

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Newgate, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF8 4AA

Inspection dates: 17 to 18 April 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 headteacher of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is Michaela Velayudhan Tomlin. This school is part of The Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust, which means that other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Lesley Fitton, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Utting.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Joseph's Catholic Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Joseph's Catholic Primary School to be outstanding before it opened as an academy.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy learning in this vibrant and caring school. They are deeply respectful, unfailingly polite and are kind and caring towards each other. Pupils have excellent relationships with adults. Pupils feel and are safe. They know who they can talk to if they have any worries. The approach of the staff and attitudes of the pupils reflect the Catholic ethos of the school.

The carefully planned curriculum reflects the clear ambition that leaders have for pupils, who thrive in the care that they are given. Pupils enjoy learning to read and understand that reading is an important life skill. They concentrate and, mostly, work hard in lessons.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well met in this highly inclusive school.

Expectations for behaviour are very clear. Pupils move around school in an exemplary way and behave well almost all of the time. Bullying is rare and pupils state that it does not happen. They are confident that, if it did, it would be sorted out straight away. They are proud of the leadership roles that they have and their contributions to school life. Pupils also appreciate the range of sporting opportunities and after-school clubs that are available to them.

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

Leaders, in close partnership with the trust, have brought about significant improvement in the last two years. They have focused on the right things at the right time, in order to secure improvement in many areas of the school's offer.

Reading is a priority at St Joseph's. The school now has a rigorous and highly effective approach to the teaching of early reading and phonics. Staff are well trained, which means that teaching is precise. Assessment is timely and interventions enable almost all pupils to keep up. As a result, pupils learn to read quickly, accurately and fluently. The school is now supporting other schools to deliver phonics teaching effectively. Older pupils know how they use reading to help them learn. They talk with confidence and enthusiasm about the books they read and can discuss how they learn to retrieve information or infer meaning. Pupils especially enjoy being read to by adults.

Children in the early years develop as curious and excited learners. A carefully planned curriculum that flows into key stage 1 ensures that learning is effective. This is supported by a highly engaging environment and interactions with adults that help children learn. Children in Nursery develop the skills and knowledge that they need to be successful in the Reception Year. Children's personal development is very strong. By the end of Reception, children are ready for key stage 1. Parents are very positive about the early years. One parent said, 'They (the staff) love them as much as we do.'

Leaders have worked closely with colleagues in the trust to implement an ambitious, detailed and sequenced curriculum that flows from the early years through to Year 6. Teachers use this to ensure that learning builds over time and to provide engaging learning opportunities. As a result, pupils can talk with confidence about their learning. In design technology, Year 1 pupils describe how they have joined materials using split pins and share their knowledge about how fruit and vegetables are good for us. Year 6 pupils talk about how they use their knowledge of programming from computing lessons and apply it in design technology lessons. Pupils are excited about the next steps in their learning. In mathematics, Year 4 pupils talk confidently about fractions, multiplication and algebra. Pupils enjoy using laptops in lessons and talk about how this helps them learn in mathematics.

In some subjects, the school has not clearly mapped out the specific knowledge, skills and vocabulary that are to be taught so that learning builds progressively year on year. In these subjects, what the school intends that pupils should know and be able to do by the end of each year group is not fully clear. This hampers pupils' ability to make the best possible progress over time. Although leaders have already recognised this and plans are in place to further improve the precision of planning in all subjects, there is more to do.

During lessons, staff check what pupils know and can do consistently well to identify and address any misconceptions. However, checks to assess pupils' learning at the end of a sequence are not consistently effective across all subjects. This means that, in some subjects, teachers are not fully aware of what pupils have learned over time. Action to address this is now underway. For example, leaders have identified existing models of good practice, such as in mathematics. However, these good practices are yet to be adopted across the curriculum subjects.

Leaders are ambitious for every pupil and are determined to remove barriers to learning. As a result, inclusion is at the heart of this school. The learning needs of pupils with SEND are accurately assessed, and structured plans with meaningful targets help teachers to meet the need of individual pupils. Support in lessons and around school is effective. This means that pupils with SEND learn well and play an active part in all aspects of school life.

Pupils benefit from a clear and structured personal, social and health education programme. Pupils know what healthy relationships are and know how to stay safe online. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is exceptional. They learn to be responsible citizens through leadership roles, such as school councillors, sports ambassadors and 'Mini-Vinnies'. Pupils enjoy the range of clubs and activities that are on offer. Older pupils can talk about equality and human rights and are developing their understanding of concepts like democracy and individual liberty. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures is less secure. Pupils find it difficult to discuss the key features of other faiths and similarities and differences with their own faith and culture as a result.

Leaders have worked hard to ensure that staff workload is manageable and their well-being is fully considered. Staff benefit from high-quality training and support from the trust, and the mathematics and English hubs. This has helped to strengthen the delivery of the curriculum and the achievement of pupils. Staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about the support and consideration they receive with one member of staff saying, 'This is a joyful place to work.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, it is not clear what specific knowledge, skills and vocabulary the school intends pupils to learn by the end of each year group. This prevents pupils' learning from building fully effectively over time. The school should ensure that the specific knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils are to learn by the end of each year is clearly mapped out so that teachers plan learning that builds effectively through the school in all curriculum subjects.
- In some subjects, assessment at the end of a sequence of learning is not as used effectively as it is in others. Therefore, teachers are not fully aware of what pupils have learned over time or the exact detail of any gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that summative assessment is used effectively to support teachers when planning learning to meet the differing needs of pupils.
- The school has not ensured that the curriculum enables pupils to deepen aspects of their cultural knowledge effectively over time. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of faiths and cultures beyond their own, for example, is limited. The school should ensure that pupils' cultural development is developed effectively so that they deepen their knowledge and remember more over time.

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 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	138947
Local authority	Wakefield
Inspection number	10297376
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	241
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Utting
CEO of the trust	Lesley Fitton
Headteacher	Michaela Velayudhan Tomlin
Website	www.stjosephspontefract.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Bishop Konstant Academy Trust.
- This school is a Catholic primary school. Its last section 48 inspection took place in November 2023.
- The school has a breakfast club on site.
- The school does not make use of any 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 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 and other members of the leadership team.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the board of trustees and the academy council, the chief executive officer of the trust, the director of primary standards of the trust and the diocese education adviser.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and design technology. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum planning, conducted joint lesson visits with leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at planning in science.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, around the school and at playtime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils about their views of the school and their learning, behaviour and safety.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils and Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. These included comments received via the free-text facility. Inspectors also talked to some parents at the beginning and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Chris Jennings, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Witham	Ofsted Inspector

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