

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School

Newton Drive, Blackpool, Lancashire FY3 8BT

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 April 2025

Outcome

St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Christine Murray. This school is part of Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Helen O'Neill, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Elizabeth Kelly.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel happy and safe in this nurturing school. There are strong, caring relationships between staff, pupils and their families. The school motto, 'treat others as you want to be treated' is lived out by staff, pupils and governors.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and considerate. They show a genuine interest in visitors to the school, asking them questions and listening attentively to their responses. Children in the Reception class are eager to invite visitors to join in their play.

The school is aspirational for the success of all. Pupils live up to the high expectations of what they can achieve. Pupils are academically and emotionally well prepared for high school.

The school places great importance on pupils' social and emotional development. There is a range of opportunities that are available to develop pupils' talents and interests. These are taken up by the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils enjoy a range of clubs, such as choir, gardening and table tennis. Pupils benefit from residential visits that present them with new and exciting challenges, such as climbing and canoeing. Other visits are linked carefully to enhance pupils' learning of the curriculum.

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

Leaders have made significant improvements to the school environment and to the curriculum. They have consulted with staff when making changes, taking their views into consideration. As a result, staff feel valued and trusted.

An ambitious curriculum sets out what pupils need to learn from the Reception Year through to Year 6. The important knowledge for each subject is ordered logically. The trust provides valuable training so that staff can teach pupils skilfully. Staff have a secure grasp of the subject content that they teach. They deliver this in a clear and imaginative way that engages pupils. This includes careful adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND, whose needs are identified early, can learn alongside their peers.

Typically, teachers identify and address pupils' misconceptions as they arise. Nonetheless, due to weaknesses with the previous curriculum, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge in some subjects. This limits them from being able to build new knowledge as well as they could.

The school is determined that every pupil becomes an avid reader. Staff teach phonics effectively. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. Pupils who struggle with reading get the support that they need to catch up quickly and become confident, fluent readers. Children in the Reception class love to copy the teacher, holding up phonics flashcards for their friends to sound out and blend. They readily use their phonics knowledge to write captions for their drawings. Pupils enjoy visiting the library and there are many opportunities to read in classrooms and outdoors.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Children in the early years quickly learn to follow routines, play cooperatively and take turns. Across the school, pupils are highly respectful of staff and each other.

In the early years, staff successfully support children, including those with English as an additional language, to develop their communication and language skills. As pupils progress through the school, they learn a wide range of subject-specific vocabulary. Many pupils' writing composition shows imaginative use of language to persuade or entertain the reader. However, some pupils' handwriting is poor. This is because the school does not have an agreed approach for teaching handwriting once children gain the basic skills in the Reception class.

The provision for promoting pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils learn about fundamental British values and understand their importance in everyday life. They are tolerant and celebrate the differences that exist within the school and the wider world. Pupils take pride in their roles of responsibility, such as play leaders and school councillors. They are proud of their charity work, collecting for local foodbanks and supporting overseas aid. Pupils' resilience is strengthened through competitive sports and activities that encourage them to step beyond their comfort zones.

The trust supports the work of the school well. For example, it has strengthened the skills of subject leaders so that they can check the delivery of their subjects effectively. Members of the local governing body understand their roles and carry out their duties efficiently, providing support and challenge to the school. All those within the school work together to make sure this is a happy and successful place for pupils and staff.

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 instances, the school does not ensure that pupils master accurate letter formation before being asked to join their writing. This means that some pupils do not develop their writing fluency and legibility as they progress through the curriculum. The school should develop an agreed approach for teaching handwriting so that teachers can ensure that pupils attain the necessary skills to become confident and proficient writers.
- In a small number of subjects, pupils have gaps in their understanding as a result of weaknesses in the previous curriculum. This means that they are not secure in the prior knowledge that they need to learn well in these subjects. The school should ensure that teachers are able to swiftly identify and address these gaps in pupils' knowledge so that pupils build and further strengthen their understanding in these subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 Kentigern's Catholic Primary School to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2014.

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	149262
Local authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	10378039
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	213
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth Kelly
CEO of the trust	Helen O'Neill
Headteacher	Christine Murray
Website	www.st-kentigern.blackpool.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in September 2022. When its predecessor school, St Kentigern's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness. The school is part of Blessed Edward Bamber Catholic Multi Academy Trust.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are new to role since the previous inspection, which was prior to the school becoming an academy.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Lancaster. Its last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in November 2021. The next section 48 inspection will be scheduled to take place by the end of 2026.
- The school runs breakfast- and after-school provision for pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. She also spoke with subject leaders, staff and pupils.
- The inspector spoke with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with members of the board of trustees, the CEO of the trust and representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector visited lessons and looked at samples of pupils' work. She spoke to some pupils about their learning and other aspects of school life.
- 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 leaders who are responsible for attendance, SEND, and pupils' personal development. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and throughout the school day.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies and documents relating to pupils' welfare and education, including SEND.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to the Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector spoke with some parents during the inspection. She also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including parents' free-text comments.

Inspection team

Sharon Cowey, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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