

Inspection of a good school: St Bernadette's Catholic Primary, Wallsend

Rising Sun Cottages, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 9JW

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 April 2024

Outcome

St Bernadette's Catholic Primary, Wallsend continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Laura Fallon. 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, Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and staff all share a sense of pride in belonging to St Bernadette's. This is an inclusive school where everyone is made to feel welcome. There is a strong sense of togetherness. The school sits at the heart of the local community.

This is a school all about raising aspirations and broadening life experiences. Parents appreciate staff who go 'above and beyond' to support their children. This was summed up by one parent who said, 'My child is happy, thriving and encouraged to do well.' All pupils, particularly pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils, achieve well.

Pupils are happy and feel safe in school. They can talk confidently about the school values, such as kindness and justice. They relate these to their daily life. Pupils are polite, respectful and welcoming to visitors. Behaviour is a strength of the school. Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils are curious to learn.

The school provides a rich and varied range of after-school clubs that are accessible to all. These include, eco-club, chatter books and many sports activities. Pupils enjoy several leadership roles in school. For example, house captains, 'maths ambassadors' and prayer leaders.

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

The school has undertaken a comprehensive review of the curriculum. Curriculum plans ensure that knowledge and skills are taught in the right order. This enables pupils to build on prior learning. For example, in early years, children learn about chronology. They think

about things that are within and beyond their living memory. This prepares them well for history in key stage 1, where pupils place photographs of Queen Victoria's reign on a simple timeline.

There is a strong focus on developing vocabulary throughout the curriculum. In early years, adults are highly skilled in their interactions with children. The classroom environment entices children to apply their learning independently. For example, children can count objects accurately that are 'one more' and 'one less' than the previous amount. As pupils progress into key stages 1 and 2, their learning of mathematical vocabulary becomes more complex. As a result, pupils can accurately use terms such as numerator and denominator when talking about mixed fractions.

Pupils can talk confidently about recent topics that they have been learning. For example, in history, Year 6 pupils are knowledgeable about the causes of the First World War. However, sometimes pupils find it difficult to talk about what they have learned previously, or link what they have recently learned to bigger ideas across the curriculum.

Reading lies at the centre of the curriculum. There is a well-established phonics programme in school that is raising standards in reading. Staff benefit from regular training and coaching sessions. This ensures the consistent teaching of the phonics programme. Regular checks keep pupils on track. These assessments help to adapt teaching and provide support for pupils who need extra help. Leaders have developed a reading 'spine' of books that covers a rich and diverse range of topics and genres. Pupils love to read, and they have regular access to attractive libraries located around school. Parents are welcomed into school. They appreciate the advice and support they receive to help their child to read at home.

Pupils with SEND receive the timely support they need. Early intervention ensures that pupils' additional needs are swiftly identified and addressed. Pupils are able to learn alongside their classmates, with practical resources and additional adult support. SEND support plans are regularly reviewed, and progress is carefully monitored. There is a strong programme to support pupils' mental health in school. Pupils can access counselling and weekly drawing and talking sessions. Emotion coaching is also available for staff and parents who may be struggling with their mental health.

Leaders are committed to providing pupils with a broad and balanced curriculum that extends beyond the academic. Every pupil in school has the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. The curriculum is enhanced by frequent visits, such as the Laing Art Gallery and Newcastle University library. Year 5 pupils have participated in an engineering career workshop and delivered a marketing presentation.

Pupils understand the school value of stewardship and what it means to be a responsible citizen. For example, the 'Mini-Vinnies' are a group of pupils who help people in need. They have led on school fundraising to provide transport for patients with cancer. Pupils collect harvest donations to help support refugees in the local area. Pupils respect different cultures and beliefs. This is underpinned by their knowledge of world religions.

Staff feel very well supported by leaders and their colleagues. They appreciate strategies that have been introduced to support their workload and well-being. Trustees have a clear strategic overview of the schools' strengths and priorities moving forward. Governors visit the school frequently to check on progress and support school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the new curriculum has not had time to embed. Therefore, there are some inconsistencies in how effectively new information is presented to pupils. The school should ensure that the curriculum is implemented consistently well so that pupils develop secure and detailed knowledge over time.

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 Bernadette's Roman Catholic Primary School Aided, to be good in July 2017.

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	148815
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10323153
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	323
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
CEO of the trust	Anita Bath
Headteacher	Laura Fallon
Website	www.st-bernadettesprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Bernadette's Catholic Primary joined the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust in October 2021.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school offers a daily breakfast club and after-school childcare.

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 his evaluation of the school.
- 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' interests first.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, senior leaders and special educational needs coordinator. He spoke with the chief executive officer of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, a trustee, the chair of the governing body and members of the governing body. Discussions were also held with some teachers and support staff.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, he held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also met with pupils to discuss geography.
- The inspector gathered the views of parents informally in person and formally through responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. The views of staff were considered through the staff survey and through meetings with them. Pupils' views were considered through a pupil survey and through pupil meetings.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classes, breakfast club, lunchtime and when moving around school.

Inspection team

Andy Jones, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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