

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Joseph's Catholic Academy, Goldenhill

Mobberley Road, Goldenhill, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 5RN

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 May 2025

Outcome

St Joseph's Catholic Academy, Goldenhill has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Laura Hamilton. This school is part of The Newman Catholic Collegiate, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Ian Beardmore, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Gillian Meller.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are rightly proud of their school and the many opportunities they experience. Warm, supportive relationships feature throughout the school. These help pupils to feel happy and safe in school. Pupils know that they always have someone to talk to and that staff will help them with any problems they have.

Staff know pupils well and put pupils' best interests at the heart of all they do. The school has high expectations for pupils. They rise to these and typically achieve well.

Pupils behave well. They demonstrate positive and respectful behaviour. Children in the early years learn good routines that prepare them well for their next steps. Older pupils are positive role models. They take on leadership responsibilities, such as 'play leaders' and being part of the 'world family team', which plans the school's community and charity work.

Pupils benefit from many enrichment opportunities. They enjoy many trips to places of interest that help them to understand the world around them and bring learning to life. For example, pupils visit different places of worship and visit a range of museums linked to their learning. There are many extra-curricular clubs on offer to nurture talents and interests. There is something for everyone, and many pupils take part.

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

Pupils develop a love of reading at this school. They read widely and often, both in and out of school. In the early years, children respond to a range of songs, stories and rhymes. This helps them to develop their language and communication skills. Ongoing staff development supports staff to teach early reading expertly. Staff routinely check pupils' understanding and quickly spot if anyone is struggling to learn to read. When this is the case, pupils receive the well-planned support they need to catch up quickly. This means that most pupils learn to read with fluency and accuracy.

The school has prioritised improving handwriting. Staff have high expectations for pupils to write clearly and legibly. In the younger years, staff model how to write each new sound pupils learn effectively. Younger pupils have regular opportunities to practise and refine their handwriting techniques. This prepares them well as they move into key stage 2.

The wider curriculum is broad and ambitious. It identifies the key knowledge and skills that pupils need to know and remember. However, in a small minority of subjects, teaching does not consistently build on what pupils already know well. The school does not check what pupils know and remember to enable them to make links between concepts well enough. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their learning and struggle to remember what they have learned.

The school is very inclusive. The school caters very well for the many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The trust plays an important role in ensuring that the school has the necessary resources to provide highly effective support for pupils with SEND. The school identifies pupils' individual needs quickly. Pupils with SEND play a full part in the wider life of the school, enjoying many enrichment activities alongside their peers.

The programme for enrichment and personal development is a strength of the school. Pupils speak with confidence about a range of important issues that help them to be safe, healthy and well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of fundamental British values. They can relate these to their lives, such as following the school's rules and voting for the school council representatives.

Pupils model the school's values of 'aspiration, resilience, compassion and opportunity'. They are friendly, polite and courteous. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is calm and respectful.

The school has taken highly effective action to address the low levels of attendance in previous years. Staff are relentless in their pursuit to ensure high attendance for all. Staff swiftly identify pupils who need extra support to attend regularly. They identify any barriers and provide highly effective support through their extensive pastoral work. As a result, pupils attend well.

Leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the school and have identified the right areas to focus on to further improve. Trust and school leaders have a genuine understanding of the local community. Parents and carers are highly positive about the relationships staff have with pupils. The trust supports important professional networks to support staff development. Staff are extremely positive about working at the school. They feel that workload and well-being are always at the forefront of any decisions made, and they feel valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small minority of subjects, teaching does not consistently build on what pupils already know. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and struggle to recall key knowledge confidently. The school should ensure that teachers check pupils' prior learning and support pupils to make links between concepts securely so that they know and remember more.

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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in April 2015.

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	140148
Local authority	Stoke-on-Trent
Inspection number	10344024
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	237
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Gillian Meller
CEO of the trust	Ian Beardmore
Principal	Laura Hamilton
Website	www.stjosephscatholicacademy.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 October 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of The Newman Catholic Collegiate.
- The school has a Catholic religious ethos and is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in September 2021. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for its pupils.
- The school runs a pre-school catering for two-year-olds.

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.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the principal and other school leaders. The inspector also met with directors and representatives from the local academy committee.
- The inspector talked to a representative from the archdiocese.
- 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 spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- The inspector met with groups of staff and pupils and considered the opinions expressed through the staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector met some parents at the end of the school day and had regard to the views expressed through Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Cathy Young, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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