

Inspection of St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, South Shields

Harton House Road East, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 6DZ

Inspection dates: 29 and 30 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
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 Alison Dunne. This school is part of Bishop Chadwick 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, Brendan Tapping, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel O'Mahoney.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Gregory's is a calm and supportive place for pupils to learn. The respect and warmth that pupils and adults show towards each other makes them a happy team. Pupils' behaviour inside and outside of the classroom is exceptional. Pupils rarely require adult support to solve small disagreements. They have the skills needed to negotiate and reflect together. Good manners are evident at all times.

Pupils feel safe and well supported. They know that they can approach any adult for help and that they will receive it. Younger pupils value the buddy system, where staff allocate an older pupil to look after them. These older pupils can be seen fastening coats and playing games with their younger friends across the school day.

The personal development programme for pupils is excellent. This is aligned with the strong Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils learn to be kind, within school and in the local community. Class captains have recently planned a 'kindness month' for all classes. Pupils also collect items for the local food bank and excitedly visit local care homes.

The school's ambitions for pupils' academic development are also high. Pupils experience a coherent and interesting education. They achieve well in most aspects of the curriculum.

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

The school has designed a curriculum that enables pupils to acquire important knowledge across a range of subjects. Pupils are encouraged to 'think like a scientist, geographer, or artist'. Lessons allow pupils to build their knowledge and to practise important skills. Pupils achieve well. They complete work in their books to a high standard. However, teaching does not consistently check how well pupils are learning the intended curriculum. For example, in lessons, some pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to articulate or demonstrate their understanding of the curriculum.

Leaders want the best for the pupils and staff of St Gregory's. They think deeply about all aspects of the school day to keep improving things for pupils. They make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) can fully access their lessons and wider school experiences.

There is a sharp focus on all pupils learning to read with accuracy and fluency. All staff have received quality training to ensure that they are able to help pupils to keep up with the pace of phonics lessons. If a pupil falls behind, they receive the extra help that they need to catch up. Older pupils talk with confidence about the range of authors and books that they enjoy from the school and class libraries.

The school's recent work to improve pupils' problem-solving and reasoning knowledge in mathematics is having a positive impact. Pupils tackle mathematics

problems with greater confidence than they did previously. However, pupils' learning is hampered because their understanding of important number facts is not sufficiently secure.

Children in Reception get off to a flying start. Despite children joining the school from over 10 different pre-school settings, they quickly settle in. The strong personal, social and emotional development curriculum means that children swiftly learn the routines and rhythm of the school day. Staff warmly and gently guide pupils in their learning and help them to become independent. Children take good care of the classroom and resources. They work together to tidy up and help each other in their work and play.

The school ethos ensures that pupils develop a strong and kind character. While many pupils enjoy deepening their Catholic faith, they say that all faiths are welcome in their school. One pupil summed up the views of many when she shared, 'We believe in Jesus, but not everyone has to.' Pupils respect that people may have a different type of family or religion to their own. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. This learning stays with them. They remember key messages learned in previous years related to staying safe online and about bicycle and road safety. Pupils speak articulately about their emotional well-being. They value the opportunities to place concerns in worry boxes and to reflect in collective worship and liturgy.

The attendance of pupils is very high. They enjoy coming to school to learn and see their friends. Staff also relish working at the school. They feel that leaders consider their workload and well-being and that it is a 'fabulous' school to be part of.

The local governing committee is an active and effective part of school leadership. Governors' skills are carefully matched with their allocated responsibilities. They work in partnership with staff to support and challenge the work of the school. They are proud to be part of the St Gregory's community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In mathematics, some pupils do not have a secure understanding of number facts. This can hamper their progression through the mathematics curriculum. The school should work with staff to improve pupils' understanding of important number facts.
- The school does not consistently check pupils' understanding of the taught curriculum well enough. For example, pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to articulate or demonstrate their understanding in class. This means that gaps in

pupils' understanding can go unnoticed. The school should improve how it checks that pupils have learned important knowledge.

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	149034
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10297556
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	201
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel O'Mahoney
Headteacher	Alison Dunne
Website	www.st-gregorys.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a Catholic primary school. Its last section 48 inspection was in June 2023. The school is part of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has joined the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.
- The school does not currently use any alternative education providers.
- The school provides wraparound care for its pupils, in the form of breakfast and after-school clubs.

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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. 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.
- Inspectors also reviewed the curriculum for the early years.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2 and 3.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors held discussions with school leaders, the trust school improvement lead, a trustee, members of the school's local governing committee and the deputy director of education for the diocese.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits, at lunchtime, playtime and during a visit to the school's breakfast club. Inspectors spoke with pupils and were also given a tour of the school by pupils.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school, such as minutes of governance meetings, quality assurance reports and school improvement planning.
- Inspectors considered the responses made by parents to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text responses. Inspectors reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaires and also met with staff to discuss their workload and well-being. No responses were received to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire, but inspectors spoke with several groups of pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Mark Dent, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Victoria James

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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