

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Low Fell

Dryden Road, Low Fell, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE9 5TU

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Low Fell has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Paula McArthur. This school is part of Bishop Wilkinson 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 (CEO), Nick Hurn OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Martin Gannon.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Peter's love their school. They are polite, good-natured and welcoming to all. Pupils' respectful nature and their compassion for others is evident. The school achieves its aim of being a place in which every child can flourish. Pupils thrive in the highly positive atmosphere.

Leaders have very high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils across the school produce work of an increasingly high standard. Focused support from well-trained staff helps pupils achieve well.

Pupils are excellent role models for others. They exemplify the school's high expectations for their conduct and attitude. Where a small number of pupils may have difficulties managing their own behaviour from time to time, the school's actions are timely and effective.

Pupils are safe at St Peter's. They know how staff keep them safe. Pupils talk about staff 'who we can rely on and trust'.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. They mention the school's 'supportive and welcoming' ethos and the 'engaging and vibrant curriculum'. They also mention staff who 'treat pupils and parents with respect'.

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

The development of high-quality curriculums in school is evident. These curriculums are implemented well by confident, skilled staff as a result of highly effective professional development. There is ambition for all. This is realised in terms of pupils' readiness for the next stage of education. Pupils achieve well. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school's work in identifying pupils' individual needs is thorough and robust.

A clear focus on personal, social and emotional development in early years has a notable impact. Positive relationships abound. The promotion of communication and language is also evident in the quality interactions between children and adults. For example, a child responded to careful questioning by an adult to recognise the 'lighter' end of a large set of scales. Children show much independence when accessing the provision. They locate and share resources with others. Children learn and play in harmony.

The school's approach to early reading is tenacious. Skilled staff immerse pupils in opportunities to develop and use their emerging phonics knowledge. Pupils get the support they need to achieve highly. As a result, they become increasingly confident and fluent readers.

Across the school, lessons make significant contributions to pupils' retention of their learning. For instance, in early years, children manipulate practical resources to discuss the difference between odd and even numbers. In Year 2, pupils build on their prior learning to develop a secure understanding of how to use conjunctions effectively in their writing. Older pupils have a comprehensive understanding of musical techniques and vocabulary. For example, they understand counterpoint and demonstrate this in their own performances. They modulate their own singing voices in response to prompts such as 'pianissimo' and 'mezzo forte'. In some cases, however, adaptations to curriculum and task delivery for a small minority of pupils mean they are not able to fully express their understanding in their written work. This can limit their achievement.

Attendance across the school is high. There are effective processes in place to check on absence. Conduct in and around school is exemplary. Pupils' concentration and engagement in lessons is remarkable.

The inclusive ethos of St Peter's shines through all the school does. Pupils develop a keen sense of equality. They understand that people are unique. They appreciate the importance of respecting difference. Their respect for, and understanding of, different faiths and beliefs is exemplary. Numerous opportunities for extra-curricular enhancements, including visits to a number of different places of worship, allow pupils to develop a keen sense of their place in the wider world. They make highly positive contributions to the school and to the wider community. These include the school council and other opportunities for pupil leadership. In addition, links with a local food bank and a school for pupils with more profound SEND enhance the school's work in this area. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life beyond the school.

Leaders at all levels have taken highly effective action to sustain and, in some areas, improve the performance of the school. The school provides detailed information to the governing committee. Governors then use this to question, probe and offer supportive challenge to the school. Well-established processes for information sharing mean trustees have clear oversight of the school's work. Staff feel valued. Leaders place a high priority on staff's workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, adaptations to curriculum delivery for a small number of pupils who struggle to demonstrate their learning in written work are not as effective as they could be. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should ensure that adaptations to curriculum delivery support all pupils to demonstrate what they have learned through their written work across the curriculum.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Peter's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2020.

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	148908
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10346790
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	207
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Martin Gannon
CEO of the trust	Nick Hurn OBE
Headteacher	Paula McArthur
Website	stpeterslowfell.bwcet.com
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Peter's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 February 2022. When its predecessor school, St Peter's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is one of 47 schools in the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.
- The senior leadership team has changed since the predecessor school's last inspection. The headteacher was appointed to her permanent position in March 2024 after a period of being the acting headteacher. The deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- Wraparound care operates on site under the management of the school.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is also inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school's last such inspection was in September 2024. The school's next section 48 inspection is therefore due before September 2029.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, some other school staff, members of the local governing committee, representatives of the trust and the director of education from the diocese.
- The inspector spoke to a representative of the alternative provision used by the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to some pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online staff and pupil surveys and spoke to some staff about their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
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