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

Coppice Rise, North Yorkshire, Harrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 2DP

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 April 2025

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Gillian Delahay. This school is part of the Bishop Wheeler 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), Darren Beardsley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Helen Mills.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Joseph's is a warm and nurturing school where pupils thrive. The school's vision to 'let all that you do be done in love' is realised in the deeply respectful relationships that pupils have with one another. Pupils describe their school, rightly, as 'supportive and fun'. Pupils are enthusiastic and committed learners. They achieve highly and by the time they leave the school are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Relationships between pupils and staff are mutually respectful. Pupils are confident that their teachers take any concerns they have seriously.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. All staff have high expectations of pupils' conduct. Learning takes place without interruption and classrooms are an oasis of calm. Although bullying is rare, pupils are confident that issues are resolved quickly. Daily 'check-ins' by teachers encourage pupils to share how they are feeling. This helps them to feel happy and safe.

The school is highly ambitious for its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This starts in the early years where children's thinking is deepened through the 'star challenges' that children try as they learn through play. Pupils leave St Joseph's as well-rounded, caring individuals, confident and ready to embrace their future.

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

Amidst recent, significant staffing changes, effective leadership has ensured that the school has continued to improve its curriculum offer. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced a new science curriculum and reviewed the sequence of learning in many other curriculum subjects. The curriculum is well considered, broad, and motivates pupils to work hard. New learning builds carefully on what pupils have been taught before. The impact of this is shown in pupils' positive attitudes to their learning and their strong achievement by the end of key stage 2.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They apply the school's agreed teaching approaches with increasing consistency. This ensures pupils' thinking is suitably challenged through effective questioning and engaging activities. Teachers make timely checks on what pupils can remember. However, in some subjects, the information from these checks is not used to adapt future teaching. When this happens, the gaps in pupils' knowledge go unaddressed and misconceptions persist.

Reading remains a high priority for the school. Pupils who fall behind in their phonics get the help that they need to catch up. Nearly all pupils can read fluently by the end of key stage 1. A focus on phonics and language in the early years means that children get off to a strong start. Children quickly become confident in identifying letters and sounds. They enjoy labelling the pictures and models they create. Children use their newly learned sounds accurately in their writing. Staff inspire children with stories. They model new and exciting vocabulary to children as they learn through play. The early years is full of exciting books which children enjoy sharing together. Older pupils enjoy reading too, and develop a strong love of literature. They describe books as 'taking you to places you can't go in real life'.

The school identifies the needs of pupils with SEND well. Curriculum adaptations, such as additional staff support or changes to the tasks these pupils complete, help pupils with SEND to access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. However, sometimes the tasks that teachers give to pupils with SEND are not sufficiently matched to their needs. Consequently, some pupils complete work that does not help them to practise the skills that they need to develop the most.

The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum ensures pupils are well prepared for life beyond school. Pupils build their character and grow as active citizens through the many and varied democratically elected roles that they hold. As pupils get older, they learn about keeping themselves safe online. They know to keep personal details secure and to report their concerns to a trusted adult. Pupils talk with maturity about the impact that discriminatory behaviour has on the well-being of others. They have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils take pride in recording the acts of kindness their friends show towards one another in the school's 'book of kindness'.

The school is well led and managed. Staff appreciate the support in relation to their workload and well-being. They value the training that they have received and feel well

consulted on any changes that leaders make. Staff describe the school as a supportive place to work. Those with responsibility for governance are aligned in their vision and high aspirations for the school. They support and challenge the school to continue to improve the quality of education it offers.

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 checks that the school makes on pupils' learning are not used carefully enough to plan future lessons. This means that, at times, gaps in pupils' knowledge go unaddressed and pupils do not learn the curriculum as the school intends. The school should ensure that staff have the skills they need to use assessment information to ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are addressed.
- The tasks that the school sets for some pupils with SEND are not as well matched to their specific needs as they could be. This means that on occasions some pupils with SEND are not ready to complete some of the tasks that they are asked to complete. The school should ensure that the tasks given to pupils with SEND are carefully matched to their needs so that work is appropriately challenging and supportive of their next steps.

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 March 2020.

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	142159
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10379394
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	197
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Helen Mills
CEO of the trust	Darren Beardsley
Headteacher	Gillian Delahay
Website	www.stjosephsharrogate.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Leeds. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools with religious character took place in April 2022. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place within five academic years.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does not currently use any 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 met with the headteacher to discuss pupils' behaviour and attendance. The inspector also reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records.
- The inspector met with a selection of teaching and support staff to discuss workload and well-being.
- The inspector spoke with the deputy director of education for the Diocese of Leeds.
- The inspector held conversations with the chair of the trust, CEO and four members of the academy council, including the chair of the academy council.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons across four curriculum subjects, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during lunchtime.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted's parent survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Pearce, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector

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