

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Mary's Catholic Primary School, North Shields

Farringdon Road, Cullercoats, North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE30 3EY

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Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

## Outcome

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, North Shields has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Colette Bland. 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 (CEO), Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this caring and inclusive school. Parents comment positively about the 'family feel' of the school and how it is part of the local community. Pupils' behaviour reflects one of the school's key teachings of 'treat each other as you want to be treated'. Pupils learn about a range of values, including tolerance and empathy. This helps the school to be a place where everyone is welcome.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Published outcomes show that pupils achieve well in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

Pupils feel safe at the school. They know they have trusted adults to report any worries to. Pupils are confident that the staff care and will follow up on these concerns. Children in the early years learn how to interact positively with each other through activities that encourage sharing and turn taking.

Pupils develop their talents and interests by attending the range of extra-curricular clubs that are on offer. Pupils take on leadership roles, for example as Mini Vinnies, eco warriors or 'special friend' mentors. These opportunities help to develop a sense of community across the school.

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

The school has developed a curriculum that is ambitious and meets the breadth of the national curriculum. It is well considered and well sequenced. Pupils' knowledge builds over time from the early years until the end of Year 6. Teachers have sound subject knowledge. They select engaging activities to deliver the curriculum. As a result, pupils have a strong understanding of the things that they have been taught. Teachers regularly check pupils' knowledge and address misconceptions. However, sometimes they do not choose the best activities to do this within the lesson, which means some gaps in pupils' knowledge are not identified or addressed in a timely manner.

Reading is at the heart of the school. In daily reading lessons, pupils read carefully chosen books that improve their knowledge of the wider curriculum. Trips to the theatre enhance pupils' enthusiasm for literature. Pupils thoroughly enjoy reading at St Mary's. In Reception and Year 1, children access daily phonics lessons. Staff deliver these lessons consistently well and in line with the school's chosen phonics scheme. This helps pupils at the early stages of learning to read to develop confidence and fluency. The school accurately identifies pupils who are struggling to read. Highly effective support ensures that these pupils quickly catch up with their peers.

The school quickly identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils receive exceptional support. Staff know the pupils extremely well. This enables them to provide support and adaptations so that most pupils with SEND access the full curriculum. Pupils with SEND achieve well at the school.

In the early years, the school places a sharp focus on helping children to develop early writing skills, such as pencil grip and drawing basic shapes. Staff carefully design activities to extend pupils' understanding of the books that they are reading. Equal care is given to other areas of the curriculum, such as the development of children's gross motor skills. This ensures that children in the early years are well prepared for key stage 1.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are polite and respectful of each other and staff. They display a real enthusiasm for learning. Attendance at the school is high. Pupils enjoy coming to school. If any pupil falls below expected levels of attendance, the school provides effective support to help them attend more often.

The provision for pupils' personal development is a strength of the school. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is constructed and delivered with the same precision as other areas of the curriculum. Pupils take part in themed weeks, such as 'healthy week' and 'big art week'. During big art week pupils learn about the art and culture of different countries and present their work to their parents. This helps to develop pupils' confidence and gives them a greater understanding of the world around them. A variety of trips and visits help bring the curriculum to life. For example, during their history unit of work, pupils in Year 2 explore the origins of the great fire of Newcastle and Gateshead.

The local governing committee are skilled. This enables them to support and challenge school leaders appropriately. Trustees maintain a strong oversight of the school. Leaders are mindful of staff workload. They care about the staff and their well-being. Staff feel supported and valued. They thoroughly enjoy working here. The school engages positively with parents, who value the education that the school provides for their children.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Sometimes, teachers do not choose the best activities to check on pupils' learning. As a result, gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified and addressed as quickly as they could be, which may hinder their achievement. To further enhance the quality of education, the school should ensure that teachers consistently select the most effective methods to identify any gaps in pupils' learning.

## **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, St Marys Roman Catholic Primary School Aided, to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

## 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>             | 148450                                                               |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | North Tyneside                                                       |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10346763                                                             |
| <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> | 198                                                                  |
| <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>                         | Colette Bland                                                        |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.stmarysonline.co.uk">www.stmarysonline.co.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | Not previously inspected                                             |

## Information about this school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary School, North Shields joined Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust in August 2021.
- This Catholic school is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in March 2019.
- The school provides a breakfast and an after-school club for its pupils.
- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher and other senior staff. He also met with the CEO of the trust and the chair of trustees.
- The inspector met with the representatives of the local governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 spoke with several groups of pupils and observed their behaviour at breaktime and lunchtime.
- The inspector met with groups of staff and also considered the views expressed through the staff survey.
- The inspector took account of the views of parents expressed through Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Chris Sergeant, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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