

Inspection of St Leonard's Catholic Primary School, Silksworth

Tunstall Village Road, Silksworth, Sunderland SR3 2BB

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 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	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Staff and multi-academy trust aspirations for this school and its pupils are high. A transformation is happening at St Leonard's. Parents and carers and pupils wholeheartedly agree. One pupil summed up the views of many adults and pupils in saying, 'The new headteacher has sorted the whole school out.' All staff in the school work tirelessly to make their school the best that it can be.

Pupils are proud of their school. They 'Learn, Grow and Shine' together harmoniously. Behaviour across the school day is excellent. From the youngest children in Reception Year to the oldest pupils in Year 6, they show motivation and a thoughtful, positive attitude to learning.

Warm relationships between staff and pupils are evident in every space of the school and at every point in the day. Pupils say, 'You can always trust the adults and make new friends at our school.' Pupils welcome new classmates with open arms. They say that bullying no longer happens in the school and that they feel happy and safe.

Pupils are learning a new and exciting curriculum. They learn to read with accuracy and show a good appreciation of books and authors. They feel well prepared and ready for secondary school.

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

Pupils flourish at this school. Staff nurture pupils while they experience a well-designed curriculum. Lessons build learning in a logical order. For some subjects, this curriculum is relatively new. Pupils are already benefiting from the more structured teaching approaches and detailed curriculum content. This builds their knowledge year on year, although leaders have not yet designed systems to revisit and make checks on this growing knowledge over time. For some subjects, such as reading, mathematics and personal, social and health education (PSHE), the curriculum is designed from early years. This is not the case for all subjects. In subjects such as geography and science, the way in which learning is built from children's starting points in early years is not so well identified.

Reading across the school is a strength. Pupils talk with excitement about the new books they have to read and how their reading is improving. Staff are well trained in delivering the school's chosen phonics programme, which means that they deliver lessons with confidence and skill. Teachers quickly identify pupils falling behind with learning their sounds in phonics lessons and provide additional help so that pupils catch up.

Leaders have developed a calm and peaceful environment in which pupils can learn. Children in early years settle quickly and are happy and confident learners. Year 6 'buddies' provide Reception-age children with a new friend on their first day of school. Pupils show strong self-control, and good manners abound. Their good

manners are a natural part of their vocabulary. Pupils hold doors open for adults and ask where to sit down. They take turns when speaking and are polite to visitors.

Spirituality is at the heart of the school. Over time, pupils learn to lead their own liturgical prayers and seek out their own spiritual moments in areas such as the scared spaces or remembrance tree. Pupils thrive in the Catholic life of the school to develop their tolerance, kindness and fairness. Pupils accept all. They talk maturely about difference and acceptance and how they treat everyone in the same way. Pupils say that, 'Your religion doesn't matter – we support anyone and any religion.' Pupils visit several places of worship to deepen their understanding of other religions, such as the local mosque and Methodist church.

Pupils have credible opportunities to volunteer and make the world a better place. The popular CAFOD and 'Mini Vinnies' groups give pupils the chance to help those less fortunate than themselves. Other clubs are not limited to sports and pupils get to try out new activities such as cross-stitch and gardening. Pupils' aspirations are high. They aspire to be future architects, firefighters, nurses and artists. A local MP, mayoress, army personnel and a gynaecologist have all visited the school, all in an attempt to open the world of work up to pupils.

The identification and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective. Teachers listen to pupils' and parents' ideas about how best to address the needs of the pupil. Parents feel that they are well informed and valued. They have recently relaunched the Friends of St Leonard's group to help the school to provide exciting events and activities during the year.

The school's interim advisory board (IAB) and multi-academy trust provide highly effective challenge and support. Staff and leaders alike value their work and input. Staff feel that 'every door is open' for any help and guidance they may need. Morale is high because leaders check staff's workload and well-being with care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a tangible culture of safeguarding across the school. All staff are well trained to spot the signs when a pupil or family might need support. They are vigilant, know each individual pupil and genuinely care. Pupils say, 'There are no grown-ups in school that we couldn't go to if we had a worry.' Families also feel well supported. They know that school staff are approachable and will help in any way that they can.

Leaders have reviewed all safeguarding practices, policies and procedures to ensure that these are fit for purpose and effective. Board members assure themselves of their implementation through external auditing and visits.

Pupils are savvy users of technology due to the thorough online safety curriculum that they receive. They can recognise risks such as identity theft, phishing and accessing age-restricted sites and apps.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is at an early stage of implementation in some subjects. Some subject curriculum planning is very new. This means that, on occasion, pupils are learning concepts without the prior knowledge required being well embedded. As the new curriculum develops, leaders should devise systems to ensure that the most important key content is revisited and assessed to check that pupils can build their learning in the longer term.
- Subject leaders do not have a clear understanding of what is taught in the early years foundation stage in relation to their national curriculum subjects. This makes it challenging for subject leaders to be assured that the early years curriculum is consistently building the specific knowledge and vocabulary that children need in preparation for key stage 1 and beyond. Leaders need to review curriculum planning to ensure that the foundations of learning and how these link to the curriculum content across the school are clear.

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](#)' 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	148277
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10246813
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel O'Mahoney
Headteacher	Dionne Dunn
Website	www.stleonardsprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic faith primary school. Its most recent section 48 inspection was in March 2015. The school is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- Since the inspection of the predecessor school, the school has converted to become an academy school and has joined the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.
- A new headteacher took up post in May 2022.
- The school does not currently use any alternative education providers.
- The multi-academy trust has put in an IAB in place of a local governing body.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school club for its pupils.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school had 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 did deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science and geography. Inspectors spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- Inspectors listened to a range of pupils from different year groups reading.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator, members of the IAB and representatives from the multi-academy trust and diocese.
- Inspectors looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and spoke to leaders, staff, IAB members, the trust representative and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons visits, at lunchtime and during a visit to the school's after-school club.
- Inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text comments. No responses were received for Ofsted's online staff or pupil questionnaires. Inspectors met with staff to discuss their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Mark Dent, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Dawn Foster

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023