

St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

Address: Claremont Terrace, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 2LE

Unique reference number (URN): 148282

Inspection report: 30 June 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders place a high priority on pupils' attendance. Positive strategic work with families has had considerable impact over time. Published figures for attendance show the impact of their actions. Attendance across school has improved. In some cases, this is significant. For example, the attendance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved more quickly than for pupils with SEND nationally. Persistent absence rates for pupils with SEND and those who are eligible for pupil premium funding has improved substantially. Leaders are aware of the barriers to continued improvements in attendance and seek to overcome these. However, there is still a small proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school. This limits pupils' learning and they miss out on social occasions with their peers.

Classrooms are calm and purposeful. Pupils behave well and display positive attitudes to learning. Playtimes are equally positive. Pupils speak confidently about any friendship issues being dealt with quickly, including rare instances of bullying or other discriminatory behaviour. Leaders and staff have established a consistent and effective ethos for behaviour across the school. In early years, children look out for one another. They willingly include, and collaborate with, others in their work and play.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have a clear and strategic understanding of the quality of the school's curriculums and how these are taught. They identify where there have been significant inconsistencies in these areas over time. As a consequence of leaders' insight, clear improvements to subject curriculums, and the teaching of these curriculums, are evident across the school. For example, improvements in the teaching of phonics have resulted in significant increases in the proportion of Year 1 pupils who meet the required standard in the phonics screening check. The focus on strong foundations for all pupils is having positive impact in the classroom. Children and pupils of all ages and needs have the basic skills in reading that they need to access the wider curriculum. Through effective adaptations to learning and timely support, this also applies to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are otherwise vulnerable.

The impact of leaders' work to improve teaching and learning across school is evident in classroom practice, as well as in the work that pupils produce in their books. Pupils calculate with fractions, with confidence. Others talk with understanding about the importance of leaves as part of photosynthesis in plants. However, it is too early in the improvement journey to see a corresponding impact on pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

St Wilfrid's as an inclusive school where staff seek to make learning accessible for all. Leaders have worked quickly and decisively to upskill staff around inclusive practices. Well-targeted professional development gives staff the knowledge and skills they need to swiftly identify pupils' needs. Leaders then seek to provide the most effective provision to meet

these needs. This means that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils with other vulnerabilities typically get the support they need.

Leaders have overseen improvements in the quality of targets in pupils' support plans. This includes the personal education plans for pupils who are known to social care. This means that support for pupils across a wide range of needs is typically effective. Adaptations to task or provision are timely and have a positive impact on how well pupils progress through the curriculum. This allows pupils to access the curriculum alongside their peers. Leaders rigorously track the progress that pupils make to help inform further adjustments to the curriculum that may be necessary.

The school's pupil premium funding is targeted to help improve provision and outcomes for eligible pupils. In some cases, this has notable impact. For example, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics at the end of Year 6 has improved over time.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

The interim leadership team have worked quickly since appointment to understand the school's strengths. They also identify suitable priorities for further improvement and take appropriate action. At the heart of these actions sit the best interests of pupils across the school. Timely support from the trust has enabled leaders to target priority areas around curriculum and teaching across the school, including in the early years foundation stage. Leaders' work is beginning to have demonstrable impact in these areas but is not fully embedded. The clear focus on increasing staff expertise through professional development and training has had particularly notable impact.

Those responsible for governance fulfil their statutory duties. They get the information that they need to understand the school's performance and to hold leaders to account. Trustees and other senior trust leaders have effective mechanisms for checking and confirming the information that they receive from school leaders. Despite the pace of improvement since September 2025, leaders have prioritised staff wellbeing and workload. The vast majority of staff reflect this positively in their feedback.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school. The way in which leaders seek to engage with the community is appreciated. Parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View were highly positive. Their comments typically refer to 'amazing support and care' for pupils, 'kind and approachable' staff and appreciation for the way that the school promotes the development of 'understanding, respect and appreciation for different cultures and ethnicities'.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders and staff across school have a clear focus on pupils' wider development beyond the academic. They work strategically to improve this offer. For example, leaders amend the provision to adapt to the changing needs of pupils or in response to changes within the local community. Pupils' understanding of spirituality develops appropriately through opportunities to understand different world faiths and beliefs. Staff ensure that pupils understand the

dangers of discrimination. This helps to reinforce pupils' understanding of the need to embrace diversity and inclusion. They respect and celebrate one another's differences.

