

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

Rutland Street, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR4 6HY

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 January 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 acting head of school is Adele Toward. The school is part of the 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. There is also an acting executive headteacher, Marie Graham, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

This welcoming school has the very highest academic expectations of its pupils. By the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above the national average. Pupils love learning at St Joseph's. They are very well prepared for the demands of secondary education.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are highly respectful of each other, their teachers and the school. They carry out roles of responsibility, such as school parliamentarians, willingly and confidently. Pupils welcome visitors to the school politely and with interest.

The school provides a safe place of learning for children and their families. Diversity is celebrated throughout the school's curriculum. All pupils are treated equally. As one child said, 'We are all the same, we just have different skin colours, cultures and religions.'

Pupils benefit from the wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as glow stick dancing and musical theatre, the school provides. The exciting curriculum is enhanced through

educational visits in the locality and wider afield, including residential experiences in key stage 2.

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

Pupils make exceptional progress across the curriculum. The school's provision for early reading, writing and mathematics is of extremely high quality. Throughout the school, pupils' misconceptions are corrected quickly and sensitively. The school ensures that pupils retrieve, recall and use the knowledge they have learned regularly. The school's curriculum is adapted well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with SEND make excellent progress.

In the early years, teachers and teaching assistants model the correct use of language constantly. Children, including the very large proportion who speak English as an additional language, learn quickly from this emphasis on developing communication and language. They speak in whole sentences when working and playing in the indoor and outdoor learning environments. Teachers deliver the school's phonics programme expertly. The overwhelming majority of the school's pupils are confident readers by the end of Year 1. The school checks carefully how well pupils achieve. It takes incisive action in response to the areas for development that are identified by the checks. For example, a new reading programme was implemented at the beginning of the current academic year to boost pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 2 even further.

Pupils attend very well and on time. They appreciate the supportive environment, which they describe as 'loving and caring'. Pupils behave exceedingly well in lessons. They have first-class attitudes to learning. Pupils behave well at the less-structured times of the school day too. They know right from wrong. Friendship fixers and playground buddies help staff to ensure breaktimes are harmonious. Currently, members of the pupils' parliament are supporting the school to develop outdoor play and learning further.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development meets the needs of its pupils and the community it serves comprehensively. Issues such as child sexual exploitation, knife crime and substance abuse are woven, at an age-appropriate level, throughout the curriculum. Pupils' individual differences are celebrated and met. For example, the prayer room has dedicated spaces for pupils who are Hindus and Muslims to worship. Pupils understand and support the work of local, national and international charities. Their recent pen-pal letters to the elderly residents of a local care home were welcomed warmly. The curriculum for personal development is developing pupils' resilience and independence well.

Members of the local governing committee carry out their duties very competently. Leaders from the school, the diocese and the trust have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas that require development. The two-year-long review of the school's curriculum has been led expertly. Staff workload and well-being are considered fully before new initiatives are introduced. The vast majority of parents and carers are extremely happy with the provision for their children at St Joseph's. One, echoing the views of many wrote, 'St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Sunderland has had a

profoundly positive impact on my children's lives, nurturing their growth in morals, academics, spirituality and physical development.'

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Joseph's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Sunderland, the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2016.

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	148912
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10346792
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	Daniel O'Mahoney
CEO of the trust	Brendan Tapping
Executive headteacher	Marie Graham
Website	www.stjosephssunderland.school
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Sunderland opened on 1 February 2022. It is one of 30 schools in the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.
- The acting executive headteacher and the acting head of school have been in their posts for two years.
- The school is part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. Its predecessor school's most recent section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in May 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place within eight years of that date.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider of education.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.

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.
- Discussions were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders.
- The lead inspector spoke with members of the local governing committee, trustees, the trust's CEO and the trust's standards officer.
- A telephone discussion was held with a diocesan representative.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to some pupils about their learning.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account 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 evaluated a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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