

Inspection of an outstanding school: Our Lady & St. Bede Catholic Academy

Bishopton Road West, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland TS19 0QH

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 December 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Mo Wilkinson. This school is part of the 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, Mike Shorten, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Yvonne Coates.

What is it like to attend this school?

Our Lady & St Bede is a school where staff and pupils are happy. Much of pupils' daily experience is underpinned by the religious ethos of the school. Leaders teach pupils about important virtues and reward pupils for demonstrating them. The school is ambitious for pupils, academically and spiritually. There is a commitment to developing the 'whole child', so pupils have access to a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the range of the clubs they can attend. Sports and performing arts clubs are particularly well attended.

In their holistic development lessons, pupils learn important messages that will prepare them for life. They have a strong understanding of diversity and equality. Pupils also receive high-quality careers information. They learn about the full range of options that are available to them when they leave school, from apprenticeships to higher education. The school supports pupils well to make the right choices for their future.

Pupils learn about bullying and why it is not acceptable. Most pupils feel it is not a problem in their school and agree that teachers would take it seriously. They explain people's right to be respected and valued.

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

The school continues to provide an ambitious and academic curriculum for pupils. Over half of pupils are studying the suite of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). However, leaders have also prioritised broadening the curriculum so that pupils have a range of options at key stage 4. Vocational options, such as engineering and health and social care, have been added so that pupils can pursue a range of interests. The school is committed to providing pupils with the ambitious and broad curriculum that will set them up for future success.

In subject areas, leaders have carefully considered what pupils will learn. The content is logically organised so that pupils can build on what they already know. Learning journey maps help pupils to make connections in their knowledge. The school have prioritised and clearly mapped out key vocabulary. This focus on vocabulary is beginning to have a notable impact for pupils. The curriculum is securely embedded in some subjects. Other subjects are still in the process of refining their curriculum thinking.

Generally, the curriculum is being delivered effectively in classrooms. Teachers have good subject knowledge. This is evident in their clear explanations which use the key vocabulary that pupils need to know. Teachers use modelling effectively to demonstrate key concepts. They use questioning well to identify and address any gaps in what pupils know. However, after learning new content, pupils do not get regular opportunities to apply what they have learned independently.

Staff provide effective support in lessons to enable pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to access the curriculum alongside their peers. The enhanced mainstream base is a supportive and nurturing environment where some pupils with SEND receive additional support. It is also a key social space that provides a range of lunchtime activities which pupils value.

The school has fostered a culture of reading. Pupils read daily and the library plays a prominent role in school. Leaders have given all pupils the chance to choose their own book to keep, promoting reading for pleasure.

Pupils behave well around school and at social times. Respectful relationships exist between staff and pupils. In lessons, teachers have high expectations for how pupils will behave. They apply the behaviour policy consistently. Generally, behaviour in lessons is positive.

The school has placed considerable importance around encouraging positive attendance. They have strengthened systems to monitor attendance. These systems are in the process of embedding. However, some pupils, particularly pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils, do not attend school as regularly as they should. This is having an impact on the outcomes for some pupils.

Most staff are happy and proud to work here. They outline leaders' attention to staff wellbeing. Staff feel that leaders are approachable and willing to listen. Most staff feel very well supported by leadership. Trust leaders and governors are closely involved with

the life of the school. They have an accurate understanding of the priorities for the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to independently apply their learning in lessons. This means that pupils do not regularly get the chance to consolidate what they have learned. The school should ensure that pupils have regular opportunities in lessons to independently apply what they have learned.
- Certain groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, do not attend school as well as they should. This means they are missing valuable learning time. The school should ensure that their strategies for increasing attendance continue to embed and have an impact for all pupils.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which 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 school to be outstanding in January 2018.

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	141370
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10297406
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,053
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Coates
Headteacher	Mo Wilkinson
Website	www.olsb.bhcet.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	16 and 17 January 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has increased in size since the previous inspection.
- The school uses a small number of registered alternative providers.
- The school has an enhanced mainstream provision for pupils with additional communication and interaction needs and/or disabilities.
- The school is part of the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust. The school was last inspected under section 48 in 2017. Their next section 48 inspection is due this academic year.

Information about this inspection

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 met with the headteacher and school improvement partners from the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education trust. They also spoke with the chair of the trust and a trust director. They met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair and the vice chair. They also spoke with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, geography and physical education. 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 looked at curriculum documents for some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the special educational needs coordinator (SENDCO) and leaders responsible for careers, personal, social and health education, reading and personal development.
- 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 the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff, pupils and parents through Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

Katie Spurr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Dan McKeating

His Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023