# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Walburga's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy

Victoria Park, Shipley, West Yorkshire BD18 4RL

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 November 2024

## Outcome

St Walburga's Catholic Primary School, A Voluntary Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Elizabeth Fearnley. This school is part of Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic 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), Chris Hanson, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Joe McDonnell.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school's Catholic ethos is central to all that it has to offer. Pupils are polite, respectful and well mannered. They are patient and kind to each other and adults. There is a positive and supportive culture, where pupils achieve well.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend well. They talk positively about 'fun lessons' and 'caring adults'. There is an inclusive environment, where all pupils regardless of their needs access a high-quality education in a safe and friendly environment. The school prepares pupils well for their next stage in education.

Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations for learning and behaviour. In lessons, pupils are eager to learn. They listen carefully and respond quickly to teachers. They enjoy talking to adults and hold engaging conversations. During playtime, pupils play sensibly together. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger pupils as 'buddies'.

There is a strong focus on pupils' well-being and personal growth. The school promotes mental health awareness. Pupils recognise the importance of looking after their mental well-being and supporting others. Pupils are encouraged to help others through a number

of leadership responsibilities including well-being ambassadors and 'Mini Vinnies'. Pupils know who to talk to if they are worried.

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

The curriculum is ambitious and consistently structured. The school has identified the specific knowledge they want pupils to learn and the sequence in which it is taught. Teachers ensure activities are carefully adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Adults use a variety of resources to develop pupils' understanding. Regular checks ensure that pupils' learning is moved on. For example, in mathematics, pre-learning tasks are used to match activities to pupils' specific learning needs. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use precise vocabulary. They generate discussion to extend pupils' thinking.

Phonics is taught consistently by well-trained adults through structured lessons that capture pupils' interest. Misconceptions are quickly addressed. Pupils who need additional support are given the help that they need. Pupils read books that are well matched to their reading ability. Adults support reading well. They encourage pupils to re-read the text to develop their understanding and fluency. The school has an effective whole-school approach to teach writing. Pupils' knowledge of grammar and punctuation builds accurately as they move through the school. However, the school recognises that the teaching of handwriting needs further attention. This includes in the early years. Consequently, while some pupils take pride in their work, others do not develop their handwriting as well as they should. This may impact how effectively pupils convey their ideas and understanding in written tasks.

The school quickly identifies pupils with SEND right from the early years. Staff work closely with parents and carers and external agencies to ensure pupils get the support that they need. Pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum and achieve well. Pupils who access the 'The Lighthouse' are calm, settled and follow clearly structured routines.

The early years environment is a calm, purposeful and engaging space. Children develop early communication and language skills well. They learn through fun, meaningful activities. Adults talk to children, listen to them and extend their learning. Children are confident, engaged, and excited to learn. For example, one child proudly showed different ways to represent the number two. Children interact well with adults and each other. They follow routines and learn independently, persevering with more challenging tasks.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Pupils learn how to behave positively through assemblies, clear rules and well-established routines. Pupils understand the system of rewards and consequences. They are proud to 'move up' the behaviour board and understand that there are consequences if behaviour is not as expected. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons. They listen well and discuss their learning. Pupils right from the early years move calmly and sensibly between activities.

The school offers many opportunities for personal development linked to the Catholic ethos. Pupils learn about different religions. They understand how fundamental British values help to prepare them for the future. They understand equality and show respect for difference. Older pupils enjoy attending clubs linked to sport and the arts. These are now being developed for younger pupils. They value the opportunities to work as a team, including 'wow days' and residentials. They know how to stay safe online and in the local community.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, are proud of the school. They are committed to continuing to improve the school and ensuring the best possible outcomes for all pupils. Staff feel valued. They appreciate the support they get, professionally and personally, from leaders and from each other. The school has recently reviewed their communication systems. The majority of parents are positive about the school. However, some parents feel that communication between home and school is not always as effective as it could be.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

## (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's approach to teaching handwriting is not as effective as other aspects of English. This means that some pupils do not have the knowledge to be able to form their letters accurately, which may impact how effectively they convey their ideas and understanding in written tasks. The school should continue to review and improve the approach to teaching handwriting so that pupils write accurately and fluently.
- Some parents feel that communication methods are too varied. This means that some parents do not feel fully informed about key updates and activities that happen in school. The school should continue to review their communication systems so that all parents feel fully involved and informed about their child's education.

## 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 Walburga's Catholic Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2012.

## 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

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| **Unique reference number** | 142947 |
| **Local authority** | Bradford |
| **Inspection number** | 10346591 |
| **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** | 224 |
| **Appropriate authority** | Board of trustees |
| **Chair of trust** | Joe McDonnell |
| **CEO of the trust** | Chris Hanson (Interim CEO) |
| **Headteacher** | Elizabeth Fearnley |
| **Website** | www.wal.bcwcat.co.uk |
| **Date of previous inspection** | 5 July 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 |

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Blessed Christopher Wharton Catholic Academy Trust
- The headteacher is new to the role since the last inspection.
- The school is a Catholic primary school within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Leeds. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in May 2024. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school runs a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND who attend the school. The provision mainly supports pupils with autism spectrum disorder.
- The school provides a breakfast club run by the school on site.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

## 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 a number of leaders, including the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector met with leaders from the trust, including the CEO. They met with the trustees, including the chair of the trust and members of the local governing body. They also met with a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, met with subject leaders, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They held discussions about the curriculum and spoke to staff. The inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school, at playtime and at lunchtime. The inspector spoke with pupils about their views of the school, their learning, behaviour and safety.
- 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 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and pupils. They also took into account the views of parents and carers using Ofsted's online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View. These included comments received via the free-text facility. The inspector also talked to parents in the school playground.

### Inspection team

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|---|---|
| Nicola Beaumont, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |

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