

# Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Barnstaple

Chanters Hill, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 8DN

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Inspection dates: 4 and 5 March 2025

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

The headteacher is Rob Meech. This school is part of Plymouth Cast multi-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), Zoe Batten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Elizabeth Ruth O'Donovan.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming school. They are kind and polite to visitors and each other. Pupils are happy and are safe. They know there is a member of staff they can speak to if they have any concerns. Staff have high expectations for pupils' academic achievements. In most subjects, pupils meet these expectations and achieve well. Where outcomes are below national standards, leaders have taken swift actions, and pupils' achievements are now improving.

Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. Older pupils know they are role models for the younger pupils. Pupils are proud of their roles as 'mini chaplains'. Each chaplain is responsible for a year group. They prepare assemblies by choosing the themes and verses to read. These roles help to build pupils' confidence and a sense of responsibility.

Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the guitar or piano. Competitive sporting events help to develop pupils' talents and interests. Visits from science organisations and brass bands help to deepen pupils' understanding of the curriculum. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to stay safe online and in the community.

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

The school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum. Learning is well sequenced so that pupils build knowledge and skills progressively. The school is ambitious for all pupils to learn to read from the time they start school. Ongoing professional development means staff are skilled at teaching pupils to read. Staff routinely check pupils' understanding to ensure pupils are secure in the sounds they learn. At all ages, pupils read books that reflect their reading ability. This means pupils have positive attitudes to reading and achieve well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff carefully consider how to help these pupils learn the same curriculum as their peers. Where adult support is required, this is skilfully managed, enabling pupils with SEND to learn alongside their peers.

The wider curriculum is implemented effectively across most subjects. This means pupils can explain in detail what they have learned in the past and how this helps them with what they are currently learning. For example, in art, pupils can discuss the differences in the work of artists they have studied from different year groups. Older pupils are able to explain how using Newton metres in Year 3 helped them develop a scientific understanding of forces. In these subjects, staff are skilled at checking pupils' understanding and extra support is provided for those pupils who need it. As a result, pupils are secure in what they have learned. However, in some other subjects, the checks on pupils' understanding are not as effective. This means pupils develop gaps in their knowledge and do not learn as well as they could.

Children in the early years are keen to learn. Staff build warm and caring relationships with children that help them to feel safe. Positive attitudes to learning are developed from the time children start school. The early years environment provides children with a rich range of learning experiences that promote communication. For example, children use scales to weigh vegetables and then explain to each other which is heavier and lighter. Children also develop their ability to take turns using timers, which they use independent of adult supervision. As a result, children are well prepared for the next stage of education.

Pupils benefit from the diversity of the local community. They are respectful of difference and are keen to learn about cultures and religions that are different from their own. However, the school offers limited experiences to learn beyond the local community. This means pupils' interests and talents are not as developed as they could be. Pupils do not develop a deep understanding of life in the wider community. As a result, pupils are not as fully prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be.

Across the school, pupils behave well. Pupils know the school rules of 'be ready, be respectful, be safe'. For pupils who need help to regulate their behaviour, personalised support plans are put in place. School leaders have focused on improving pupils' attendance. There are robust systems in place to track attendance. Pupils with low attendance are identified, and support is offered to families when needed. This has led to improved rates of attendance and a reduction in the number of persistently absent pupils.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They say leaders support them to do their best. Governors and the trust provide an effective level of support and challenge.

## **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 offers a limited range of experiences and opportunities for pupils to learn about or visit places beyond the local community. This means pupils do not have experience of communities beyond the local area. As part of curriculum development, leaders, including the trust, should consider the essential experiences and opportunities they want pupils to have in order to fully prepare them for life in modern Britain.
- Improvements to the use of assessment information in the wider curriculum are very recent and have not had an impact on addressing pupils' gaps in knowledge. In a few subjects, pupils do not learn as well as they could. The school must continue its work to refine assessment so that learning builds on what pupils already know and closes gaps in pupils' knowledge across the wider curriculum.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140739
<b>Local authority</b>	Devon
<b>Inspection number</b>	10344675
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	192
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Ruth O'Donovan
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Zoe Batten
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rob Meech
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ourladys.devon.sch.uk">www.ourladys.devon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5 and 6 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Plymouth Cast multi-academy trust.
- This is a Roman Catholic school. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2020.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision.
- The school operates its own Nursery provision for two-, three- and four-year-olds.

## 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, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with teachers, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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.
- The inspectors met with the members of the trust leadership team, the executive headteacher, the head of school, the special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders and members of the governing body.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and by talking to parents. The inspectors also reviewed responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

James Gentile, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

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