

Inspection of a good school: Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Whitley Bay

Seatonville Road, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE25 9EG

Inspection dates:

8 to 9 May 2024

Outcome

Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School, Whitley Bay continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Kathryn DiMambro. The 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.

What is it like to attend this school?

Star of the Sea Catholic Primary School is an inclusive and welcoming school. Relationships between pupils and staff are caring and strong. Staff know pupils very well. Pupils rise to the high expectations that adults have for them in their respectful interactions with each other and the adults in school.

Pupils are kept safe. They talk confidently about how they can keep themselves safe online, eat healthy foods, develop fitness and keep safe when out and about in the community. Pupils trust the adults who work with them to support them if they have a concern.

Pupils behave well in class and around school grounds. They move around the school calmly and with respect for each other. Some pupils have struggled to manage their own behaviour. Staff respond to these pupils with skill and patience. They provide pupils with the support and guidance they need to behave better. Bullying is very rare. Records show that, when it does happen, staff act quickly to stop it. This helps pupils to feel safe.

The school ensures the staff plan for pupils' personal development throughout the school day. Pupils have opportunities to take part in activities, such as supporting local charities, enjoying dance clubs and developing their understanding of the local community. Where needed, pupils can take part in groups to support them to cope with bereavement or other things, which may be affecting their resilience or mental health.

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

The school has carefully constructed a broad and ambitious curriculum for most subjects, based on the national curriculum. The curriculum specifies what pupils must know and learn. In most subjects, learning is carefully planned so that pupils build their subject knowledge and skills sequentially over time. However, in a minority of subjects, this approach is not yet embedded. In these subjects, opportunities for pupils to build on their prior learning are limited. Work to address this is already underway, but there remains more to do.

Pupils with specific and more-complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school ensures that advice from therapists and other external professionals is understood and implemented effectively by staff. This helps these pupils to make effective progress from their starting points. However, for some other pupils with SEND, sometimes, the curriculum and tasks they are given in classrooms, as they learn alongside their peers, are not adapted well enough to enable them to learn effectively. This hampers their progress.

The school has developed a carefully considered approach to the teaching of reading. This begins at the earliest stages of reading, irrelevant of pupils' age. Pupils enjoy sharing stories, songs and rhymes with an adult. Each morning, staff teach early reading skills through an agreed, consistently used phonics programme in classes that matches pupils' level of knowledge and skills. This helps teachers to deliver learning that best meets pupils' needs. Staff match the books for those at the earliest stages of reading to pupils' interests and the sounds that they know. Pupils develop their reading fluency well over time. Pupils who are more fluent readers are supported well to develop their understanding of the many rich texts they study and to develop a love of reading.

Children in the early years follow well-established routines. They learn cooperatively alongside one another and are enthusiastic in taking part in all activities. Adults ensure the curriculum is carefully considered and planned to develop the knowledge and skills they will need as they move to the next stages of their education.

The school promotes pupils' personal development very effectively. Pupils benefit from the many enrichment activities offered by school. This includes clubs, organised nurture-based groups, acts of kindness celebrations and attending dance sessions before school. Pupils experience many trips and visits, including trips to the museums, parks, beaches and local community areas. Pupils were especially looking forward to upcoming residential trips. These memorable experiences enhance pupils' learning well.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the support which leaders provide for their workload and well-being. Governors and trustees support the school well and provide effective challenge to 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 a minority of subjects, the school's curriculum is not developed as well as it could be. Opportunities for pupils to build on their prior learning are limited. This means that some pupils do not make as much progress as they move through the school as they could. The school needs to further develop the curriculum in these subjects to ensure that pupils are able to know and remember more over time.
- For some pupils with SEND, the school's curriculum and classroom task choices are not considered well enough. This means that these pupils find it hard to access the planned learning in class, which, in turn, hampers their progress. The school needs to ensure the curriculum and task choices for all pupils with SEND are well adapted so that they can fully engage in learning in classrooms.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be good in March 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	148451
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10323128
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	366
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anita Bath
Headteacher	Kathryn DiMambro
Website	www.staroftheseaschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust.
- The headteacher was appointed in January 2020.
- The school does not use alternative education providers.
- The school is designated as having a Catholic religious character. It is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in January 2019. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.

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, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. The inspector also met with members of the governing body and the trust.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector 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. The inspector also considered other evidence of the educational experience of the pupils.
- The inspector visited pupils across the school, in classes, during social times and in separate pupil meetings.
- 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 considered the views of staff who responded to Ofsted's staff survey. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Catherine Beard, lead inspector

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 2024