

Inspection of St Alphonsus' Catholic Primary School

Cadogan Street, North Ormesby, Middlesbrough, Cleveland TS3 6PX

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

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

The head teacher of this school is Angela McCann. This school is part of the 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Alphonsus are exceptionally polite, kind and caring. This is a very inclusive school. Pupils are tolerant and accepting of others. They enjoy coming to school and attend well. Pupils are very proud of their school. They are keen to show visitors the work they do and the trophies they have won.

A high number of pupils start and leave the school outside of the usual times. The school manages high pupil mobility well. The school wants the best for every pupil, even when they know pupils may not stay with them for very long.

The school has very high expectations for all pupils. Staff help pupils to be successful in later life. Pupils, led by the 'Mini Vinnies', engage in a range of charitable events in their community. They learn how to care for the local environment and the wider world. Pupils talk about the Catholic ethos of the school and how this helps them to become global citizens.

Pupils have many opportunities for leadership roles. They can become house captains, 'Mini Vinnies' and play leaders. They can attend a range of clubs at lunchtime and after school. Pupils go on many trips linked to their lessons. The whole school visited the theatre to see a pantomime. There are many opportunities to take part in competitive sports.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They confidently talk to visitors to their school. Pupils have impeccable manners. The school is calm. There are warm relationships and high levels of respect between pupils and adults. Pupils feel safe. The adults in school look after them well. Pupils want to learn. They listen carefully to adults. Behaviour in lessons is excellent.

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

Pupils quickly learn to read. The teaching of phonics begins as soon as pupils start school. Parents are provided with information so that they can help their children at home. Adults in school are skilled at helping pupils learn to read. Adults check pupils' understanding and explain new words clearly. Pupils quickly gain new vocabulary and use it independently. Pupils who fall behind in reading are given the additional support they need to catch up. Pupils enjoy reading and can choose books from a wide range of authors. They are very keen to show visitors their reading areas. Pupils become fluent and confident readers.

In mathematics and reading, the school has a well-embedded curriculum. At the end of key stage 2, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve similar outcomes to other pupils nationally. The school has introduced an ambitious curriculum across other subjects. Pupils can remember and discuss what they are learning now. Some pupils do not remember the knowledge or skills from earlier learning that they need to build on. The school does consistently check for gaps in pupils' learning before introducing new content. Teachers are confident when delivering the curriculum.

Subject leaders ensure that teachers receive appropriate training in each subject area.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well in lessons. Teachers adapt lessons and resources to enable all pupils to access the curriculum.

Leaders are determined that pupils will leave St Alphonsus equipped for life in the world. Through the Catholic ethos, pupils learn about global issues and how they can have an impact. Leaders work tirelessly to support families, as well as the pupils, in school. An eco-shop has recently been opened to support parents during the financial crisis. The school has engaged with a local charity that purchases sportswear for every pupil. The school offers a range of opportunities that pupils would not otherwise experience.

Pupils develop high levels of independence. This starts in the early years. Pupils are extremely confident. Through leadership roles in the school, they develop a sense of responsibility. Pupils welcome new people to school and treat everyone equally. They do not tolerate bullying or any type of harassment. They look after each other.

In the early years, children quickly develop independence. They play well together and learn to take turns. The resources provided enable children to explore things they are interested in. For example, during a rainy morning, children wanted to see how much rain they could catch in watering cans. Staff used this moment to develop vocabulary and increase children's knowledge. 'In the moment' opportunities are used well by all staff. Leaders have mapped out all of the end goals that they want children to achieve at the end of the year. This supports the school in checking what children know and what they can do in readiness for Year 1. However, the school has not identified the smaller steps children should learn in order to reach the end goals that they have set out. Learning is often led by the children. Although the provision is set up well to facilitate this way of learning, there is a lack of clarity about exactly what knowledge children should learn as they progress through the early years.

Leaders at all levels have a clear vision for the school. The school welcomes the support offered by the wider trust network. Governors have different experiences and skills. They use these to support the school effectively. The whole staff team has worked together through recent staffing changes to minimise the impact on pupils and each other. Staff are proud to work in this school and feel valued. Parents appreciate the support the school offers them.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers have not always checked what pupils already know and remember. Although this does now happen, this means that sometimes, older pupils do not always have the prior knowledge required to deepen their understanding of a subject. The school should ensure that all gaps in learning are identified and staff adapt the curriculum to support pupils to build on what they already know.
- Although the early years milestones are clearly mapped out, the curriculum is not broken down into the smaller steps children need to learn in order to meet the end points. Some children do not meet all the milestones needed to achieve early learning goals. The school should ensure that the curriculum is broken down into small, precise steps so that children gain sufficient knowledge 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 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	142367
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10297422
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	244
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joseph Hughes
CEO of the trust	Hugh Hegarty
Headteacher	Angela McCann
Website	www.stalphonsus.npcat.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care for 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors met with subject leaders to discuss the curriculum, had discussions with staff and pupils, visited

lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. Other areas of the curriculum were also looked at, including geography and art.

- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for improvement.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record of pre-employment checks; 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 inspectors met with senior leaders, trust leaders, including the CEO, a representative from the diocese, teachers and the wider school team.
- The inspectors met with the members of the governing body, including the chair.
- The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for parents, staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Helen Haunch, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Zoe Carr

Ofsted Inspector

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