

Inspection of a good school: St Catherine's Catholic Primary School

Greystoke Gardens, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE2 1PS

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 December 2023

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good 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 Lisa Hoey. This school is part of Bishop Bewick 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 (CEO), Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Catherine's Catholic Primary School has pupils at the heart of everything it does. There is high ambition for everyone. The school recognises that the quality of education requires some strengthening. The school is taking steps to address this. Pupils enjoy their learning. However, at present, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in some subjects.

Pupils behave well. There are clear expectations of their behaviour around school. They are motivated by the reward systems in school. Pupils' work and conduct are celebrated in classrooms. Whole-school assemblies reward good attendance, behaviour and positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils work well together in lessons. Pupils listen to each other. They are patient and kind.

The school provides opportunities for pupils' character development and active citizenship. Pupils enjoy contributing to school life and the wider community.

This is an inclusive school. Pupils' heritage and individuality are celebrated. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive, particularly in early years. Pupils treat each other with high levels of respect. There is a breadth of extra-curricular activities to extend pupils' experiences. The school's systems to promote good attendance and punctuality are effective.

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

The school has introduced an ambitious new curriculum in most subjects. Teachers deliver engaging lessons. Pupils are keen to share ideas and work with their peers. The school is introducing resources and classroom aids to help pupils remember the important knowledge they need. In subjects where this is better embedded, pupils confidently discuss their learning and understanding of new vocabulary. In some subjects, the school does not provide regular opportunities for pupils to revisit prior learning. As a result, some pupils forget what they have been taught. Systems to check that pupils have learned and remembered the knowledge they need are still being developed. In some subjects, teachers do not adapt the curriculum to help pupils recover gaps in their knowledge.

Children in early years recite songs and rhymes from memory. This helps their confidence with counting and number. Children benefit from the well-considered environment, both outdoors and indoors. Staff follow children's interests to engage them in learning. However, some of the activities that children participate in do not help them to develop new knowledge. Staff in early years do not check carefully enough to ensure that children learn and remember the knowledge they need in order to be ready for Year 1.

Children make a good start in learning to read in Reception Year. Children read books that are matched to the sounds they know. This helps them learn to read quickly and fluently. When children struggle with reading, they receive extra help each day. For most children, this helps them catch up quickly. Teachers model reading with expression when sharing stories with pupils. Older pupils have daily lessons to develop their reading skills and comprehension. Pupils enjoy reading. They enjoy the new cosy 'Harry Potter' themed library. Pupils treat this area with a high level of respect.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from the specialist staff who work with them. These pupils are included in lessons and work towards the same end-points as their peers. However, some pupils do not receive the support that they need in lessons. For these pupils, their progress is slower than it should be. The school recognises this and is in the process of implementing more consistent provision.

Pupils have a firm understanding of fairness and equality. This is strengthened by the Catholic ethos of the school and partnerships with local charities. The School of Sanctuary award recognises the school's commitment to being a welcoming place. Pupil leadership opportunities and projects with the Royal Shakespeare Company develop pupils' confidence. The school encourages pupils to reflect on their feelings in classrooms and at the prayer stations around school. Pupils enjoy spending time in the spiritual garden and sensory room when they need quiet reflection.

Those responsible for governance know the school well. They have a clear understanding of the school's improvement journey. The school regularly engages with professional development from the trust and external partners. Governors are highly supportive and provide appropriate challenge. Staff workload is well balanced. Staff appreciate recent changes made by leaders to reduce their 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 school's systems to check what pupils know and remember are more developed in some subjects than in others. This contributes to, in some curriculum subjects, teachers not recognising gaps in the knowledge that pupils need for future learning. The school should refine how it checks pupils' knowledge so that staff can quickly identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and plan future work accordingly.
- In some subjects, pupils do not have opportunities to revisit prior learning. This means that pupils do not transfer some of their learning to their long-term memory. In these subjects, the school should consider how staff help pupils to remember their learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Catherine's Catholic Primary School, to be good in January 2015.

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	148271
Local authority	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Inspection number	10269169
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	184
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
CEO of trust	Anita Bath
Headteacher	Lisa Hoey
Website	www.stcatherinesnewcastle.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Catherine's Catholic Primary School is part of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust.
- The school has a Roman Catholic character. The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle carried out a section 48 inspection in November 2017.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care.
- The school does not currently use alternative education providers.

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 had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in the evaluation of the school.

- The inspector spoke to senior leaders, including trustees, members of the governing body, and the trust's senior director of school improvement and the director of primary support.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector 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.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils reading from different year groups.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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. The inspector also spoke to leaders, teachers, governors and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector analysed the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and reviewed responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments.

Inspection team

Georgina Chinaka, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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