

# Inspection of St Margaret Clitherows RC Primary School

St Margaret's Grove, South Bank, Middlesbrough TS6 6TA

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Outstanding</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Outstanding</b>
Early years provision	<b>Outstanding</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Clare McNicholas. 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.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils thrive in the highly inclusive environment of this welcoming school. Warm and caring relationships are at the heart of everything that the school has to offer. Pupils show high levels of respect towards each other and adults. Pupils are polite and friendly and engage well in conversations. Pupils know that adults are keen to hear their views. Adults ensure that they consider these when making decisions that affect pupils.

The school has high expectations for all pupils. Leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils, regardless of their background or starting points, participate fully in school life. They ensure that resources provide pupils with an enriched experience of the curriculum. The school has thought carefully about the actions needed to improve the curriculum. This is having a positive impact on how well pupils achieve.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. Most pupils attend regularly and on time. Pupils understand the importance of equality and know that difference is valued and celebrated. Parents and carers value the importance that the school places on their children's safety. The school is passionate and determined to secure the very best outcomes for pupils and their families. Effective use of counsellors, charities and food banks provides emotional and practical support for pupils and families.

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

The curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. This ambition starts in the early years. There is a consistent approach to teaching in lessons across the curriculum. Lessons are well structured with similar routines. The school helps pupils to remember what they have learned. For example, recap and revisiting previous learning is a regular part of lessons. Misconceptions are addressed quickly by teachers. Pupils engage attentively in lessons. They talk about their learning and respond enthusiastically to teachers. Over time, the curriculum helps pupils achieve well.

Well-trained staff teach phonics in a consistent and clear way. Books are precisely matched to pupils' ability in phonics. Regular checks ensure pupils make progress. Pupils who are not on track in phonics and reading receive daily support. For these pupils, the support that they receive for writing does not match the support that they receive in phonics and reading. Writing tasks do not focus enough on teaching the basic skills of spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting that these pupils need to be able to write independently. Pupils enjoy listening to adults read. Reading is promoted well, such as through daily lessons, 'reading together' books and the 'library bus'.

The early years curriculum prioritises communication and personal, social and emotional development. It is skilfully designed to build children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning. Children typically enter nursery with lower than expected starting points. Language development is a high priority. It connects learning from early years to key stage 1, helping children to build their knowledge. Activities, both indoors and outdoors, are exceptionally well thought out to encourage communication and independence. Routines are quickly established. Well-trained adults take every opportunity to expertly

extend children's learning. Children show high levels of concentration when completing tasks. For example, one child showed perseverance when using scissors.

Pupils behave impeccably around school and in lessons. They follow firmly established routines right from the early years. Adults have high expectations for behaviour which pupils respond positively to. The behaviour policy is clearly understood by staff and pupils. Rewards and consequences are applied consistently throughout school and in lessons. Pupils know and follow the school rules. They value the rewards that they receive, including 'SMC tickets', star of the week and the headteacher award. Attendance has improved consistently over time. The school has prioritised managing daily attendance. Any concerns are quickly addressed. The school builds strong relationships with families and removes any barriers to pupils coming to school regularly and on time.

The school has an extensive personal development offer for pupils and families. It is centred around leaders' knowledge of the community. Pupils are safe in school. They know how to keep safe online. Pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values is firmly embedded. They have a strong understanding of different faiths and cultures. High priority is given to ensure pupils experience a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities to develop their talents and interests. These include sports, music and the arts. Pupils talk enthusiastically about deliberately planned educational visits that broaden their social and cultural knowledge. For example, all pupils experience a residential trip and visit the theatre to see a pantomime.

The trust has an ambitious vision for the school. The school is relentless in its approach to ensuring that all pupils receive a high-quality education. The needs of children and their families are central to all that the school has to offer. Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued and well supported by leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- For some pupils, the school does not give enough attention to the technical aspects of writing, including spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting. As a result, these pupils are not able to write with accuracy. The school should ensure that the curriculum for writing gives sufficient attention to building pupils' fluency in the basic skills so that they are able to write independently across all areas of the curriculum.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140769
<b>Local authority</b>	Redcar and Cleveland
<b>Inspection number</b>	10346539
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	361
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Joseph Hughes
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Hugh Hegarty
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clare McNicholas
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://smc.npcat.org.uk">smc.npcat.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	22 and 23 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school has a nursery for three- and four-year-old children.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club run by the school on site.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision provider.
- The school is a Catholic primary school within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in July 2019. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and

management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors met with leaders from the trust, including the CEO. They met with the chair of the trust and members of the local governing body. They also met with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, at playtime and at lunchtime. Inspectors spoke with pupils about their views of the school, 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. They also took into account the views of parents and carers using Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey. These included comments received via the free-text facility. Inspectors also talked to parents in the school playground.

### **Inspection team**

Nicola Beaumont, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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