

Inspection of St Chad's Catholic Primary School, Witton Park

The Baltic, Witton Park, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 0EP

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 September 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The headteacher of this school is Jenna Ellison. This school is part of Bishop Hogarth 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, Michael Shorten, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Yvonne Coates.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school is a calm, happy and welcoming learning community. The school's values and mission statement, 'come as you are and walk with us', are reflected in every aspect of school life. Warm relationships exist between pupils and staff and everyone is included at St Chad's Catholic Primary School. Pupils say that bullying is rare. They trust staff to help them if they have any worries.

Pupils are polite and respectful to other pupils, staff and visitors. They respond well to leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. In lessons, pupils are engaged in their learning. They discuss their ideas and opinions readily. The caring and friendly atmosphere includes playtimes, when older pupils act as role models for younger pupils.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Children get off to a strong start in Reception. They learn to express their feelings and emotions in a supportive and safe environment. Pupils enjoy being active citizens. They contribute to the local community with litter picks and carol services at a nearby care home. In school, they share their views in the student council and faith council, developing confidence and independence.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and ambitious curriculum to enable pupils to build detailed knowledge over time. Although the curriculum in most subjects is new, leaders have thought carefully about the most important knowledge pupils need to learn. This begins in early years, where children develop an understanding of early mathematics and language through carefully planned activities. For example, children use puppets and storytelling equipment to retell stories and rhymes.

Leaders have prioritised reading within the curriculum. Phonics teaching starts straightaway in Reception. Staff are trained well in how to teach the phonics programme. As a result, the teaching of phonics is consistent and high quality. Pupils practise their reading with books accurately matched to the sounds that they know. Teachers spot pupils who are struggling to read, and they arrange additional support to help them catch up. Leaders ensure that daily reading sessions include a range of fiction and non-fiction texts, as well as poetry.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. Generally, the work given to pupils enables them to deepen and extend their knowledge. Teachers make regular checks on pupils' learning. However, this is not always the case. Sometimes, teachers do not closely match the work given to pupils to the planned curriculum. When this happens, it limits the extent to which pupils develop their curriculum knowledge.

Leaders have ensured that staff quickly identify and support pupils with SEND. When necessary, leaders work with external agencies to gather expert advice about what

additional help pupils need. Teachers are provided with detailed information on how to best support pupils with SEND in their classes. Teachers implement this advice consistently well to the benefit of pupils.

Leaders have recently revised the school's behaviour systems. They have established high expectations which pupils understand. Consequently, lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Leaders are continuing to develop attendance systems to ensure pupils attend school regularly. They engage the support of external agencies and work closely with parents. Despite this, the attendance of some pupils remains low.

Pupils' personal development is supported by a comprehensive personal, social, health and economic education programme. They learn about healthy relationships, how to stay safe online and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. In Reception, children learn the difference between right and wrong, in both their own actions and the actions of others. Pupils have a strong understanding of equality and celebrate difference. Pupils' learning is enhanced by trips and visits. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about carrying out geography fieldwork at the River Wear and a science, technology, engineering and mathematics trip to the Shildon locomotion museum. Pupils are respectful and tolerant in their actions and behaviour. However, fundamental British values are not taught explicitly enough to ensure pupils fully understand them.

The school is well led by knowledgeable and caring leaders. The trust and trustees support them well. Parents recognise and appreciate an improvement in home-school communication over recent months. Staff are proud to be part of St Chad's Catholic Primary School. There is a collegiate atmosphere centred on achieving the very best for all pupils. Staff say that leaders are approachable and mindful of workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculums for many subjects are new and, sometimes, learning activities, especially in mixed-age classes, do not closely match the knowledge and skills teachers would like pupils to develop. This means that pupils do not deepen their subject knowledge well. The school should review the implementation of newly introduced curriculums to ensure that the work given to pupils enables them to achieve highly in all subjects.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This means that they miss important learning. The school should continue to take action to ensure that they

improve the attendance of these pupils. This is so these pupils can benefit from the good quality of education that the school provides.

- The school has not been clear enough in the teaching of fundamental British values. Although pupils demonstrate these values in their actions and conduct, some pupils are limited in their understanding of them. The school should ensure that there are specific opportunities for teachers to develop pupils' understanding of each of the British values to help prepare them for life in modern Britain.

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 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	148281
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10269197
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	70
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Coates
Headteacher	Jenna Ellison
Website	www.stchads.bhcet.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Chad's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in June 2021. When its predecessor school, St Chad's Roman Catholic Voluntary Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good.
- The school is part of the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a before- and after-school club.
- The school is a Catholic school and is part of the Diocese of Newcastle and Hexham. The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in April 2023.

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 met with the headteacher, senior leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and board of trustees, including the chair of trustees. She also met with representatives from the diocese and the chief executive officer.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, geography and art. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 observed behaviour as pupils moved around the school, during lessons, in the outdoor play area and in the dining hall.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, leaders' behaviour and attendance records and minutes of meetings held by those responsible for governance.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Kate Morris, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Victoria James	Ofsted Inspector

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