

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Clare's RC Primary School

Trimdon Avenue, Acklam, Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire TS5 8RZ

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 April 2025

## Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Eddies. 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 Karen Siedle.

## What is it like to attend this school?

This is a caring and happy school where pupils' love of learning is nurtured. Over their time at St Clare's, pupils grow in confidence and develop a deep sense of respect for one another. Pupils enjoy the high academic challenges that the school's ambitious curriculum provides. Pupils are rightly proud of their work and their achievements. They have big dreams for their futures, which the school sets them up well to fulfil.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. All staff have consistently high expectations for pupils' conduct. Classrooms are calm, purposeful and orderly places. Commonly used behaviour strategies ensure that learning takes place without interruption. Bullying is incredibly rare but when it happens, staff take it seriously and quickly resolve it.

Pupils' relish the many opportunities that they have to show leadership and responsibility. Sports leaders enjoy organising activities at breaktime to help their friends stay active. Some pupils have been trained to support others with their mental well-being. They take this role seriously and are proud of the contribution they make to their school. School councillors bring the fundamental British value of democracy to life by encouraging pupils to vote for their choice of playground equipment. Pupils enjoy school. They are well cared for.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has developed a curriculum which is well constructed. The key knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn are clearly identified. Pupils are made aware of the most important curriculum content and vocabulary through 'knowledge notes' in their books. For example, Year 4 pupils understand why the Vikings invaded Britain. Key vocabulary, such as settlement and invasion, is well understood. Staff explain new information skilfully. Quick quizzes, at the start of lessons, help teachers to check on what pupils have remembered. However, sometimes the learning tasks that pupils complete do not give them sufficient opportunities to put their newly acquired knowledge into practice.

The school has prioritised reading. Staff are well trained and teach phonics effectively. This starts in the early years, where children quickly learn letters and the sounds that they represent. Children are given lots of opportunities to apply their newly learned sounds in their writing. Highly skilled staff encourage children to write lists or Easter cards for their friends. Pupils who need extra help to catch up receive timely and targeted support to get them back on track. Older pupils enjoy reading. The school has carefully chosen the books it shares with pupils to enthuse them and to introduce them to diversity and equality issues.

Children in the early years benefit from high-quality interactions with staff. This encourages children to make adventurous vocabulary choices as they learn through play. The early years is a warm and inviting space for children to learn in. Children play together confidently. Children were seen taking turns as they practised their number skills and counted out the ingredients for their 'spring potions'.

The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified. Many of these pupils benefit from appropriate curriculum adaptations, such as additional staff support or access to technology during lessons. However, for some pupils, the targets and strategies that the school has identified have not been reviewed or considered carefully enough. This results in some pupils with SEND accessing work that is too easy or that does not give them the opportunity to practise the skills that they need to develop.

The school follows up absences tenaciously. Its regular monitoring means that action is taken swiftly to address any decline in pupils' attendance. The school works with individual pupils and families to help overcome the barriers that they face to attendance.

Support for pupils' personal development and well-being is a strength of the school. Visitors, with many varied careers, inspire pupils to set their own ambitious goals for the future. First-aid training is provided to older pupils to give them the confidence to respond in an emergency and to help them to realise their responsibilities as active citizens. Older pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. Year 6 pupils speak with confidence about the importance of equality and diversity. Pupils know the negative impact of discriminatory behaviour and relate this to their recent studies of the Windrush period in British history.

Those with responsibility for governance have a detailed knowledge of the school and its performance. Local governors and the trust carry out effective work to check that the school is safe and the curriculum is impactful. Staff benefit from the learning opportunities that leaders provide. Recently introduced coaching and mentoring are developing staff's skills and knowledge further. Staff describe the school as 'a big family'.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The review of SEND support plans is not robust enough. Consequently, targets and support strategies for some pupils with SEND are not as well matched to their specific needs and to how these needs may change over time. This results in pupils sometimes accessing work that is too easy for them. The school should ensure that the support provided to pupils with SEND is reviewed more carefully, so that work is appropriately challenging and supportive of their next steps.
- In some wider curriculum subjects, the activities that pupils complete do not consistently support them to learn the important curriculum knowledge that the school has identified. When this happens, pupils do not remember what they have learned with enough clarity. The school should ensure that teaching activities are more closely matched to their intended learning outcomes so that pupils get more opportunities to practise what they have been taught.

## **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 February 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142370
<b>Local authority</b>	Middlesbrough
<b>Inspection number</b>	10346569
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	236
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Karen Siedle
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Hugh Hegarty
<b>Headteacher</b>	Elizabeth Eddies
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://stclares.npcat.org.uk">https://stclares.npcat.org.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	4 and 5 February 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Middlesbrough. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools with a religious character took place in October 2023. 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 and the deputy headteacher for the school. The inspector also met with a range of teaching and support staff to discuss workload and well-being.
- The inspector met with the assistant CEO, the primary standards officer, the vice-chair of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body, including the chair.
- The inspector met with the deputy director of education for the Diocese of Middlesbrough.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- 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 reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent survey, Ofsted Parent View, and considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Pearce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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