

Inspection of St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

Claremont Terrace, Blyth, Northumberland NE24 2LE

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Pauline Johnstone. 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 at this school are enthusiastic about their learning. They know that their teachers want them to do well. They listen carefully in lessons and work hard. The school has introduced a new curriculum for pupils. This is developing well and helping pupils to deepen their skills in subjects such as science and history.

All staff want the best for pupils. The school ensures that pupils experience a variety of local visits that support their learning. Pupils make good use of the extra-curricular clubs on offer. These clubs vary throughout the year. They give pupils opportunities to develop their talents and interests beyond the classroom.

Many pupils achieve well in most curriculum areas. Pupils, including children in the early years, behave well during lessons. However, their behaviour during social times is not as positive. Some pupils, predominantly in key stage 2, engage in rough behaviour, or they act in a way that is not kind or caring to others. Staff do not always challenge these incidents. As such, some behaviour goes unchecked and becomes the norm outside of learning time. In addition, staff do not deal with some bullying and behaviour reports as well as they should. Despite these weaknesses, pupils are safe at this school.

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

The school is developing a curriculum that is becoming more ambitious for pupils. The school has identified the essential knowledge that pupils need to know. Subject leaders have specified the order in which content should be taught. For instance, the school has amended the sequence of learning in mathematics. This now reinforces identified areas of weakness. Teachers know when, and what, to teach. In some subjects, trips are carefully planned to enrich pupils' learning. For example, in geography, pupils visit local beaches to understand more about coastal erosion and deposition. This enables pupils to understand significant change within their local context.

Links with science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) partners allow pupils to learn more about the importance of science. Teachers have begun to refine assessment strategies. This ensures that pupils are remembering what they should. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive support from experienced staff. Some learning is not always sequenced to meet their particular needs. The school is aware of this and is taking appropriate action, through the modification of schemes of learning, to ensure that learning is suitable for all.

The school has a phonics curriculum in place. In Reception, children are becoming confident in reading the sounds they have learned. In key stage 1, some pupils do not read with appropriate fluency, as some reading books are not well matched to what pupils know. Early interventions are not always precise, and pupils do not catch up as quickly as they should. In key stage 2, pupils make progress and deepen their knowledge. High-quality texts are used in lessons. Pupils demonstrate a love of

reading and share this with adults. Across the school, pupils enjoy their daily reading lessons, talking with enthusiasm about the books that teachers share in class.

Children in both the Nursery and Reception Year enjoy a well-designed curriculum. This helps children to make a good start to school life. Children develop good habits and behaviours for learning. Children listen attentively to their teachers. All staff model language effectively and encourage learning through careful interventions. The early years learning environment is well organised. There are opportunities for children to develop new skills and practise their learning. This prepares children for the next stage of their education.

The school promotes pupils' personal and physical development well. Pupils are supported to develop their physical and mental well-being. The school has a mental health lead, who works alongside both staff and parents. They help to design support strategies for pupils. The school ensures that pupils learn about different faiths. Pupils develop a sense of tolerance and respect for different cultures. The school has identified opportunities, such as local trips, that enhance the curriculum. Work with other providers allows pupils the opportunities to raise their career aspirations.

Pupils behave well in lessons, where they listen to instructions. Pupils move around the building in a calm and respectful manner. However, some pupils do not maintain these high standards at breaktimes and lunchtimes. The interactions of some pupils with others are rough and unkind during these more unstructured times. Staff members do not deal with them consistently, and relationships with adults other than teachers are not as strong. This has resulted in some pupils expressing concern for their own well-being. Local attitudes and influences can also negatively impact on some playground behaviour.

The school does not keep sufficiently detailed records of behaviour and any linked SEND concerns. Incidents are logged in separate systems, making analysis difficult. This means that leaders and governors miss opportunities to review patterns of behaviour or need. Exclusions and suspensions are higher than average for a school of its size.

Governors engage with the life of the school, supporting events and attending meetings. However, they do not have the level of information needed to check the work of the school effectively. This means that they are not aware of some of the school's challenges. For instance, although governors are aware of the number of exclusions, they have not looked in depth at the reasons behind them. Senior leaders engage well with staff. They have taken action to reduce teachers' workload. Staff appreciate these changes and feel well supported.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, the school's actions in response to concerns are not as well thought out as they could be. This includes how staff record these actions and how they report them to others. This means that leaders could miss opportunities to identify patterns of behaviour or bullying. The school should improve its approach for recording or evaluating actions taken to keep pupils safe.
- The school has not given staff the training they need to deliver the phonics curriculum with fidelity. As a result, pupils are sometimes taught sounds in an order that does not help them to build their phonics knowledge over time. This means that pupils struggle to apply these sounds to their reading. The school should ensure that staff receive the training they need to deliver the phonics curriculum consistently and in an order that helps pupils learn and apply sounds fluently in their reading.
- The school does not deal swiftly with some incidents of poor behaviour during more unstructured times. This means that pupils accept some unkind and rough behaviours as the norm. The school should review its current policies and, with the wider school community, develop a shared culture of high-quality behaviour.

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	148282
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10269192
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	257
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
Headteacher	Pauline Johnstone
Website	www.blythstwilfridsprimary.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in December 2020. When its predecessor school, St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School is now part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust. The school joined the trust in December 2020.
- The school's religious character has not been inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 since it converted to academy status. The last section 48 inspection (conducted by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle) was in February 2018. The predecessor school, St Wilfrid's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, was judged to be outstanding.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff. Inspectors spoke with the assistant director (school effectiveness) for the Dioceses of Newcastle and Durham, a trustee from the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, a director and senior director for school improvement from the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, the chief executive officer of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, and governors.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors also spoke to leaders and pupils about the curriculum in other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, self-evaluation documents, reports from external advisors and minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, information submitted by parents, as well as responses to the staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

David Hodgkiss, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Ward	Ofsted Inspector
Gemma Jeynes	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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