

Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy

Portland Road, Halifax, West Yorkshire HX3 6LA

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
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 this school is Mary Togher. This school is part of Blessed Peter Snow 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, Robert Pritchard, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Antonia Dorsey.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this warm and welcoming school. There is a strong family feel, with pupils genuinely caring for each other. Pupils are respectful as they move around school. Pupils, including the very youngest are polite to each other, staff and visitors. Adults and pupils have positive, respectful relationships. Pupils are safe.

The school has high expectations for learning and behaviour. The school can clearly explain why outcomes and progress in 2023 fell below the expected standard. The actions taken by the school, including the appointment of a new leadership team, have led to higher quality learning for pupils.

The pastoral offer is strong. For example, the pastoral team runs mental health workshops, especially focused on Year 6 girls and their friendships and relationships. The school accesses support from charities for families in need.

Pupils understand the importance of equality. One pupil said, 'It's important to treat everyone how you want to be treated.' There is a focus on using pupils to celebrate their own cultures with others through sharing information and art competitions.

Parents and carers talk positively about the school. They feel listened to and welcome the communication that they receive.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and matches the breadth of the national curriculum. The school has logically ordered the important knowledge that pupils need to learn so that it builds progressively from the early years. In reading and maths, staff development has been prioritised. In these subjects, staff demonstrate secure subject knowledge. They explain new content to pupils clearly. However, in a few subjects, the school's agreed teaching approaches are not consistently implemented. This means that some pupils don't learn as well as they could.

Pupils' learning is now well aligned with the curriculum. Adaptations in lessons are successful, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The needs of pupils with SEND are clearly identified. They are confident to participate in lessons. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' vocabulary. Pupils talk confidently about their learning. However, the recording of some pupils' written work contains inconsistent letter formation and lacks pride. This is not routinely picked up by staff.

Phonics lessons are taught consistently by well-trained adults. Pupils follow clearly established routines. There is a high focus on oracy. Pupils have opportunities for speaking with repetition of sounds and sentences. Pupils apply their phonic knowledge in writing. Reading books are accurately matched to pupils' phonic knowledge. Pupils read with increasing fluency as they become more accurate. Older pupils read fluently and confidently.

The early years curriculum prepares children well for Year 1 and beyond. Adults prioritise the development of children's language and vocabulary. Children use the sounds that they know to read and write. They develop their mathematical knowledge from carefully chosen activities. Children in the early years access a range of activities. Routines are firmly established from the start. Children cooperate sensibly with each other. Adults support learning well. For example, during the inspection, adults modelled how to mix colours using powder paint.

The behaviour policy can be seen in action in all areas of school life. Pupils know what is expected of them and they behave well. There are clear systems for rewards and consequences which are understood by pupils. Pupils move calmly and sensibly around school. They play together happily outside.

Attendance including persistent absence has improved over time. However, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. Recently, the school has put systems in place to further improve pupils' attendance and to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent. This includes listening to the views of parents and pupils.

The school has thought carefully about the school's personal development offer. The personal, social, health and economic education curriculum has recently been reviewed. This broadens pupils' knowledge of the world. Pupils experience a wide range of opportunities. The school encourages charity work and leadership through its 'Pupil Parliament'. Extracurricular activities include choir, netball and art. The music offer ensures that pupils have access to whole class instrument tuition. Educational visits build pupils' cultural awareness, using high quality local places.

The school has made carefully considered improvements in a short time. Leaders, including governors and trust leaders have built capacity to improve the school further. Governors know the strengths of the school and the priorities for improvement. Leaders respond positively to staff needs. They ensure that training and support is robust. Staff are positive about the support that they get from leaders and for their 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)

- In some subjects, the implementation of the curriculum does not meet subject leaders' high expectations. This means that pupils experience variability in the way the curriculum in some subjects is taught across the school. In these cases, pupils do not learn as well as they should. The school should ensure that all subject leaders have the

expertise to check that the curriculum in their subject area is being taught as they intend and support staff where required.

- The recording of some pupils' written work contains inconsistent letter formation and lacks pride. Teachers do not consistently pick up on this. This means that some pupils repeat the same mistakes. The school should ensure that the writing expectations across the curriculum are clearly established so that teachers address errors promptly and pupils present their work with pride.
- Some pupils do not attend school often enough. This means that these pupils miss out on important learning and do not make the progress they should. The school should continue to develop the recently implemented systems to secure sustained and regular attendance.

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	148479
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10346764
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Antonia Dorsey
CEO of the trust	Robert Pritchard
Headteacher	Mary Togher
Website	www.st-josephs.calderdale.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Blessed Peter Snow Catholic Academy Trust.
- The headteacher is new to the role since September 2024.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school club run by the school on site.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is a Catholic primary school within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Leeds. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in June 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 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 a trustee 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, science and art and design. 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's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View. 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

Adrian Fearn

Ofsted Inspector

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