

Inspection of St Stephen's Catholic Primary School and Nursery, A Voluntary Academy

Gargrave Road, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 1PJ

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 February 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

St Stephen's Catholic Primary Academy is a welcoming and happy place to learn. The school's motto, 'learning, living and loving one another in God's name', is at the heart of school life. Pupils told us that their school is 'amazing'. They said teachers help them to have fun in their lessons.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged. All pupils' achievements are celebrated. The strong nurturing ethos helps pupils to develop confidence and belief in their own abilities.

Staff set a strong example of kindness and care. As a result, pupils feel safe and are kind and respectful towards each other. On the very rare occasions that bullying or name-calling happens, it is dealt with effectively. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Pupils play happily together at breaktimes. They enjoy the activities that are provided for them.

Pupils are able to take part in a wide range of activities. These include dance and drama, a range of sports and educational visits. Staff encourage pupils to be active. Pupils want to get to school on time every day so they can join in the active trail before they start lessons.

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

New leaders have brought about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The governing body and trust have worked closely with leaders to bring this about. They have provided high-quality training opportunities. New subject leaders and teachers have been coached and supported. This has had a positive impact on the achievement of pupils.

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that is sequenced and designed to help pupils build on what they already know. Subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They support less experienced colleagues well. As a result, teachers are developing their subject knowledge and confidence in teaching all subjects. This means that pupils enjoy their lessons and remember more of what they have learned. For example, inspectors noted that in physical education (PE), pupils build on their racquet skills to develop a backhand stroke effectively. Leaders know there is more work to do to ensure that all teachers have good knowledge of all the curriculum subjects.

Teachers make sure that pupils develop a love of reading from the moment they start school. Year 6 pupils read to their 'buddies' in Reception and join them for story time at the beginning of the year. Children start to match phonics sounds to letters as soon as they enter Reception. Most of them are able to use these sounds to read simple words and sentences. Reading books match the sounds that pupils already know. This helps pupils to enjoy reading with confidence. This is especially

important for the pupils who need to catch up.

Teachers adapt the curriculum in mathematics to make sure it meets the needs of pupils. Lessons are structured to help pupils build on their prior knowledge. Daily fluency sessions help pupils to remember important number facts. As a result, they tackle problems confidently. Teachers regularly check what pupils know so they can plan follow up sessions for the next day. Pupils appreciate this and say it helps them to keep up. They enjoy mathematics, especially when work is more challenging.

Teachers use accurate assessment to identify gaps in learning. However, sometimes the targets that they set for pupils with SEND lack precise detail. This means that pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.

In the early years, children quickly pick up routines and follow rules. They make the most of the vibrant indoor and outdoor learning environment. Leaders have planned the curriculum to ensure that children are ready for Year 1. There is an emphasis on developing vocabulary and early subject knowledge. For example, some children were seen to be enjoying their discussion about weather conditions in the Arctic.

Pupils behave well and are enthusiastic about their learning. They are kind and show respect to others. They care for others in the wider world through being involved with the school's charitable work. The 'Minnie Vinnies' take pride in leading events to raise money for chosen causes.

Leaders provide a broad range of opportunities and experiences for pupils. These include leadership roles, after school clubs, visits and visitors. In Year 6, they enjoy a residential trip to an outdoor activity centre. Pupils participate in competitive team sports. They are proud to have won the virtual basketball competition. Leaders make sure everyone gets involved and is included.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff and governors have regular safeguarding training. They are knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe. There are secure systems in place for reporting concerns about pupils' safety and well-being. Leaders act swiftly to make sure vulnerable pupils stay safe. During the pandemic, leaders made regular checks to make sure those pupils who were not in school stayed safe.

Pupils learn how to keep safe online. They are able to give tips for the safe use of the internet. They say that if a message looks too good to be true, it is likely to contain a virus and should never be opened. They also know never to reveal their personal details.

Pupils learn how to stay safe on the roads. They have visits from the road safety team, and Year 6 pupils receive cycling safety sessions.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not have a secure knowledge of the curriculum in every subject. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should now accelerate their plans to help all teachers gain the specialist knowledge they need.
- Target setting for pupils with SEND is not precise enough. This means that pupils do not receive the knowledge they require in mathematics and English. Leaders should ensure that the provision for pupils with SEND is reviewed and refined.

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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	142023
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10211681
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	163
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Janet Sheehan
Headteacher	Alixena Lubomski
Website	www.st-stephens.n-yorks.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 and 23 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bishop Wheeler Catholic Academy Trust.
- The local academy council oversees the running of the school on behalf of the board of trustees.
- The last section 48 inspection by the Diocese of Leeds took place in October 2018.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the English leader, the mathematics leader, the special educational needs coordinator and the leaders of PE and computing.

- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with the chief executive of the Bishop Wheeler Multi-Academy Trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, PE and computing. This involved meeting with senior leaders, subject leaders and teachers, looking at curriculum plans, visiting lessons, speaking to pupils about their learning and looking at pupils' work. An inspector also observed adults listening to pupils read.
- The arrangements for safeguarding were checked. This included checks on the single central record, staff's training and safeguarding records. An inspector also talked to the designated safeguarding lead.
- An inspector discussed the school's records on attendance and behaviour with the headteacher.
- The lead inspector analysed the school's self-evaluation document and plans for improvement.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils in lessons and at breaktimes. They also took account of the 21 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of 38 responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors met with staff and considered the 13 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Janet Keefe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Spencer-Brooke	Ofsted Inspector

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