

Inspection of an outstanding school: St Wilfrid's RC College

Temple Park Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 0QA

Inspection dates:

7 and 8 February 2024

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 head of school is Denise Ritchie. This school is part of The 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. There is also an executive headteacher, Francesca Craik, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Wilfrid's is a calm and welcoming school. Pupils are respectful to each other and to staff. A strong, Catholic ethos runs throughout the school. Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school.

The school is highly inclusive. Pupils treat everyone equally, regardless of any differences, belief or background. Pupils say that they build a sense of community responsibility during their time at school. They are proud of becoming a 'Wilfie' when they attend St Wilfrid's.

Pupils know how to stay safe both online and offline. They learn about physical, mental and financial well-being. Most pupils can talk about the protected characteristics and fundamental British values confidently. Pupils at St Wilfrid's are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Occasionally, a minority of pupils do not meet the high expectations of the school and sometimes cause disruption outside of lessons. These pupils are receiving a rising number of suspensions.

Lots of pupils make the most of the wide range of clubs and activities on offer. Pupils in the sixth form have two hours of enrichment in their timetable and participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's award, the extended professional qualification and volunteer in the local community. The safe space club recently won a 'FAB' award in the local community for its support work by pupils, for pupils within school.

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

Leaders at all levels are highly ambitious for pupils at St Wilfrid's. The curriculum is broad and ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The order in which pupils learn curriculum content and the activities they complete have been carefully considered. The school has worked with feeder primary schools to ensure that the curriculum builds logically from key stage 2 to key stage 3.

Teachers' use of assessment is highly effective in most curriculum areas. Pupils' understanding is regularly checked during lessons, and at the end of a sequence of lessons. Teachers use this information to address pupils' misconceptions quickly and, if necessary, reteach small parts of the curriculum to help pupils develop their understanding further. Pupils achieve well in most subjects.

Most pupils with SEND achieve well. This is, in part, because staff have a thorough understanding of the individual learning needs of pupils with SEND. Teachers adapt lessons using different resources and precise questioning so that pupils with SEND access the curriculum effectively. Skilled teaching assistants know the pupils well and deliver helpful support for pupils when needed.

A small group of pupils with SEND and some disadvantaged pupils do not attend school often enough. These pupils are not achieving as well as they might. Leaders are doing all they reasonably can to increase the attendance of these pupils. This includes working with parents and outside agencies, and employing mental health professionals to work directly with pupils who are struggling to attend school regularly.

The school quickly identifies pupils who require support to read fluently. Leaders ensure these pupils receive targeted support to help them improve their phonics knowledge, reading fluency and understanding. The school fosters a love of reading through timetabled reading lessons, a form time reading programme and enrichment activities such as a 'readathon'.

Pupils behave well in lessons and at social times. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare and, if it does happen, teachers use the established behaviour system to respond quickly and effectively. This helps to ensure classrooms are calm and purposeful learning environments.

Pupils receive exceptional careers information, advice and guidance. There are a broad range of opportunities for all pupils, with many receiving carefully targeted advice and a range of careers opportunities. The school has strong links with local industry providers, including a large car manufacturing firm. Industry experts deliver workshops, and pupils visit a range of further education providers. Sixth-form pupils have high ambitions, and a small group are receiving help and guidance to apply for specific universities.

The personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum is an integral part of the school curriculum. Pupils learn character values and positive behaviour traits which develop in an age-appropriate way. They have access to a wide range of clubs, trips and visits, including the diocesan summer festival, international visits to Spain and France and

a range of sporting clubs. There are extensive leadership and community opportunities, including a school colours programme which encourages community cohesion and re-enforces the Catholic values.

School leaders, the local governing body, trustees, and the diocese work effectively together. The local governing body brings a wealth of skills and experience to the school and is passionate that all pupils should have the very best opportunities at St Wilfrid's. School leaders support staff with their workload and well-being. Staff are proud to work at 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)

- Some pupils with SEND and a proportion of disadvantaged pupils do not attend school often enough. These pupils are not achieving as well as they might. The school should continue to do all it reasonably can to improve the attendance and achievement of these pupils.
- Occasionally, a small group of pupils cause disruption around the school building. These pupils are receiving a rising number of suspensions. Leaders should support these pupils to manage their behaviour effectively so that they behave well and are not suspended as often.

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 October 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	142601
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10297431
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1,328
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	144
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel O'Mahoney
Head of school	Denise Ritchie
Website	www.st-wilfrids.org
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Wilfrid's RC College is part of The Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.
- The trust is part of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- The school received a section 48 diocesan inspection in October 2023.
- This school currently uses two registered alternative education providers.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 head of school, the executive headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative of the trust and members of the governing body, including the chair of the governing body and the chief executive officer of the trust. The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: mathematics, English, geography, modern foreign languages and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 in a range of situations, including in corridors, at breaktimes, at lunchtimes and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils about behaviour and bullying. Inspectors spoke with leaders, teachers and pupils about the school's programme of personal development and careers provision.
- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This included the comments submitted via the free-text facility. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey and staff survey.

Inspection team

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