

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, North Shields

Lovaine Place, North Shields, Tyne and Wear NE29 0BU

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 January 2025

Outcome

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, North Shields has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Shaun Dillon. 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, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School is a happy place filled with kindness. Pupils' conversations create a palpable buzz around the building. Outdoor learning enhances every part of the curriculum. From early years to Year 6, pupils become increasingly skilled in cycling. They progress from balance bikes to competent cycling in the local area. Pupils also relish learning that takes place in and around the school's grounds. This includes cooking pancakes and bread on the campfire.

Pupils achieve well and this is reflected in published outcomes. The broad and ambitious curriculum prepares them well for the future. Books and reading are at the heart of this community school. Staff and pupils share a passion for stories and the discussion they promote. In the early years, children love to share their current books with staff and visitors.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are kind to one another. Pupils display empathy for others that is exceptionally mature. They enjoy their 'compassion matters' lessons. Here, they learn about personal development. This includes managing their emotions and understanding challenges others might face. Parents and carers recognise the many strengths of the school. They comment on the consistently welcoming and nurturing environment that the school provides.

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

The school has high expectations of its pupils, both academically and socially. In lessons, pupils are keen to contribute. They are willing to try even if they get something wrong. Pupils learn that mistakes help you to get better. They embrace this in everything they do. The curriculum is sequenced effectively from early years to Year 6. The school recognises the importance of a flying start in the early years. Here, staff support children to build strong foundations in English and mathematics. For example, children quickly learn to recognise numbers. They enjoy activities such as matching building blocks to numbers on playing cards. Songs and rhymes help them learn to count with increasing complexity. A carefully designed environment also helps them practise and embed their wider learning.

Across the school, teaching supports pupils to progress through the curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included in all aspects of school life. Staff know pupils with SEND exceptionally well. Thoughtful adaptations help pupils access learning with their peers. The teaching of reading is a strength. However, some pupils do not achieve as highly in mathematics as they do in other parts of the curriculum. The school's approach to teaching more complex mathematics is not as consistent as it could be. Some pupils lack the fluency and skills to tackle more tricky problems. The school recognises this and has started to make important improvements.

Pupils enjoy a curriculum with many enrichment opportunities. For example, they experience a variety of trips. This includes going to a local river to bring geography to life. However, there is a lack of clarity about what pupils should know and remember in wider subjects. The school has not identified the precise knowledge pupils should gain. This means the school cannot easily check what pupils know as they move through the curriculum.

From Nursery, staff prepare children for learning to read. The youngest children focus well as they learn to make and recognise sounds. This helps prepare them for phonics in Reception. Expert staff throughout the school teach phonics well. If children fall behind or join the school mid-year, staff quickly help them to catch up.

Carefully chosen books and stories also underpin the school's approach to personal development. Across the school and at home, pupils engage in discussions about the book's themes. For example, pupils enjoy reading 'My Name is Not Refugee'. Later, children in Reception confidently explain what a refugee is. Pupils of all ages listen respectfully to each other. They talk about their personal heritage and explore why your background is important. These learning opportunities contribute exceptionally well to pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils display extraordinary kindness towards one another. They also empathise with people who are less fortunate than themselves.

The school sits at the heart of the local community. Parents are proud of the school. They are effusive about the opportunities the school provides. Staff enjoy working at the school. They are clear that school considers their workload and supports their well-being.

Those responsible for governance know the school well and provide effective support. The work of the wider trust helps the school to achieve its ambitious goals.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The school keeps pupils safe from harm. However, records do not consistently reflect the actions that the school has taken to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While safeguarding is effective, there is variation in how well the school records the actions taken to look after pupils. This means it is not always clear what has already been done with families and external agencies. The school should make sure that records clearly reflect the actions that staff have taken to safeguard pupils.
- Over time, teaching has not helped pupils confidently apply mathematical learning to more complex problems. Some pupils' achievement in mathematics is not as high as it is in other areas of the curriculum. The school should build on its current success by further strengthening the mathematics curriculum so that pupils have the skills and knowledge to apply learning in increasingly complex ways.
- In some foundation subjects, the school has not identified the most important knowledge pupils should know and remember. This limits pupils' progress in these subjects and makes it harder to check what pupils know. The school should identify the important knowledge in these subject areas and check pupils have learned it successfully.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, North Shields, to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2014.

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	148448
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10346762
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	212
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
CEO of the trust	Anita Bath
Headteacher	Shaun Dillon
Website	www.stcuthbertsrcprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, North Shields is part of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust.
- The school does not currently use alternative provision for its pupils.

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 this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher over the course of the inspection. The inspector also met with the CEO of the trust and the director of primary standards for the trust.

- The inspector spoke with the chair of the board of trustees and four governors. Governance documents were reviewed, including minutes from governor meetings.
- The inspector 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 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 met with groups of pupils and staff formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- The inspector reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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