

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Francis Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy

Myers Lane, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD2 4ES

Inspection dates:

3 and 4 December 2024

Outcome

St Francis Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

This school is part of Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy 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), Christopher Hanson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Mark Dalton.

What is it like to attend this school?

At St Francis Catholic Primary School, staff and pupils cherish learning. This is a school where every pupil matters. Children from early years to Year 6 explore different subjects. They ask questions and grow in confidence.

The classrooms buzz with energy. Teachers make lessons fun and challenging. Staff set high expectations. Pupils meet them in their learning and interactions. At St Francis, learning is about not remembering facts. It is about understanding the process of deep thinking.

Pupils feel a strong sense of safety here. They have many ways to share their thoughts with trusted staff who are ready to listen. The school has clubs and leadership opportunities. Pupils can develop their talents. For example, they can be digital leaders or join the school council.

Behaviour is calm and respectful. Pupils and staff help each other make good choices. Bullying is rare, and when it occurs, staff deal with it.

The school goes beyond teaching subjects. It helps pupils learn values such as kindness and respect. It shows them how to be good citizens. Every child gets support to help them shine.

The school is a happy, supportive place where pupils can dream big and work towards those dreams.

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

The school has a strong curriculum that helps pupils learn very well. Teachers have a deep understanding of their subjects. They check what pupils know and fix misunderstandings in most subjects. They do this without delay. At times, in a few subjects, such as personal, social and health education (PSHE), checks on pupils' understanding are not as robust. Lessons extend beyond basic knowledge and encourage pupils to engage in deep thinking. Teachers ask questions that make pupils explain complicated ideas. For example, in science, pupils talk about advanced topics with confidence.

The school provides thorough support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff use information to understand each pupil's learning needs. They create learning plans that help pupils access the lessons. Teachers adapt their teaching so all pupils can join in and do well. The school works hard to include pupils in their learning. For example, adults give children options and choices in the early years. This helps them build confidence and communication skills. Also, in the early years, the children focus for long periods on the different areas of the provision.

The school teaches reading regularly. It uses a careful method to teach children letter sounds. Staff help struggling pupils. Pupils learn to break down words and put them back together. The school identifies pupils who need to catch up without delay. It then gives them exceptional help to catch up with their classmates. This helps ensure that the pupils enjoy the library's many resources.

The school maintains a calm and focused learning environment. Staff have clear rules that all pupils understand. Lessons are peaceful, with pupils listening and working well. When minor disruptions happen, teachers address them with efficiency and professionalism. Pupils show good social skills and respect for each other. They have chances to be leaders and help build a positive school community.

The school prepares pupils to be good citizens. It teaches pupils about important values such as respect and democracy. Pupils learn to understand different perspectives and talk about complex topics. They get chances to lead in sports, art and digital areas. The school helps pupils develop confidence and care for others.

The school focuses on developing pupils' character. It teaches pupils about kindness, strength, honesty and curiosity. Pupils learn about different family types and how to have good relationships.

Pupils get many chances to develop their interests and talents. They join school clubs, become sports and art ambassadors and participate in environmental projects. The school helps pupils understand equality and respect for different people.

The school helps pupils understand fundamental British values. Through school elections, pupils learn about democracy. They discuss different perspectives and learn to listen to each other. The school teaches about protected characteristics and helps pupils understand diverse family structures. Pupils develop their emotional intelligence. They understand the importance of working with others in a supportive and caring manner.

The school supports staff well-being. It is a friendly workplace where staff feel cared for and have chances to learn and grow in their jobs. Leaders are successful in creating a supportive learning environment for staff and pupils.

Governors play an active role in the school. They participate in curriculum discussions and ensure the school runs well. Governors use their knowledge to challenge decisions, which helps the school improve.

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 number of subjects, the school's approach to checking what pupils know is not fully embedded, such as PSHE. As a result, some new content may be introduced without pupils having a secure prior understanding of the content taught. This limits pupils' ability to connect learning over time. The school should ensure that checking for pupils' understanding is consistently aligned with the ideas and concepts they have identified in their curriculum.

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. The predecessor 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 predecessor school, St Francis Catholic Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in January 2018.

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	147922
Local authority	Bradford
Inspection number	10346751
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	229
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Mark Dalton
CEO of the trust	Chris Hanson
Headteacher	Andrea Haines
Website	fra.bcwcat.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust in May 2020.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school was last inspected in February 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders and spoke to staff.
- The inspector also met with representatives of the local academy council, the trust's CEO, two trustees and a representative of the Diocese of Leeds.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They also spoke to some subject leaders.
- 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' interest first.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for pupils and staff. He also reviewed the responses to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector also considered the views of pupils from meetings with groups of pupils from across the school. He also spoke to pupils informally about the school.

Inspection team

Richard Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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