

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School - a Catholic voluntary academy

Broomfield Avenue, Northallerton, North Yorkshire DL7 8UL

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

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 executive headteacher of this school is Paul Conway. 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?

Pupils are proud to live up to the school's vision of 'being the best you can be'. Older pupils enjoy taking on leadership roles in school. They act as sports leaders in the 'wake up, shake up' club. They are also 'buddies' to younger children in the early years.

Pupils are safe in this inclusive school. They are kind to one another. Instances of poor behaviour are rare. Pupils understand the expectations the school has. They relish the focus the school places on celebrating their success. Children in the early years develop their social interaction in a well-designed provision. They are confident and enthusiastic when talking to others.

The school has high expectations for the quality of education. Pupils achieve well. They benefit from the well-designed curriculum the trust has helped to put in place. Pupils look forward to their lessons and enjoy positive relationships with staff.

Pupils increasingly benefit from a curriculum that extends beyond the academic. They have a sound understanding of how to stay safe on- and offline. Pupils are proud to support a range of charities. They also enjoy being house captains and joining the school council. This enables them to develop life skills and help others.

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

Sacred Heart Primary School has recently undergone significant change. Leaders have improved the quality of education for pupils. The curriculum is ambitious. The school has identified the important knowledge they want pupils to learn. There is also a strong focus on vocabulary. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils are carefully taught subject-specific words. These include sportsmanship, dedication and resilience. Teachers break learning down into small chunks effectively. They highlight the steps and sequence of shooting a basketball. These clear explanations support pupils' achievement in the subject.

Focused professional development supports staff to teach the curriculum well. However, this is not consistent across all subjects. In mathematics, some teaching does not match the school's ambitious intentions. For some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learning is not well matched to their needs. In addition, gaps in pupils' mathematical knowledge or progress are not identified and addressed reliably. In the early years, children develop their mathematical understanding well. They are enthusiastic while counting their magic beans. This links to their learning about 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.

A positive reading culture underpins the curriculum. The foundations of reading begin in Nursery. Here, stories are a significant feature of the curriculum. Children also learn effective listening skills in readiness for phonics lessons. Well-trained staff teach daily phonics lessons from the beginning of Reception. Children benefit from clear routines as they begin to develop their reading skills. If pupils fall behind, they

quickly catch up through focused extra phonics sessions. Pupils in key stage 2 enjoy a range of well-planned reading activities linked to thoughtfully chosen texts.

Pupils flourish personally and socially in an environment where bullying is not tolerated. Pupils understand what bullying is and the different forms it can take. The broader curriculum supports pupils' understanding of British values such as tolerance. They embrace the importance of friendship and equality. Staff in the early years focus on developing relationships between children. Children play well together. They share resources and include one another in their games.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. However, the attendance of some pupils is below national and local figures. Leaders place a high priority on improving attendance. The school works closely with families. They identify any barriers that prevent children coming to school. This focused approach is starting to have an impact for several individuals. The school's pre-school club helps families to make sure pupils arrive in school on time.

In recent years, the school has joined a new multi-academy trust. The school is now run by an executive team. They also have responsibility for another trust school in North Yorkshire. This leadership model has supported rapid improvement. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the current provision in the school. Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate how leaders listen to feedback. Governors and trustees know the school's strengths and areas for development well. Executive leaders are aware that many aspects of the school's curriculum and wider offer are new. At the time of the inspection, the school's impact is not fully realised or understood. However, trust and executive leaders' focus on building leadership capacity is supporting their improvement journey.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The mathematics curriculum is not implemented consistently well across the school. Learning is not well matched to some pupils' needs, including those with SEND. Furthermore, assessment does not identify gaps in learning as effectively as it should. The school should further intensify actions to improve the mathematics curriculum for all pupil groups.
- Many aspects of the school's curriculum and wider provision are new. The impact of these changes is not fully understood or realised. The school should continue its work to build leadership capacity so that their ambitious vision is implemented, evaluated and refined consistently well.

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	147276
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10297473
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	99
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joseph Hughes
Headteacher	Paul Conway (Executive headteacher)
Website	https://shn.npcat.org.uk/
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is of a Catholic religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in November 2023.
- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School converted to be an academy in August 2019. When its predecessor school, Sacred Heart RC Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school became part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust in September 2022.
- The executive headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school does not use providers of alternative provision for its pupils.

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 executive headteacher, assistant headteacher and other leaders from the trust over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also held a virtual meeting with the chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the board of trustees. They also met with the chair of the local governing committee and five other governors. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from governor meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the history curriculum with the subject leader and looked at a sample of pupils' work in this subject.
- An inspector met with the leader responsible for early years.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator.
- 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 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.
- A range of school documents was reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Stephenson

Ofsted Inspector

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