver the curriculum with confidence and consistency, including those subject areas that have been recently introduced. Their subject knowledge is strong. They check for understanding and quickly step in to address any misconceptions. School staff benefit from the high-quality networks and subject support groups offered by the trust. As a result, pupils achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported effectively. Pupils with SEND are identified quickly. Bespoke support is put in place to ensure that they can access the same curriculum as their peers. The school works effectively with parents of pupils with SEND and engages with external experts when appropriate. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve highly across all areas in the curriculum.

Behaviour across the school is exemplary. There is a calm and friendly atmosphere. Pupils are engaged and attentive during lessons. There is very little low-level disruption. Strong routines across school are taught explicitly, and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils attend school regularly. Leaders support families well when barriers to attending school arise.

Pupils have a wealth of opportunities that enable them to develop character and a sense of social justice. Leaders go beyond the norm to ensure that pupils become active and thoughtful members of society. For example, they raise money for local charities. Celebrating diversity and thinking of others is evident in many areas of school life. Pupils understand the meaning of fundamental British values and live them out in what they do and how they respect others. When pupils leave the school, they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Trustees, trust leaders and governors have a clear, shared vision. They challenge and support while being mindful of workload and well-being. They work together with school leaders, never letting up on the drive for continuous improvement in order to enhance the life chances of pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	147147
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10268487
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	172
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of board of trustees	Angela Boyle
Headteacher	Denise Cushlow
Website	www.stjohnbosteprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St John Boste Catholic Primary School is part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, which consists of 48 schools in total. The school converted to become an academy in July 2019.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The last Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection took place in September 2023.
- Lamesley Childcare provides before- and after-school care on the school site. The last Ofsted inspection of the provision took place in June 2022.
- There are no pupils attending alternative 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and other school leaders. They also met with the chair of the board of trustees, the trust senior director of performance and standards, a representative from the diocese and the board of governors, including the chair.
- 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum by looking at work samples in other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed school documentation, spoke to staff with different responsibilities and had discussions with pupils about aspects of school life.
- Inspectors considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and spoke to a sample of parents. Inspectors also considered responses to the online staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Helen Haunch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cathy Lee

Ofsted Inspector

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