

Inspection of St John Henry Newman Catholic VA Primary School

Aqua Drive, Hampton Water, Peterborough PE7 8QL

Inspection dates:	11 and 12 March 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

At St John Henry Newman, pupils thrive in an exceptionally nurturing environment that is deeply rooted in Catholic values. A strong sense of community runs through the school. This is built through shared experiences such as collective worship and moments of reflection. From the start, pupils learn to show kindness, compassion and respect. They are thoughtful about others' needs and support one another with genuine care.

Pupils benefit from an extremely ambitious and engaging curriculum. They love their lessons and speak enthusiastically about what they are learning. In the early years, children develop very high levels of independence. For example, in Reception, children use visual prompts to independently write about how Jesus felt during his time in the desert. Pupils take pride in their exceptional achievements and are unwaveringly focused on their work, eager to do their best.

Pupils rise to meet the very high expectations that the school sets for their behaviour. Their conduct is exemplary, both in lessons and during playtime. Pupils are incredibly polite and friendly. They help each other to do well. Pupils celebrate each other's successes and take joy in seeing their friends achieve highly.

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

The school has designed a challenging curriculum that outlines clearly the skills and knowledge that pupils will learn from Reception onwards. The curriculum is enriched regularly with interesting visits, such as to museums or the theatre, to deepen pupils' enjoyment and understanding of different subjects.

Teachers are highly skilled at supporting pupils to make excellent progress through the curriculum. They explain new information clearly and ask pupils appropriate questions frequently to extend their thinking or to ensure they have understood the learning. Teachers adapt the learning to expertly meet the needs of all pupils in their class. They have a very secure understanding of how to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, they use symbols and pictures to ensure pupils can learn the curriculum and build independence. As a result of a range of effective strategies, pupils achieve very well.

A small number of pupils with SEND receive expert support in 'The Nest' to help them thrive and prepare for the next stage of their education. Skilled staff provide tailored support that meets their individual needs, ensuring they make strong progress from their starting points.

The school develops pupils to be fluent and enthusiastic readers exceptionally well. Staff receive regular, high-quality training to ensure they are experts at delivering the reading programme with confidence. From Reception, pupils benefit from consistently strong phonics sessions. This ensures they quickly gain the skills and

knowledge they need to read fluently. Any pupil who needs extra help is quickly given appropriate support to build their reading skills. Pupils regularly use inviting, well-stocked book corners as well as the school library. Pupils love reading and enjoy a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books.

The school frequently admits pupils at non-standard points in the year. New starters settle incredibly quickly. This is because clear routines and high expectations are so well embedded into the school culture. Staff model consistently how pupils should behave, both towards others and with their learning. The school teaches pupils to develop their independence precisely. As a result, pupils are confident in attempting difficult work. Pupils help each other to succeed. They are warm and friendly, regularly thanking others for kind deeds. This helps the school be a wonderful place to learn and make friends.

The school's approach to developing pupils' character is exceptional. It provides strong spiritual guidance rooted in Catholic values. This nurtures pupils' moral development. The school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to build their skills and interests. They keep fit and build team skills during tag rugby. Their leadership skills are honed through pioneering cadets. Cooking, music lessons, performing arts and Spanish are exciting and popular. A quarter of the pupils attend choir. Pupil leadership groups, such as the librarians and the 'mini-Vinnies', play an active role in school life. As well as developing individuals' skills, these experiences help to create the strong and cohesive school community.

Leaders, including governors, ensure the school excels in all areas through highly effective collaboration. Leaders work closely with the local authority and the diocese to ensure that pupils benefit from ongoing, high-quality support. Leaders' meticulous attention to detail ensures pupils benefit consistently from excellent experience. Parents, carers and staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	149159
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10378602
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	369
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lucy White
Headteacher	Mark Cooper
Website	www.st-johnhenrynewman.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a Christian religious character, which means it is subject to section 48 inspections. The school opened in September 2022 and has not yet had its first section 48 inspection, which should happen within eight years of the school opening.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised science and history curriculum documents, met with subject leaders and reviewed a sample of books in these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 lead inspector met with those responsible for governance, including the chair of governors. She also reviewed documentation relating to governance and school improvement.
- The lead inspector spoke to representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors reviewed attendance records, held discussions with leaders about pupil behaviour and observed pupils' behaviour around the site.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss the school's approach to pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for early years and reviewed documentation for this area.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator and reviewed plans relating to supporting pupils with SEND.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils from different years to hear their views about school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's parent survey, Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Bessie Owen, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jess Pearce	Ofsted Inspector
Tom Sparks	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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