

Inspection of The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School

Kingsland Gardens, Kingsthorpe, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN2 7BH

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	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Carmel Dodds. This school is part of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust (OLICAT), which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the strategic executive lead, Tony Bishop, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Christopher Donnellan.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School. The school's 'virtues' of faith, hope, forgiveness, love and trust are tangible and lived throughout the school. Pupils feel valued, listened to and safe. They are polite and respectful and welcome new friends to the school. Pupils learn and play harmoniously together.

The school is aspirational for pupils' achievements. Pupils study a wide range of interesting topics and read books that enthuse them to learn new and ambitious vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have the same opportunities as their peers and are well supported to be successful. Pupils try hard and achieve well.

Pupils are enthused by the enriching experiences that the school provides. These include learning outdoors and in the community, visiting museums, participating in sports events and learning to play musical instruments. The school is calm and orderly. Pupils enjoy making their own contribution to school life, for instance, as junior leaders and 'eco stewards'. Pupils aim to show kindness and to be resilient. They are proud to earn virtue tokens for doing this. All this prepares pupils well for their next steps.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious and engaging. It is well structured. In all subjects, the school has identified precisely what pupils will learn and when they will learn it. There are many opportunities to revisit important concepts. This is built carefully right from the start of the Reception class. This helps pupils to gain and retain new knowledge over time.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and most present concepts clearly. Teachers provide interesting activities and opportunities for pupils to practise skills they have learned. Leaders have ensured that teachers check pupils' learning rigorously in reading, writing and mathematics. Staff use this information effectively to address any knowledge gaps and misconceptions. However, this is not done consistently well in some other subjects. In these subjects, pupils do not build their knowledge as securely as they could.

Reading is a constant priority in the school. Phonics is taught well right from the start. This includes a sharp focus on supporting weaker readers to catch up quickly. Pupils read often from books that are well matched to the sounds they know. This helps them to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils learn demanding vocabulary through the wide range of texts that the school has placed at the heart of the curriculum. Teachers support pupils to structure their written and oral responses well. This starts with communication and language being threaded through in the Nursery and Reception classes. This is helpful for all pupils, but particularly the many pupils in the school who speak English as an additional language (EAL). Pupils

use increasingly sophisticated language in their spoken and written explanations as they move through the school. They become confident communicators.

The school is currently developing leadership of the wider curriculum. However, in some subjects, the school does not have a secure understanding of how well pupils are learning. In these subjects, the school does not have the information it needs to make improvements in a timely way.

The school takes seriously its duty to ensure that everyone is included. It precisely identifies pupils' additional needs and puts in place support to help pupils with SEND learn successfully alongside their peers. Staff make careful adaptations to teaching, so pupils achieve well.

Opportunities to promote pupils' well-being are woven through everything the school does. Pupils learn to respect and appreciate difference, including different cultures, beliefs and family structures. They learn about making healthy and safe choices. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils show positive attitudes to all aspects of school life. The school has put in place careful procedures, so pupils new to the school get off to a strong start. Pupils move around the school calmly and follow routines and instructions without fuss. The school keeps the importance of attendance in parents' and carers' minds. The school is approachable and offers tailored support to families when needed. Rates of absence and persistent absence are dropping. Parents are universally appreciative of the school and the positive impact of its nurturing ethos on their children.

Staff feel valued and enjoy working at the school. They appreciate leaders' actions to consider staff's workload and to respect their health and well-being.

The trust's collaborative support is a strength. Leaders and staff appreciate the opportunities for training that help them in their work to provide pupils with the best education possible. Local governors and trustees are knowledgeable and passionate about the school and are integral to this endeavour.

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 subjects and sometimes in the early years, staff's checks on pupils' knowledge do not spot pupils' misunderstandings or learning gaps. This means staff do not routinely make appropriate decisions about pupils' next learning steps to ensure that

they gain knowledge securely. The school should support staff to use assessment information effectively so that pupils achieve well in all subjects.

- The school does not have as secure an understanding of how well pupils are learning in some subjects compared to others. This means they do not have as full a picture of where to make improvements. The school should ensure that they check how well pupils are learning across subjects, so they better understand where they might need to make necessary improvements.

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	142742
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10347611
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	249
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair of trust	Christopher Donnellan
CEO of the trust	Tony Bishop (strategic executive lead)
Headteacher	Carmel Dodds
Website	www.thegoodshepherdatholicprimaryschool.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 June 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Academies Trust (OLICAT), formed in February 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in June 2024.
- The school runs a breakfast club on the school site.

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

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