

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: All Saints' Catholic Primary School, Lanchester

Kitswell Road, Lanchester, Durham DH7 0JG

Inspection dates:

1 and 2 April 2025

Outcome

All Saints' Catholic Primary School, Lanchester has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Frances Stephenson. The school is part of Bishop Wilkinson 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 (CEO), Nick Hurn, OBE and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Cllr Martin Gannon.

What is it like to attend this school?

All Saints' Catholic Primary School is a happy and inclusive place, where pupils thrive. The care and support provided by all staff helps pupils to become confident, resilient, young people. The school's mission statement, 'aspire not to have more but to be more', is realised through pupils' hard work and positive attitudes to their learning.

Relationships between staff and pupils are mutually respectful. Pupils feel safe because they know how much adults care about them. Pupils hold many positions of responsibility. House captains have helped leaders to review the processes in school which help to keep them safe. Other pupils work as 'E-Cadets' to support their friends to use the internet responsibly. Pupils feel empowered to report any concerns they have to adults. They are confident that issues are resolved.

Pupils behave well. Classrooms are an oasis of calm where pupils work hard. Pupils are rightly proud of the work they produce. The school's curriculum is extremely ambitious. Pupils are immersed in a curriculum that is rich in language and interesting facts. Through stories, teachers captivate pupils' interests and engage them in their learning. Pupils' vocabulary grows quickly, and their language choices become more ambitious as they get older.

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

The school is aspirational for all its pupils. The needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. Teachers adjust the curriculum to ensure that it is fully accessible for pupils with SEND. The strategies teachers use are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

Staff continue to benefit from trust-wide training and support. This has developed the skills and knowledge they need to teach the curriculum well. During lessons, teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning. They use this information to revisit pupils' misunderstandings and ensure pupils are secure before they move on. Teachers check the understanding of pupils who may need additional support closely. They benefit from targeted questions and extra help to address gaps in their learning. Children in the early years learn in a nurturing, well-resourced environment. Highly skilled practitioners model the language and behaviours they expect from the children. The activities that teachers provide support children's learning well.

In most subjects, teachers use the school's agreed teaching approaches effectively. They provide lots of opportunities for pupils to work together, collaboratively. New vocabulary is carefully explained and repeated so that pupils understand and remember it. However, in a minority of wider curriculum areas, these approaches are less consistent. Where this is the case, pupils remember less of the vocabulary and curriculum knowledge they have been taught.

Reading is a high priority for the school. Teachers ensure that pupils are given lots of opportunities to practise their newly learned sounds and letters. When this is not the case, pupils get the help they need to catch up. Most pupils become fluent, confident readers by the end of key stage 1. Pupils enjoy the time in the day when their teacher reads to them. The English curriculum immerses pupils in high-quality texts. This helps to broaden pupils' knowledge of different authors and genres and encourages them to read widely and often.

Pupils experience many opportunities that prepare them well for life in modern Britain. Visits to museums, places of local historical significance and participation in residential trips broaden pupils' understanding of the world beyond Lanchester. Older pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships, describing tolerance and respect as key ingredients to successful friendships. Visits from the police educate pupils about important themes, such as personal safety, the age of criminal responsibility and the dangers of drugs. Pupils are deeply respectful of difference and their own uniqueness. One pupil captured the views of many by explaining, 'Everyone is a book still being written; you can't judge them until it's finished.'

Leaders are tenacious and proportionate in following up pupil absences. Daily checks mean that action is taken quickly to address any decline in pupils' attendance. The school works with individual pupils and families to help overcome the barriers they face to attendance. As a result, attendance is high, and pupils are able to benefit from the positive education and care that the school provides.

Those responsible for governance ensure that the school's work is making a positive difference to pupils' learning and well-being. Trust reports and visits give governors the information they need to check the school's work and make impactful decisions. All leaders know the school well. Staff morale is high. Workload and well-being are prioritised when making changes. Staff describe the school as a large, supportive and ambitious family.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some curriculum subjects, vocabulary is not prioritised or clarified to the same extent as it is in others. As a result, pupils do not remember key curriculum knowledge or vocabulary as well as they could. The school should ensure that its agreed teaching approaches are used with consistency so that pupils remember more of the important learning that 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 predecessor school, All Saints' Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2012.

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	148610
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10346770
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	CLlr Martin Gannon
CEO of the trust	Nick Hurn OBE
Headteacher	Frances Stephenson
Website	https://allsaintslanchester.bwcet.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- All Saints' Catholic Primary School, Lanchester converted to become an academy school in May 2022. When its predecessor school, All Saints' Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The school joined Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust in June 2022.
- The school is a Catholic school in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools with religious character took place in November 2024. 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.
- In September 2022, the school opened nursery provision for three-year-old children.

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 this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher to discuss pupils' behaviour and attendance. The inspector also reviewed the school's behaviour and attendance records.
- The inspector met with a selection of teaching and support staff to discuss workload and well-being.
- The inspector spoke with the director of education for the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- The inspector had a conversation with the vice-chair of the trust, the trust senior director of performance and standards and three members of the local governance committee, including the chair.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons across four curriculum subjects, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during lunchtime.
- 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 considered responses to Ofsted's parent survey, Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Chris Pearce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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