

Inspection of a good school: St Charles' Catholic Primary School

Regent Farm Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE3 3HE

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 September 2023

The headteacher of this school is Mrs Louise Nealings. This school is part of Bishop Bewick Trust 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, Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

Outcome

St Charles' Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Charles Catholic Primary School is a vibrant and happy place to learn. The school is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils achieve well across the curriculum and in all key stages. They are well prepared for the next phase of their education.

Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities within school. For example, the elected Safe Squad look out for one another's safety. Recently, they designed posters for the car park reminding parents and carers and visitors to drive safely for everyone's protection. The Laudato Si club are working towards a Live Simply award through taking part in a range of environmentally friendly projects. Pupils benefit from a range of wider opportunities in school, including residential visits, clubs and trips to places of interest. Parents typically comment that the school allows their children 'to thrive academically, personally and socially'.

Pupils behave very well. They know that the simple 'footsteps' rules are there to make sure everyone can follow the St Charles' mission to 'be the best we can be and live life to the full'. Pupils have good, trusting relationships with staff. They know that their views and suggestions are important and that staff will always listen. Pupils show great respect for everyone in the school community.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with SEND.

The school's meticulous design of the curriculum ensures that pupils gain the knowledge and skills that they need in each subject area. Teachers know exactly what pupils need to learn and in what order. The curriculum builds from the early years. Here, children's learning and play are structured to prepare them with the language, literacy and numeracy skills to help them begin the key stage 1 curriculum. Pupils with SEND are identified at an early stage. They receive good support to learn the curriculum and join in with all the other enjoyable activities in school.

Teachers make sure that every lesson gives pupils the opportunity to review earlier learning and to correct or edit their work. This helps pupils to remember what they have learned. Teachers check pupils' work carefully so that they can quickly sort out any misunderstandings or give extra help. In most lessons, the activities teachers require pupils to complete are carefully matched to what pupils need to learn. Occasionally, the tasks pupils are given do not help them to secure the intended learning.

Reading has a high priority in the curriculum. Most pupils learn to read fluently at the earliest possible stage. Highly skilled staff teach phonics from children's first days in the Reception class. They carefully check pupils' learning to make sure that no one can slip behind unnoticed. Pupils who find reading difficult receive the right support to master phonics and develop fluency. The early reading books that teachers choose for pupils are well matched to the sounds that pupils know.

Pupils enjoy reading. The daily class story time is keenly anticipated. A group of older pupils talked about their favourite books and authors and explained why they enjoyed their work so much. Older pupils chatted about poetry and Shakespeare plays. Alfred Noyes' poem, 'The Highwayman', was obviously very popular, with some pupils maturely describing the poem as 'a romantic horror and murder story'.

Pupils are enthusiastic mathematicians. Skilled teaching means that they develop fluency with numbers and can confidently approach increasingly complex problems as they move through the school.

Visits to places of worship, including a synagogue and a mosque as well as the local church, help pupils learn about religious diversity. Other visits, such as to museums and sites of historical or geographical interest, support pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils also play an important part in the local community, for example through visiting residents in a care home. These opportunities give pupils the chance to be active citizens

The trust provides a range of training opportunities. These are having a positive impact on staff understanding of the subjects that they teach. Leaders and those responsible for governance have created a culture in which staff share good practice with each other. Leaders check that the improvements the school makes are having an impact on the

quality of pupils' education. Staff are very proud to be part of the team at St Charles. The school, trustees and governors are considerate of their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, the activities teachers set for pupils are not precisely matched to the intended learning outcomes from a lesson. This means that pupils' learning is not as secure as it should be. The school should work with staff to support them in focusing their planned activities on specific learning intentions.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 Charles Catholic Primary School, to be good in February 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	148269
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10297506
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	238
Appropriate authority	The Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
Headteacher	Louise Nealings
Website	www.stcharlesprimary.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust in April 2021.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2017 and the next inspection is due in the academic year 2023/2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and a range of staff.
- The inspector also met with governors, the chair of the trust board and the chief executive officer of the trust.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. To do this, they met with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record. They 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 met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including free-text comments, and the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey. The inspector spoke informally to parents during the breakfast gathering in the school hall.

Inspection team

Jan Corlett, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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