A coherent programme of study gives pupils the knowledge, skills and moral compass that they need to understand the importance of making positive choices, including in their online and offline presence. This programme develops pupils' understanding of fundamental British values. It enables them to become socially aware at an appropriate level. Pupils have an informed understanding of physical and mental health. They understand the potential impact of their actions on others. This makes a significant contribution to the sense of calm across the school.

The relationships education programme across school prepares pupils well for adolescence and life beyond the school. The wider development offer across school is carefully crafted and adjusted to ensure that pupils of all needs or vulnerabilities can access this appropriately. Leaders also track pupils' participation in extra-curricular activities. They seek to remove any barriers to pupils' involvement in this offer.

Pastoral support across school is effective in helping pupils who may struggle with their emotional wellbeing at times. Older pupils develop remarkable insight into the impact of this work. They speak positively about the impact of 'reflection group' work, for example. Staff have a deep knowledge and understanding of individual pupils and their backgrounds. This helps foster the highly positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils.

Needs attention ●

Achievement

Needs attention ●

Over time, pupils' attainment and progress through the curriculum have not been as good as they need to be. Pupils' attainment, including for those who are disadvantaged, fluctuates over time. An increasingly small number of pupils have gaps in their foundational knowledge that have not been sufficiently resolved in the past. This impacts on the progress through the curriculum that pupils have made. This means that these pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they could be.

Where effective action has been taken to close the gaps in learning, outcomes have improved. For example, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of pupils who attain the required standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1. Recent work in some pupils' books shows improvement in how well they progress through the curriculum across a range of curriculum subjects. From starting points that are often low, pupils with a range of vulnerabilities generally make expected progress through the curriculum. However, there are inconsistencies across year groups and different curriculum subjects. Leaders are aware of this. Their work to improve teaching and the curriculum across the school is beginning to have some positive impact. However, it is too soon for the impact of this work to be reflected in current published outcomes.

Leaders demonstrate clear expertise and understanding of the early years. There is tangible ambition for all children to succeed. A quality curriculum sets out the intent of positive and meaningful learning experiences. Children typically secure key foundational knowledge of phonics and number through targeted activities. Children across a range of ages demonstrate sustained engagement and independence. Leaders adapt the curriculum to take account of emerging needs, for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with any other vulnerabilities. The curriculum is therefore accessible for all. Children's wellbeing and welfare is a high priority. Across the early years, children are happy and safe.

However, the way in which the curriculum is taught is inconsistent. At times, chosen activities lack purpose or sufficient focus. Opportunities for children to develop and secure their early writing skills are sometimes not as effective as they could be. Staff do not consistently seek to engage pupils in high-quality conversation to consistently embed and promote the key vocabulary, skills and knowledge that children need. As a result, some children do not achieve as well as they should. Therefore, they are not as well prepared for the next stage of education as they should be.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at St Wilfrid's are confident, inquisitive and happy members of the school community. They benefit from the school's determination to 'make a difference to our children's lives'. All are welcomed, cared for and safe at this inclusive school. Pupils who are safeguarding ambassadors take pride in their roles. Throughout school, pupils embody a clear sense of belonging. Staff promote positive and nurturing relationships with pupils. Pupils reciprocate this positivity. Coming from a wide range of backgrounds and ethnicities, pupils across school learn and play together in harmony.

