

Inspection of a good school: Corpus Christi RC Primary School

Cargo Fleet Lane, Corpus Christi Primary School, Middlesbrough TS3 8NL

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 April 2024

Outcome

Corpus Christi RC Primary School continues to be a good school.

The executive headteacher of this school is Carolyn Baker. 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 (CEO), Hugh Hegarty, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joseph Hughes. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly place to learn. The school welcomes pupils of different nationalities and backgrounds. Staff are very caring and understanding of pupils' needs. Pupils know that they can speak about any concerns that they may have and that adults will help them. Staff encourage pupils to be aspirational for themselves. There are many opportunities for pupils to think about different careers. This gives them a purpose for their learning.

Children in early years thrive. Adults constantly engage with children. They model language well, talking with children and sharing books. Routines are quickly established, with children new to school. Children show deep concentration in their chosen tasks.

Staff have high expectations for all pupils academically and socially. Pupils respond well to these, showing keenness in lessons to succeed. Behaviour in school is calm. Pupils are respectful of one another and of staff.

Pupil self-confidence, and the ability to articulate in a range of social settings, is at the heart of the school's personal development offer. Pupils take part in poetry slams, enterprise competitions and theatrical performances. Through their leadership responsibilities, such as preparing aspects of worship, pupils blossom.

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

The published school data from standardised teacher assessments in 2023 accurately reflects the strength of the key stage 1 curriculum. Year 2 pupils were working at age-related expectations compared to their peer group in English and mathematics. Outcomes

in national tests and assessments for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2023 were much lower than in 2022, particularly in reading and mathematics. This reflects the extenuating circumstances of the cohort. Many pupils experienced significant, traumatic, life changing events, including bereavement and loss. This had a direct impact on their ability to focus on learning. There is an appropriate curriculum in place for pupils in key stage 2. Current pupils in Year 6 are close to completing the national curriculum programmes of study for English and mathematics. They are well prepared for secondary school.

The teaching of reading is a school priority. In Nursery, there is a strong emphasis on getting children to be school ready. Adults encourage good listening, sound discrimination and speech production. Children successfully learn pre-phonics skills. Most pupils complete the phonics programme during Year 2. There is a well-considered approach to developing reading fluency to build up confidence in reading. The key stage 2 reading curriculum is delivered in a consistent way. Teachers model reading and ensure that pupils have opportunities to read aloud. The mechanics of reading are in place. However, some pupils do not read beyond the taught class texts, and do not have the same love of reading as their peers.

The school has introduced a detailed curriculum to strengthen the teaching of grammar, punctuation, and spelling. This is taught through the texts that pupils are studying in reading. Pupils learn spelling patterns and rules. However, teachers do not consistently check that pupils are spelling taught words correctly. As a result, some pupils regularly spell common words and subject-specific vocabulary incorrectly.

The teaching of mathematics is a strength of the school. Teachers ensure that pupils have a firm understanding of taught mathematical concepts. Pupils accurately recall number facts and apply their knowledge to problem-solving. Pupils are, rightly, proud of their work in mathematics.

There are a significant number of pupils who have complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are supported in school to succeed. This includes prompts from adults and adapted worksheets. They access age-appropriate work alongside their peers. Many pupils enter school with speech difficulties. Staff deliver specific programmes to help pupils overcome these barriers to learning.

Behaviour is highly positive. Staff are consistent in applying the trust behaviour policy. There is a rigorous approach to attendance. The school works extensively with families to encourage good attendance. Absence has decreased considerably. However, there is still more work to do to reduce the number of pupils who are absent from school or arrive late for lessons and miss out on learning.

Pupils develop a strong moral code linked to the school's Christian character. Pupils understand fundamental British values, in particular democracy and rule of law. Visitors from emergency services help pupils to consider risks so that they can remain safe in the wider community.

The school is well supported, and held to account, by the trust and the local governing board. Staff appreciate the trust-wide training on teaching the curriculum. There are

many opportunities to network with other teachers. The school has introduced policies that have improved the work-life balance for 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 pupils do not choose to read, or listen to, a wide range of stories and poems in school and at home. These pupils do not have the same love of reading as their peers. Furthermore, they miss out on opportunities to develop a wider range of ambitious vocabulary or improve their general knowledge. The school should develop further opportunities for pupils to read and appreciate a wide range of literature to help them develop a life-long enjoyment of reading.
- Teachers do not consistently check that pupils are spelling taught words correctly. Some pupils regularly spell common words and subject-specific vocabulary incorrectly. The school should ensure that all teachers make clear the expectations for using correct spelling and follow the agreed policy for feedback to pupils.

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, Corpus Christi RC Primary School, to be good in March 2012.

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	142344
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10297419
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	269
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joseph Hughes
Headteacher	Carolyn Baker (Executive headteacher)
Website	corpus.npcat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a member of the Diocese of Middlesbrough and has a Christian character. It is, therefore, also inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The diocese last carried out a section 48 inspection in April 2022.
- The executive headteacher and the governing board oversee one other school, St Gabriel's Catholic Primary School.
- The school uses two alternative providers of education.
- There is a provision for two-year-old children on site.

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 school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, other senior leaders and the special educational needs coordinators. Meetings were also held with subject leaders, class teachers and pupils. Further meetings were held with early career teachers.
- The inspector met with the chair of trustees, the CEO, other officers from the trust and representatives of the local governing board.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to pupils about their work and looked at pupils' books and samples of their work.
- Prior to the inspection, the inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the school. She spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector took the views of staff into account through a number of meetings as well as their responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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