

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Sacriston

Front Street, Sacriston, Durham, County Durham DH7 6AB

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 September 2023

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

The headteacher of this school is Samantha Clarke. This school is part of the Bishop Wilkinson 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, Nick Hurn OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Angela Boyle.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders have ensured that St Bede's Catholic Primary School is a safe and caring place to learn. The school's Christian values are at its heart. Staff are rightly proud of the school's inclusive ethos. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and conduct. Disruption is rare. Pupils respond well to the clear structures and routines that are in place. There is a calm and purposeful environment in classrooms and around the school.

Pupils feel safe. Relationships with staff are warm and respectful. The mental health of pupils is central to the school's pastoral care. Pupils know that there is always an adult to talk to. Pupils show respect towards each other and adults. Bullying is very rare. Children are confident that staff will resolve any problems quickly when they do occur.

Pupils study all the subjects in the national curriculum. Leaders are ambitious for what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can achieve.

Pupils learn about a wide range of cultures and traditions. Pupils have valuable opportunities to take responsibility in school. These opportunities can include becoming buddies to the youngest children, as house captains or as school councillors. Many pupils take part in a range of extra-curricular activities.

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

The school wants pupils to achieve well. A curriculum has been designed which helps pupils learn and remember more. Leaders place a strong emphasis on reading and mathematics. For instance, in Reception, practical tasks enable children to make a strong start to recognising number and to developing writing skills. This enables pupils to apply their understanding from these key subjects in other areas of learning, such as art and science.

A focus on developing important knowledge and vocabulary is carefully embedded into lessons. For example, in art, pupils learn how to use a wide range of media. From Reception, pupils learn specific vocabulary and use this to critique their work. They identify what to improve next time. In some subjects, the school has introduced a new curriculum. Staff have been trained to implement these changes. In a small number of subjects, for example history, some knowledge is not fully sequenced between different key stages. This means that some opportunities for deepening pupils' understanding are missed.

In most subjects, teachers check what pupils have learned and what they need to do next. For example, in mathematics, teachers review pupils' progress, adapting teaching successfully to close any gaps in pupils' understanding. In a small number of subjects, such as history, this is not carried out as successfully. Consequently, teachers are not as secure about what pupils have learned and remembered.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. They have adopted a well-constructed phonics programme. This starts in Reception. Staff are well trained and teach phonics with confidence. The books that pupils read match the sounds that they know. This helps them practise using their phonics knowledge to become confident and fluent readers. Staff provide extra support for pupils who have fallen behind with their reading to help them catch up.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils with SEND. They support teachers in adapting the curriculum for these pupils. This ensures that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. The school secures expert help for pupils with SEND when needed.

Staff establish effective routines for pupils' behaviour from the moment they start school. As a result, pupils behave well. They show consideration for each other, and courtesy to adults. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils play cooperatively. Leaders make good use of the space available to ensure that pupils have an active breaktime. Attendance is a priority for all, including for pupils with SEND. Leaders check pupils' attendance daily.

Pupils are articulate and independent by the time they are ready to leave the school. These skills are taught through a programme of Catholic social and personal education. This enables pupils to learn about their talents and how they can be used for the good of others. Pupils learn about different cultures. They understand British values and protected characteristics. Pupils develop personal responsibility, taking on caring and leadership roles across the school.

A few parents and carers have found changes to the communication and messaging system confusing and felt this was not addressed quickly enough. The school has since made software updates. A new trust-wide communication system is due to be introduced to improve communication with parents.

Staff are extremely positive about support they receive from leaders and recognise how hard leaders work to remove unnecessary workload.

Governors and trustees know the school's strengths well. They have regular meetings with school leaders. This ensures that they understand what the school must do to secure improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The sequencing of the curriculum is not consistently strong across all foundation subjects. In some subjects, assessment is not used effectively to check what

pupils remember and to inform the next steps in teaching. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. The fine tuning, implementation and assessment of the curriculum across some of the foundation subjects should be developed further.

- Some parents feel that communication from school can be unclear. This limits parents' ability to understand what is happening in school and support their children. The school should refine its communication with parents.

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	148204
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10269168
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	94
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Boyle
Headteacher	Samantha Clarke
Website	www.stbedessacrison.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Bede’s Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in November 2020. When its predecessor school, St Bede’s Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, Sacriston, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall. St Bede’s Catholic Primary School is part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust. The school joined the trust in November 2020.
- The school’s religious character has not been inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 since it converted to academy status. The last section 48 inspection (conducted by the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle for the previous school) was in November 2019. That school, St Bede’s Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, was judged to be outstanding.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff. Inspectors spoke with the deputy director of education for the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, the interim chair of Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, the deputy chief executive officer of Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust and governors, including the chair of the local governing committee.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils. Inspectors also spoke to leaders and pupils about the curriculum in other subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited the school's breakfast club and spoke to staff and pupils.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation shared by school leaders, including the school development plan, minutes from meetings of the governing body and leaders' self-evaluation document.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, information submitted by parents, and responses to the staff survey. Inspectors spoke informally to parents outside the school.

Inspection team

David Hodgkiss, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alison Cottrell

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