Pupils show respect and tolerance for one another. Classrooms are alive to the chatter of positive learning. Pupils do not disrupt the learning of others. Bullying is rare, but on the rare occasion that it does occur it is investigated thoroughly and effectively. Leaders have put effective support in place where a small number of pupils need additional support around their emotional regulation. St Wilfrid's is a place where pupils want to be. As a result, attendance has improved over time. There are still a small number of pupils who are persistently absent from school. This impacts negatively on their progress, academically and socially.

Attitudes to learning are positive. Children in early years show enthusiasm in their play. For example, they design and build their own boats from a range of materials. They then test out their craft, taking delight in the fact that their boats 'are floating, not sinking!' Older pupils also enjoy their learning. They typically demonstrate a clear understanding of their learning. Where pupils have barriers to their learning or wellbeing, these are identified quickly. Prompt action then typically reduces any barriers for pupils. However, some pupils have had inconsistent experiences of learning over time. This limits their progress through the

curriculum. Published outcomes for pupils show that this can impact on their readiness for their next stages of education.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that the recent improvements made to curriculum and teaching result in consistent and highly effective teaching to enable pupils to make rapid progress through the curriculum and achieve as well as they could.
 - Leaders should continue their work to further reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school so that these pupils do not miss out on spending time with their peers and on important learning.
 - Leaders should ensure that the well-planned curriculum for early years is consistently taught well and prepares children increasingly well for their next stage of education.
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About this inspection

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 (CEO), Anita Bath OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

The substantive headteacher is currently absent from school. An interim leadership team has been appointed by the trust. The interim executive headteacher was appointed in September 2025. The interim acting deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2026.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This inspection took place on 30 June and 1 July 2026.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with members of the interim leadership team, other school staff, representatives of the board of trustees, the CEO, the deputy director of education for the diocese and the headteacher of the local authority virtual school. They also spoke with groups of pupils, visited a sample of lessons and looked at pupils' work across a number of curriculum subjects. Inspectors also spoke with some parents and carers.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school currently uses no alternative provision.

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. It is in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. Its last section 48 inspection was on 19 and 20 November 2025.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection. An interim leadership team, appointed by the trust, has been in place since the start of this academic year.

Headteacher: Pauline Johnstone

Lead inspector:

Richard Beadnall, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sharon Ballinger, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Armstrong, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

This was the data available at the time of the full inspection, taken from [different sources](#). More recent data may have been published since the full inspection took place.

 The inspector(s) used this data during the full inspection on 30 June 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

237

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

330

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

38.97%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last 6 years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.11%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

10.55%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational needs support at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English indices of deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	47%	61%	Below
2024/25 (final)	47%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	40%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	54%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	71%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	64%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	69%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	74%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	73%	Below
2024/25 (final)	53%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	48%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	59%	73%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	35%	46%	Below
2024/25 (final)	36%	47%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	41%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	28%	44%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	63%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	50%	63%	Below
2023/24 (final)	82%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	56%	60%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (final)	50%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	59%	58%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	50%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	39%	60%	Below
2024/25 (final)	43%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	47%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	28%	59%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	35%	68%	-33 pp
2024/25 (final)	36%	69%	-33 pp
2023/24 (final)	41%	67%	-26 pp
2022/23 (final)	28%	66%	-39 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	63%	80%	-16 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	81%	-31 pp
2023/24 (final)	82%	80%	3 pp
2022/23 (final)	56%	78%	-23 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	53%	78%	-25 pp
2024/25 (final)	50%	78%	-28 pp
2023/24 (final)	59%	78%	-19 pp
2022/23 (final)	50%	77%	-27 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	39%	80%	-41 pp
2024/25 (final)	43%	81%	-38 pp
2023/24 (final)	47%	79%	-32 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	28%	79%	-51 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	5.3%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	7.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.7%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (3 term)	8.8%	13.0%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	23.6%	14.6%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	15.7%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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