

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

Coast Road, Blackhall Colliery, Hartlepool TS27 4HE

Inspection dates:

21 January 2025 and 20 February 2025

Outcome

Evidence gathered during this ungraded (section 8) inspection suggests that the school's work may have improved significantly across all areas since the previous inspection. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Lisa Ashton. This school is part of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education 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), Brendan Tapping and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel O'Mahoney.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve exceptionally well at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School. The school's nurturing and aspirational atmosphere is palpable. The school provides pupils with a wealth of carefully chosen leadership opportunities and experiences. Pupils are proud to contribute to the ethos of the school. They embody the school's values.

This is a highly inclusive school. The school has high expectations for all pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported to be successful in all areas of school life. The ambitious curriculum inspires pupils. The mixed-aged classes are well managed. Pupils are excited to share their knowledge with each other.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They conduct themselves with maturity at all points of the school day. They are kind to each other. The school teaches them to treat others fairly. Pupils have a deep understanding of fairness, equality and respect. Pupils know why this is important.

The school provides a variety of extra-curricular activities that develop pupils' interests, such as coding, cooking and fundraising. All pupils engage with the activities offered. The school teaches pupils how to keep themselves safe. Pupils discuss important safety issues with maturity.

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

The school has introduced subject curriculums that excite and inspire pupils. The curriculum is carefully designed so pupils progressively build upon their prior knowledge. This helps them develop a secure understanding and produce work of a high quality.

The school has prioritised the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember to be successful in their next steps of learning. The school has well-established opportunities for rapid recall and uses helpful prompts in the classroom to revisit previously taught content. This happens across all subjects and helps pupils to remember their learning. As a result, pupils confidently discuss their learning and make meaningful links across subjects. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

The school routinely checks pupils' understanding in lessons. As pupils complete their work, staff address errors or misunderstandings on the spot. No child is left behind. The school also uses time throughout the school day to provide additional support to pupils if it is needed. This timely and effective oversight means pupils approach their work with confidence and experience success.

Pupils with SEND receive high-quality support at St Josephs. They flourish here. The school identifies pupils' needs quickly and develops effective partnerships with parents and carers and external agencies to understand pupils' needs. Staff are well trained to provide precise support throughout the school day. There are no barriers to what pupils with SEND can partake in or achieve.

Children learn to read as soon as they join Reception. They are excited by their daily phonics lessons. Children learn to read quickly and fluently. They love to read and are keen to practise their reading throughout the day. Reading is a priority throughout the school. Staff are expert at teaching reading. The school ensures all pupils have an excellent foundation in reading. For example, it provides additional reading time before school for those that need it.

Children make an excellent start in the early years. The school provides well-thought-out experiences and opportunities to develop and enhance children's communication, social and mathematical skills. Children are encouraged to be curious and confident. They benefit from the many chances they have to rehearse new learning. Staff have high-quality interactions with children. They help them to use newly taught vocabulary. Children are engrossed in their learning. Staff closely monitor children's understanding and development. Children are well prepared for Year 1.

Pupils attend school well and on time. They are proud to contribute to the life of the school through the many leadership opportunities they have. The school teaches pupils the importance of citizenship. As a result, pupils demonstrate how they can show social responsibility in the wider world. The school teaches pupils practical ways to manage their emotions. Pupils use these strategies when they feel overwhelmed and to communicate

their feelings to each other. As a result, pupils are emotionally intelligent and conduct themselves well.

Leaders make decisions that are in the best interests of children. The school offers practical pastoral support. Leaders, across the school and trust, are committed to continually improving pupils' achievement. The leadership arrangements across the federation have added strength and expertise to the school. This has had a positive impact on staff workload. Those responsible for governance have an accurate picture of the school. They effectively hold the school to account. Staff expertise is well utilised, and staff are proud to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 predecessor school, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2017.

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	148789
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10346778
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	79
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel O'Mahoney
CEO of the trust	Brendan Tapping
Headteacher	Lisa Ashton
Website	www.st-josephsrc-pri.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust, which consists of 30 schools in total. The school converted to become an academy in October 2021.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The last Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection took place in September 2017.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative education provisions.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspection started on 21 January 2025. It was paused in line with [Ofsted inspections and visits: Deferring, pausing and gathering additional evidence policy](#). Inspectors returned on 20 February 2025 to complete the inspection.
- Inspectors spoke to senior leaders, including representatives from the board of trustees and governing body.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about pupils' learning in some other subjects.
- 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 met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, spoke to pupils with SEND and reviewed plans to support these pupils. They visited lessons to see how pupils with SEND are supported.
- Inspectors visited the early years provision to check safeguarding arrangements and discuss the learning with children and leaders.
- Inspectors observed behaviour at the start of the day, at lunchtimes and in lessons.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. They also considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including any free-text comments.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Michael Piper

Ofsted Inspector

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