

Inspection of Sacred Heart Primary School

Ayresome Street, Middlesbrough TS1 4NP

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The headteacher of this school is Vicky White. 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.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Sacred Heart Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Sacred Heart RC Primary School to be good, before it opened as Sacred Heart Primary School as a result of conversion to academy status. The school received an ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Act in December 2018.

What is it like to attend this school?

Sacred Heart Primary School serves a diverse community. The school cherishes and celebrates the varied cultures, religions and backgrounds reflected in its population. Staff care deeply for the pupils. They quickly establish and nurture positive relationships. Because of this, pupils feel happy and safe in school.

The school has high expectations for pupils. It is constantly seeking opportunities for pupils to broaden their horizons, widen their experiences and build their aspirations. Pupils can attend a wide range of extra-curricular clubs to interest and inspire them. Pupils enjoy trips organised by the school to enhance their learning.

In lessons and at less-structured times, pupils respond well to the school's routines and expectations of behaviour. Pupils are interested and attentive in lessons. Children in the early years are helpful and cooperative. Pupils move around school calmly and sensibly.

Pupils learn to make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community. They take on leadership roles on the school council. The 'Mini Vinnies' raise money for charity and sports leaders support their peers at playtimes.

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

The school's ambitious curriculum is carefully sequenced and runs from early years to the end of Year 6. The most important concepts have been identified. The school has identified what pupils need to learn before they leave primary school. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), build their knowledge well towards these end points over time. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They receive regular training. In mathematics, lessons follow a consistent structure. Through skilful questioning, teachers revisit what pupils have learned before. This helps pupils remember and build their learning in small steps.

In physical education (PE), teachers present information clearly. They also make regular checks on pupils' understanding. The physical development that children receive in the early years is an excellent preparation for the PE curriculum they will follow in key stage 1. In the outdoor provision, children enthusiastically engage in physical activity. They jump, climb, crawl and they develop core strength by swinging on ropes.

The school puts a high priority on reading. The school's chosen scheme for the teaching of reading is used expertly by well-trained teachers. Children in the early years are highly motivated to learn to read. They listen attentively and enthusiastically join in with phonics sessions. Books are valued and celebrated throughout school. A 'books and bagel' session involves parents and carers in the shared enjoyment of high-quality texts being read aloud to children. When pupils struggle or slip behind with their reading, they are quickly identified and receive specialist support to keep up.

The school expertly identifies where pupils have barriers to learning, including those with SEND. When pupils need additional support, this is provided through adaptations to the curriculum or through focused adult support. Teachers use questioning well to check what pupils have understood in lessons.

Children in the early years get off to a great start to their education. Many children join with low starting points. The school has prioritised vocabulary, language and communication. Interactions between adults and children are of high quality. The children quickly develop confidence and independence. They plant seeds and observe the growth of flowers and plants. Children in Nursery study the life cycle of the butterfly.

The school has revised the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils learn to lead healthy lifestyles. They learn about healthy relationships. In religious education lessons, pupils discuss big questions and topics such as, 'Do you think you should earn love?' Some pupils' understanding of, and respect for, protected characteristics, such as race and sexuality, is under-developed. Pupils say that there are occasions where derogatory language is used. They worry that this may become bullying.

Leaders, governors and the trust share the same vision and high ambition that pupils will achieve their best at Sacred Heart. There is an unswerving commitment to serving a deprived and complex community. The school benefits from high-quality support and collaboration that comes through membership of the trust. Staff report that leaders are mindful of their workload and well-being.

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 are concerned about the occasional use of inappropriate and derogatory language outside of lessons. This can make them upset. The school should continue to work with pupils to address these concerns to further improve pupils' experience of school.
- Some aspects of the PSHE curriculum are embedded more than others. Some pupils reported that a small number of children do not consistently show respect for some protected characteristics or do not engage sufficiently with views other than their own. The school should continue to work to ensure these issues are addressed.

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	142365
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10297421
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	332
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joseph Hughes
CEO of trust	Hugh Hegarty
Headteacher	Vicky White
Website	https://sacredheartcp.npcat.org.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	4 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school is a Roman Catholic primary school. The most recent inspection of the school's religious character took place in April 2019.
- The school has Nursery provision for three-year-old children.

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 had 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and curriculum leaders.
- Meetings were also held with representatives of the local governing board, the CEO, deputy CEO, the chair of the trust and a representative of the diocese.
- 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 spoke with parents. Account was taken of the responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with groups of pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour at various times of day, including in lessons, around the school site and at lunchtime. Inspectors scrutinised attendance records and behaviour logs.

Inspection team

Dughall McCormick, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lynn George	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Spencer-Brooke	Ofsted Inspector

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