

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Marton Road, Middlesbrough TS4 2NT

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Elizabeth King. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other. 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?

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is a happy and caring community. Relationships between staff and pupils are a strength. Staff are consistent in modelling behaviour and setting routines. Pupils respond to the high expectations set by teachers. Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and achieve well. Pupils are safe and confident that they will receive support if they have any concerns.

The school offers a wealth of enrichment activities. Educational visits, such as experiencing life on an Anglo-Saxon farm, make learning memorable. The schools acts on pupils' suggestions for clubs. These include wheelchair basketball, computing and musical theatre.

Pupils blossom in their roles as young leaders and make a significant contribution to the school and the wider community. The 'Headstarters' are trained to support other pupils' mental health and well-being. The house captains play a key role in the behaviour reward system and the many enjoy organising charitable events.

Pupils spoke about how much they adore Stanley, the school dog, and how he is a comfort and friend to them. Stanley also helps pupils to understand the responsibilities of pet ownership.

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

The school's ability to adapt to the needs of the pupils is a key to its success. There has been a significant increase in the number of disadvantaged pupils attending school in recent years. This includes pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are well trained in identifying pupils with SEND. Leaders ensure that staff have the knowledge and strategies to support vulnerable pupils well.

Pupils with SEND experience success in their learning. Many learn alongside their peers. They complete the same level of work with minor adjustments. These include, for example, the use of written prompts and practical apparatus. Some pupils have more specialist provision with adults who are adept at simplifying learning. Staff are highly reflective and modify lessons if they need to. They check pupils' knowledge throughout the lessons and correct any misconceptions. Teachers recap on prior learning. Teachers support pupils in making connections between new learning and what they already know.

The school has an ambitious curriculum which celebrates the heritage of Middlesbrough. Staff foster a love of reading. Pupils enjoy borrowing books from the well-stocked library. Pupils benefit from author visits and some volunteer as 'reading ambassadors'. Staff are well trained in teaching phonics and there is a consistent teaching approach throughout school. An increasing number of pupils who have English as an additional language have joined the school during Years 1 and 2. They are given additional support in learning phonics and catch up well with their peers. Pupils are fluent readers by the time that they leave school.

Pupils are also confident in mathematics and are well prepared for the next phase of their education. However, the school is less successful in developing pupils' writing skills. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation, which means their writing often contains errors. Recent changes mean that the school's approach to teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling is now clear. There is also a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting.

Children in the early years are visibly happy. The learning areas are inviting and well designed to support children in their development. Staff focus on communication, language, and personal development very effectively. The school creates many opportunities for children to practise the key skills that they need to be ready for Year 1. Staff have excellent subject knowledge. They use traditional stories, songs, and nursery rhymes well, often linking these to the wider curriculum.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. If any pupil struggles with their behaviour, staff take highly effective action to address this. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. Pupils' conduct around the school and at lunchtimes is calm and respectful. The school offers

support to families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly. Pupils relish the rewards for good attendance and are keen to come to school.

Pupils enjoy many activities that develop their talents and interests. These activities are appreciated by pupils. Musical productions give pupils the chance to grow in confidence as they perform in front of live audiences. Pupils learn about fundamental British values. They can explain why democracy and the rule of law make a difference to the way that we live.

Staff are proud to work at St Joseph's. They value the support that they receive from leaders. Leaders from the trust, including those with responsibility for governance, take a number of effective steps to ensure its vision for pupils is realised. This includes providing training and networking opportunities and supporting staff to be future leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to the teaching of writing has not been sufficiently systematic. As a result, there are gaps in pupils' knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation which means their writing often contains errors. The school needs to further develop staff expertise to consistently implement their new approach to the teaching of writing.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding,

behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	142374
Local authority	Middlesbrough
Inspection number	10346570
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	398
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joseph Hughes
CEO of the trust	Hugh Hegarty
Executive Headteacher	Elizabeth King
Website	stjosephs.npcat.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 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 is a member of the Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough and has a Christian character. The last statutory inspection under section 48 of the Education Act was in March 2024.
- The executive headteacher leads this school and one other, St Thomas More RC Primary School.
- A new head of school was appointed in September 2024.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the executive headteacher, head of school and other leaders in school, representatives from the local management board, the chair of the trust, the CEO and assistant CEO for the trust, school improvement leaders from the trust and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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.
- The inspector gathered views of parents informally in person and formally through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils' views were considered through the pupil survey and pupil meetings.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classes, during breaks and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Mary Cook, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024