Inspection of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, a Voluntary Academy

Lady Pit Lane, Beeston, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS11 6RX

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 October 2024
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Outstanding**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Vera Snejberkova-Taylor. This school is part of St Gregory the Great 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), Peter Hughes, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Shaun Vickers.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School is an oasis at the heart of the community. Pupils love to attend this caring school where everyone is made to feel welcome. Pupils and parents enjoy a morning greeting and a slice of toast with members of school staff. These special relationships help pupils know they are cared for. One pupil summed up the school's spirit by saying, 'There is a place for everyone and a friend to be made.'

The school has very high expectations for all pupils. This includes the high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils are highly motivated. They are eager to learn and rise to the school's challenges. Pupils have high aspirations for the future. Overall, they achieve well as they move through the curriculum. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their next stage of learning.

Pupils enjoy creative and engaging experiences that enhance their wider development. They express their excitement as they describe their 'seaside day'. During this day, donkeys and seaside attractions arrive at St Francis of Assisi to recreate the joy of the seaside. Pupils relish this opportunity. These rich and thoughtful wider activities contribute exceptionally well to pupils' development.

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

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils develop a genuine love of reading and are keen to share their favourite stories. The school incorporates texts that enhance pupils' understanding of difference. For example, pupils read texts to learn about different disabilities. This helps pupils to understand the different characteristics that these stories celebrate. Well-trained adults help pupils learn to read. The school identifies those pupils who need extra support. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from personalised support, where needed. As a result, pupils develop their reading over time.

Pupils, including pupils with SEND, benefit from a broad and ambitious curriculum. In mathematics, the curriculum progresses in a clear and logical order. This helps pupils build their knowledge over time. Regular opportunities to revisit prior learning ensure that pupils remember what they have learned. For example, Year 6 pupils recall rules about denominators and adding fractions from previous years. In the wider foundation subjects, the curriculum is still in its early stages. Pupils are less able to recall their prior learning than they are in mathematics.

Children in early years get off to a strong start in their education. The school has identified the key vocabulary and questions that adults should use to develop children's learning. At each activity station, the 'skills sheet' shows the purpose of each activity and the key vocabulary that supports this. This helps adults and children to have purposeful interactions. The school uses reading books to boost children's language and inspire their imagination. For example, the school has designed a unique 'hole' in the playground to support children's reading of a story called 'The Something'. Children make enthusiastic predictions about what might be down the 'hole'.

Pupils in the school delight in the opportunity to support their peers. Year 6 pupils fulfil their buddy role with a sense of responsibility and pride. The 'Good Shepherd' event lets every pupil lead a school activity. They relish the chance to design and lead activities that fundraise for Catholic Care. These rich experiences give pupils valuable leadership opportunities from nursery age and beyond.

A wide range of exciting trips and visits build pupils' experience of the wider world. Pupils in Year 3 learn to ice skate. Pupils in Year 4 talk about their residential visit with great enthusiasm. The school designs these visits to bring the taught curriculum to life. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn about the Great Fire of London. They develop teamwork skills by building replica houses. Pupils watch, in awe, as their model house burns in a controlled fire in the school playground. The school also expertly links this history topic to learning about fire safety. These tailored opportunities ensure pupils develop knowledge wider than the national curriculum.

The school, academy council, trust and diocese are resolute in their ambitions. They want every pupil to have the best start to their school life. Leaders ensure the caring ethos is underpinned by high standards. Pupils love to attend school. Staff receive the same care as pupils. 'Circle time' allows staff to meet and discuss their lives. It embodies the vision of putting people at the heart of the school. Adults are proud to work at the school. They are unified in their goal to give the whole community a school of which they can be proud.

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 foundation subjects, the curriculum is less securely embedded than it is in others. Where this is the case, pupils cannot recall consistently well the key knowledge they have previously been taught. The school should continue its work to ensure that the curriculum is implemented well across all subjects.

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	148739
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	10346773
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	233
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Shaun Vickers
CEO of the trust	Peter Hughes
Headteacher	Vera Snejberkova-Taylor
Website	www.bsf-leeds.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of St Gregory the Great Catholic Academy Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. It is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in May 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors 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.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and assistant headteacher of the school.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO of the trust, the director of primary standards and the vice-chair of the trust. The lead inspector also met with the academy council, including the chair.
- The lead inspector spoke with the deputy director of education for the Diocese of Leeds.
- The lead inspector met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator. An inspector also reviewed documentation relating to SEND.
- The lead inspector met with the leader responsible for early years. The inspectors also spent time in the early years provision across the course of the inspection.
- 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.
- A range of school documents was reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View. They also spoke with parents as they arrived with their child at school in the morning.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils and considered their views.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through meetings and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Gibbins, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rachael Macleod	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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