

**External Review of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Pontefract.**  
**Review Date(s): 10th / 11th July 2023**  
**Review Commissioned by: Department for Education**  
**Review Completed by: Tom Fay (Ofsted/Pontefract Academies Trust)**

### **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to this caring and supportive school. They have warm relationships with staff and say that they feel happy and safe. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Pupils say that bullying is rare and when it occurs that it is dealt with swiftly. Positive behaviour is praised in classes and pupils enjoy the range of rewards and recognition they receive for following the school rules.

Pupils behave well in lessons and during playtimes. Low level disruption in lessons is almost non-existent. Pupils are courteous and confident when spoken to and enjoy sharing their work and experiences with visitors. Pupils understand the school values of service, respect, and tolerance. They explicitly understand these virtues both in and out of lessons and how they apply in Britain's multicultural and diverse society. One pupil's quote summed up the feelings of many by saying, "it is absolutely OK to be different in today's day and age".

Pupils participate in a range of extra-curricular activities, including football, choir, and art. They are proud to contribute to their community through charitable events and by making donations to local food banks. Leaders need to ensure that the offer of extracurricular activities and clubs is fully meeting the needs, talents and interests of the pupils in the school.

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

Leaders have prioritised reading. The school's phonics programme is well planned and sequenced. Any pupil who falls behind is well supported. The delivery of the scheme, for the most part, is consistent and pupils enjoy reading the carefully chosen books that match their ability. Staff are well trained to support pupils' development of reading and as such pupils achieve well. Leaders need to consider how pupils who can read fluently are being challenged to extend their comprehension, vocabulary and inference to secure the wider reading skills they need to navigate successfully through the wider curriculum.

Plans are in place to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These plans ensure that pupils in lessons engage with learning content and make progress in line with their abilities. Teachers deliver lessons that engage all learners with clear end points and success criteria.

Behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers, and each other, to get the most out of the activities they complete. Classrooms are calm, orderly places where learning is not disturbed. Pupils like to 'get on with' their learning activities but in a minority of lessons to the detriment of the progress they make. For example, in some art lessons a lack of clarity about how to make their digital collage better meant that some pupils did not complete it to the standard of their peers. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and as such, attendance is positive.

Children in the early years enjoy the activities that are provided. They benefit from knowledgeable staff that care about them. Children are confident, articulate and used to routines that support their learning. The curriculum in this area is well planned and sequenced so the children make a seamless transition into year 1. Achievements are recognised and celebrated. Children enjoy the lessons on the seaside and the resources provided to them to explore learning in this topic. Leaders should consider how to fully immerse the children in all aspects of the seaside to meet the ambitious curriculum plans; for example, consider the

sounds of the seaside, more challenging vocabulary, the use of seafood in the kitchen area and the use of the seaside pictures to consolidate core learning.

There is a respectful culture in the school. Pupils, including those in the early years and Key Stages 1 and 2, know the importance of treating everyone the same. They learn about different faiths and religions. They talk knowledgeably about the rule of law and mutual respect. Leaders have thought about the personal development curriculum but there are aspects of the content that are not strategically delivered or monitored. This means that leaders cannot be sure that the school's offer is working as well as it should. For example, pupils do not have detailed knowledge about healthy eating, or sustainable living. In addition, the take up and participation rates to extracurricular activities are low. Leaders are aware of this and are actively addressing it for the next academic year.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained to identify and support pupils at risk of harm. Leaders engage effectively with external agencies, to secure appropriate support when needed. Pupils say that they feel safe and well looked after in school. Leaders use the curriculum and a range of visitors to help pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, including how to manage risks when online. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern about their safety. There is further work to be done to ensure that pupils, and staff, understand the local contextual safeguarding risks. Leaders should ensure that these are sensitively threaded through the curriculum and taught to the pupils in an age-appropriate manner.

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

Leaders have not clearly identified all the important knowledge that pupils need to know as part of their SMSC and personal development curriculum. Consequently, pupils do not learn detailed knowledge about important aspects such as healthy eating and sustainable living from both an environmental and financial perspective. Leaders should ensure that this content is well-sequenced and clearly defined in curriculum content to enable pupils to develop this important knowledge over time. In addition, they should ensure that staff are suitably knowledgeable and skilled to deliver these aspects of the personal development curriculum with confidence.

Leaders have not fully considered the clubs and events that they offer to ensure that a significant number of pupils attend activities that develop their talents and interests. Pupils say they would stay after school for clubs if the right activities were provided to inspire them. Leaders need to consider their extracurricular offer and monitor attendance rates over time to evaluate impact.

Leaders need to continue to monitor the impact of the curriculum, especially relating to the level of challenge in each subject and how staff check pupils' understanding of wider topic concepts. Pupils are knowledgeable, but with better formative assessment strategies they could develop deeper understanding of the content that they are being taught. Leaders need to work with staff to ensure they are confident in how to consolidate and develop pupils' knowledge and skills.

**End.**

