

# Inspection of a good school: St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School

Headlam Street, Byker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE6 2JX

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Inspection dates:

27 and 28 September 2023

## Outcome

St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

The executive headteacher of this school is Paul Brown. This school is part of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

## What is it like to attend this school?

There is a warm and caring welcome when you walk through the door of St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School. Leaders, staff and stakeholders have high expectations for all of the school community. Pupils rise to these high ambitions and achieve well.

Behaviour across school is calm and focused. Pupils have strong relationships with staff. Pupils' attitudes to school are positive. Their attitudes match the school motto of 'Kindness, tolerance, respect'. Carefully planned support for pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), helps pupils access the broad curriculum that has been planned. This is a truly inclusive school.

Pupils feel safe in school. They talk with enthusiasm about how staff and leaders make sure they do well. Leaders make sure that pupils access a wide range of educational experiences during their time in school. These opportunities are planned out to meet the individual needs of the pupils. The offer beyond the classroom is helping pupils get ready for their next steps in life. Through visits and special events, such as the celebration of languages day, pupils connect their new learning with existing knowledge. Pupils are proud to have responsible roles in school, such as being a buddy to new pupils in Reception or a key stage 1 playground leader.

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

Leaders have carefully planned out the school's curriculum. It is clear what the school wants pupils to know and remember over time. This includes the skills and knowledge that are important. Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils. In reading, pupils benefit from clear and consistent phonics lessons. Leaders ensure these lessons have the same

structure. Pupils use the sounds they know well when they read in class. Children in Reception make a prompt start to learning phonics. The books pupils read across school are thoughtfully chosen. In Nursery, children listen to and enjoy books that match their curriculum. Pupils at the earliest stages of reading use the sounds they know to read previously unknown words. Staff support them well to use these sounds effectively. However, the books that pupils read to practise their phonics do not help them to become fluent readers. These books contain too many unknown words that pupils have to sound out.

The curriculum for mathematics is also carefully mapped out. It starts in early years and builds all the way through school. In early years, children learn about number in many different ways. Staff build key mathematical language into their work with children. In key stages 1 and 2, pupils talk confidently about the ways they revisit their previous learning daily. Pupils enjoy the regular opportunities they have to explain their mathematical understanding. Assessment is used to pick up any gaps that pupils have in their knowledge. In other subjects, such as history, the important knowledge and skills that leaders want pupils to know, remember and use are clear. The activities the school chooses to help pupils remember key knowledge help some pupils remember more. Other pupils remember the activities they have completed rather than the key knowledge the school has planned for.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. The school identifies pupils' needs quickly. Precise support is put in place so that pupils with SEND do well. The school engages well with a range of professionals to understand and support pupils with SEND effectively.

Leaders, staff and stakeholders know the school community exceptionally well. Leaders prioritise a curriculum offer to develop pupils' understanding beyond the subject lessons they have. Pupils explain the dangers of vaping, unhealthy relationships and how to keep safe in the community with maturity. Pupils value the many ways in which adults in school provide them with support, such as making regular checks on their well-being. Pupils show responsibility in many different ways. They are proud to be on the school council, for example. Careers events and connections with universities add to the considered approach that leaders take to broadening pupils' experiences.

Pupils' pride extends to their attitudes to school. Behaviour across school is focused. Pupils understand the rules, rewards and consequences. Some pupils need help to make good choices. The school supports them well to meet the high expectations leaders have set. Pupils know staff care for them.

Staff are proud to work at the school. Leaders consider their well-being and their workload when planning school development. The school ensures that staff access an appropriate range of training. This includes teachers at the early stages of their careers. Stakeholders know the school well. They share the ambitions that leaders have set. Stakeholders provide the right balance of challenge and support. They work with leaders and ensure the school equips pupils for their next stage of education.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some pupils at the earliest stages of learning to read do not have books that are well matched to the sounds they know. These pupils are not able to read with fluency and automaticity using the sounds they know. The school must ensure that books are well matched to the sounds that pupils know so that pupils build fluency and automaticity when reading.
- The implementation of the curriculum in some wider curriculum subjects does not fully match the ambition of the planned curriculums. There is variability in the pedagogical choices made, meaning pupils do not remember consistently the key knowledge they need to know. The school must ensure that staff receive appropriate training to ensure the intention of the curriculum is fully realised.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 predecessor school, St Lawrence's RC Primary School, to be good in December 2017.

### 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>	148272
<b>Local authority</b>	Newcastle upon Tyne
<b>Inspection number</b>	10269159
<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>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Harrison
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Anita Bath
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Brown
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stlawrencesprimary.org.uk">www.stlawrencesprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date(s) of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in December 2020. When its predecessor school, St Lawrence's RC Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is a Roman Catholic faith primary school. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in March 2018. The school is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- The school is part of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust. It opened in December 2020.
- The school uses one alternative education provider.
- The school shares an executive headteacher with one other primary school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website, as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector listened to pupils at the early stages of reading with a familiar adult. The inspector also looked at pupils' engagement with languages by visiting a 'languages day' event.
- 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 gathered the views of parents informally in person and formally through their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with staff. Pupils' views were considered through a pupil survey and through meetings with pupils.
- The inspector spoke with representatives from the local governing body, the trust, including trustees and the chief executive officer, and the diocese.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classes, during breaktimes and at lunchtime.

### **Inspection team**

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
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E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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