

Inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School

Station Road, Nailsea, Somerset BS48 4PD

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Colleen Collett. This school is part of The Cardinal Newman Catholic Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by the chief executive officer, Dr Daniel Doyle, and a board of trustees, chaired by Christopher Izuka.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Francis is a school reborn. Following the difficulties of the predecessor school and the move into the trust, the school initially stabilised. It now thrives. The school has high ambition for its pupils. By the end of key stage 2, they achieve well. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of education.

Pupils are wonderful ambassadors for their school. They are polite, courteous and eloquent. Pupils speak proudly about sporting success against larger schools. In class, they behave well. St Francis has a nurturing ethos. Older pupils support their younger peers at lunchtimes. Adults know pupils well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They help to adapt their learning as necessary.

The school's work extends beyond the academic. It places a strong emphasis on pupils knowing the importance of contributing to society. Pupils raise money for a variety of charities. The school choir performs in homes for the elderly. This supports pupils to become empathetic and compassionate citizens.

Relationships with parents and carers are highly positive. All parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View survey would recommend the school. They value the visibility of the leadership team and the well-rounded education pupils receive.

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

The trust has been the backbone of the school's improvement journey. It quickly identified the key issues such as safeguarding. It tackled them head-on with the necessary urgency required. In addition, the school has ensured that changes to leadership have been handled smoothly. This has helped to retain the confidence of staff and parents at a potentially tricky time. Staff speak glowingly about the support they have received from leaders. This has resulted in a strong, shared vision.

The school has benefited from trust support in developing its curriculum. The trust has provided expertise from other schools to support staff to create a well-thought-out, logically ordered curriculum. The detail in this means staff know precisely what to teach. Ongoing training ensures they implement it effectively. As a result, pupils typically learn well and recall their knowledge across the long term. For example, pupils can describe the impact of the Roman invasion of Britain. In mathematics, pupils make links to their previous learning. This includes pupils with SEND. They learn the same broad and balanced curriculum as their peers.

Teachers build in opportunities for pupils to recall their knowledge. However, the use of assessment is still in development. Sometimes staff do not consider well enough what pupils can already do. They give work to pupils that does not sufficiently deepen their knowledge as much as it could.

The implementation of the early reading curriculum has improved recently. Staff now teach the phonics code with high expectations. Pupils read books matched to the sounds

they know. This allows them to practise what they have learned. Staff accurately and swiftly identify where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. However, a few pupils have gaps caused when phonics was not taught with the same rigour. Additional support means they have now started to catch up.

The school keeps a close eye on pupils' attendance. It forensically analyses any changes and takes action as necessary. Consequently, pupils' attendance is improving and close to national figures.

The school's Catholic ethos permeates its work. However, pupils also experience other faiths and cultures. They visit places of worship and participate in events such as 'International Mass' days. This helps to prepare them for life in modern Britain. Pupils understand fundamental British values. For example, they know how Parliament passes laws. Pupils develop their leadership skills through roles such as the school council and the chaplaincy team.

Governors and trustees keep a close eye on the school's performance. They are not afraid to challenge leaders if necessary. Furthermore, they make regular checks on the school's work. This means they have an accurate view of the school's performance.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On some occasions, staff do not consider well enough what pupils can already do and provide them with tasks that sufficiently deepen their thinking. As a result, some pupils do not extend their knowledge as much as they are capable of. The trust should ensure that staff are supported to plan work that better considers what pupils can already do and deepens pupils' knowledge fully.
- Historically, the implementation of the phonics curriculum has not been taught with the rigour and high expectations of more recent times. As a result, a few pupils have gaps in their phonics knowledge. The school should ensure that these gaps in knowledge continue to be addressed and ensure pupils catch up quickly.

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	148962
Local authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	10344866
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	136
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Izuka
CEO of the trust	Daniel Doyle
Headteacher	Colleen Collett
Website	www.st-francis.n-somerset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined The Cardinal Newman Catholic Educational Trust in 2022. In 2020, the predecessor school received an overall effectiveness rating of inadequate.
- The chief executive officer (CEO) of the trust became the executive principal in September 2024. An associate principal also took up post at the same time.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in February 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight school years.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the CEO, the associate principal, groups of staff, a trustee and the chair of the local governing committee. An inspector also held a telephone call with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in English, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to staff, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning in other curriculum areas.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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.
- An inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View and staff survey.
- There were too few children at the time of inspection to award a separate grade for the early years provision.

Inspection team

Jason Edge, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Musty

Ofsted Inspector

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