

# Inspection of St Augustine's RC Primary School

Beechwood Avenue, Darlington, County Durham DL3 7HP

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Inspection dates: 12 and 13 January 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Augustine's RC Primary School as an academy school under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection of the predecessor school.

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

This is a friendly school. Pupils and staff talk about it being 'like a family'. Pupils feel safe. They know that they can talk to someone or use the 'worry boxes' if they are unhappy. Pupils learn how to keep their minds and bodies healthy. They know it is important to be kind to others.

Most pupils behave well. Leaders have taken steps to make sure everyone knows what is expected. Some behaviour at lunchtime and playtime is not yet as good as it could be. Pupils understand that it is important to be respectful, responsible and ready for learning. Some bullying happens. Pupils know whom to tell if this happens. They are confident that adults will listen and help.

Some parents say that, previously, leaders have been unwilling to listen to their concerns. They say staff do not communicate well. They have been unhappy about parts of the curriculum. Leaders have recently begun to address these concerns. Some parents have already noticed a difference.

Pupils enjoy learning. They try hard and listen well. They love exploring new books and learning new words. Some pupils find their work too easy or too challenging. This is because some parts of the school curriculum are not yet planned well enough. Some staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils. They do not adapt plans well enough to meet the needs of individual pupils. Leaders have not ensured that some important parts of the curriculum are taught consistently. This means that the youngest pupils are not making a good enough start to reading and mathematics.

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

Leaders are developing the curriculum. The trust has provided curriculum plans for science, history and geography. Leaders have introduced schemes to ensure a well-planned and sequenced curriculum for physical education (PE), art and music. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of these resources. Strategies for assessing what pupils know and can do are not fully established.

In science, pupils can talk about what they have learned. They enjoy investigations and are interested in finding out about famous scientists. Their written work demonstrates understanding and use of correct vocabulary. In PE, pupils have the chance to try different sports, such as tag rugby, tennis and dodgeball. Teachers help them to develop their skills through well-structured lessons. Pupils also learn the wider benefits of PE, such as developing resilience and teamwork.

Leaders have recently introduced a new programme to strengthen the teaching of mathematics. Teachers received appropriate training before introducing it in the classroom. Pupils' work shows that they are learning the intended curriculum. They are closing any gaps in understanding. However, this is not always the case for some younger pupils and some pupils with additional needs.

Pupils enjoy reading. They are pleased that they now have a more varied range of books available in school. They are enthusiastic about their favourite books and the recent Roald Dahl week. Leaders prioritise time for pupils to read and to share books. They make sure pupils develop the skills they need to read for purpose and pleasure.

There are some inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics. Some adults do not have the knowledge they need to teach phonics effectively. Early reading books are not always well matched to the sounds pupils have learned. Leaders recognised this and are in the process of introducing a new programme. They intend that all staff will be fully trained in this approach by the end of this term.

Pupils in the early years are happy and enjoy the different learning experiences that they have. However, the curriculum in early years is not as developed as it could be. It does not fully set out precisely what children will learn in the different areas of learning. The curriculum is responsive to children's interests but is not sufficiently focused on developing the skills and knowledge pupils will need for Year 1.

The special educational needs coordinator joined the school in September 2021. She has developed a good understanding of pupils' needs. She supports families effectively. However, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not consistent across the school. Some teachers do not make sure that they always adapt the curriculum in lessons to support pupils' learning needs.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' personal development. Many of the books recently purchased were chosen to enhance pupils' understanding of diversity. Personal, social and health education makes effective links to other subjects. Pupils enjoy participating in sports festivals and competitions. They say it gives them a chance to use their skills and learn more. Pupils talk confidently about healthy relationships and healthy lifestyles. They learn about good citizenship through activities such as supporting the local food bank. Pupils know how to behave well and how to 'repair' their behaviour. Some adults have special training to support pupils with managing their feelings.

The interim executive headteacher has a clear understanding of what is working well in the school and what needs to improve. She is determined to bring about rapid improvement. Teachers speak positively about the recent support and training they have had. This extra leadership capacity recently implemented by the trust has ensured that change has begun. However, this change to leadership capacity has not happened swiftly enough. Governors bring a wide set of skills and experience. They are supportive of the changes being made. They recognise their role in monitoring and challenging leaders to ensure improvement and understand that this needs to happen more effectively.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a culture of safeguarding in this school. Leaders and staff have regular training. They know what to look out for to keep pupils safe. They follow the school's process for reporting and recording concerns. They work well with other agencies to ensure pupils get the help they need.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe and how to make good choices. They know what to do if they are worried. They are confident that adults in school will help them if they need it.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The approach to teaching phonics in the early years and key stage 1 is inconsistent. Some staff lack the knowledge to deliver the planned curriculum effectively or to help those pupils who need additional support. Leaders should ensure that all staff access focused professional development. Through robust monitoring, leaders should ensure that teaching is accurate and in line with the school's chosen programme.
- The early years curriculum is not sufficiently developed. It does not take into account enough of what children already know and can do. This means that some children are not well prepared for key stage 1. Leaders should ensure that the early years curriculum is well sequenced across all areas of learning and that assessment is used effectively to adapt teaching and provision.
- The school's curriculum in most foundation subjects is at an early stage of implementation. Although planning identifies the key knowledge and skills pupils should learn, assessment systems are not yet established. As a result, teachers do not always fully consider what pupils already know and can do. Leaders should ensure that assessment is used effectively to adapt planning and that teaching meets the needs of all pupils, particularly the most able.
- Senior leaders, including those responsible for governance, have been overly reliant on monitoring the educational performance of the school through outcomes in statutory assessment. Inconsistencies in the support for pupils and the quality of the curriculum have gone unchecked. Senior leaders, including those responsible for governance, should ensure that subject leaders use robust monitoring systems to maintain an accurate and rounded view of the quality of teaching and learning.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139531
<b>Local authority</b>	Darlington
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211847
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 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>	Maria Matthews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martina McCollom
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.staugustines.bhcet.org.uk">www.staugustines.bhcet.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust in 2013.
- There have been significant changes in leadership in recent months. The school has support from a member of the trust's school improvement team. This began in September 2021. A new deputy headteacher took up post in September 2021. An interim executive headteacher was appointed in December 2021.
- A new chair of the local governing board took up post in June 2021.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club, providing care beyond the school day.
- A qualifying complaint made to Ofsted in 2018 was considered as part of the inspection.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the interim executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and advisers from the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust school improvement team currently supporting the school. They also talked to subject leaders and teachers in the early stages of their careers.
- The inspectors looked in detail into the curriculum in reading, mathematics, science and PE. They talked to leaders and teachers about their curriculum plans. They also talked to pupils about what they knew and remembered in these subjects. They visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors talked to members of the local governing board, the chief executive officer of the trust and the director of education for the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle to find out how they support and challenge school leaders.
- Inspectors considered 94 responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including 74 free-text responses.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they dropped their children off at school and spoke to parents who requested a meeting with inspectors.
- Inspectors talked to a range of pupils across the school to hear their views on school life.

### **Inspection team**

Gill McCleave, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jo Warner

Ofsted Inspector

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