

Inspection of St George's Catholic Primary School, Bells Close

Bell's Close, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE15 6XX

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected

The executive headteacher of this school is Anne Bullerwell. 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, Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at St George's Primary School. They are happy and kept safe. The culture of the school is built on kindness. The school has been on a journey of rapid change over the last 18 months. Leaders, staff and pupils recognise these changes. They are extremely proud of their school.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of the behaviour and attitudes of all pupils. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is exemplary. Pupils understand and demonstrate what is expected of them. They learn how to be resilient and tolerant and to respect each other. They benefit from clear school rules. Consequently, learning is focused and disruption to lessons is rare.

Classrooms are calm and focused places to learn. The school rewards pupils' positive work and attitudes in different ways. Pupils talk enthusiastically about voting for activities in 'Golden Time' as a reward. There are a variety of leadership roles available for pupils. Pupils say they enjoy leading assemblies as it gives them confidence. They are enthusiastic about their learning beyond the classroom, such as school visits and trips. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a trip to Kielder and the activities they took part in, such as the zip wire. Various after-school activities help pupils socialise beyond the school day.

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

Leaders, trustees and local governors have high aspirations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are united in their drive and ambition for pupils to flourish and develop confidence to achieve whatever they set their minds to.

Children get off to a secure start in the early years. Adults plan the environment carefully to engage children as soon as they come into school each morning. There is a strong focus on ensuring that children are exposed to a wide range of vocabulary. Children make a secure start to learning to read. Staff are knowledgeable about the provision for the children. Routines are well established and children are polite and kind to each other.

The school ensures that learning to read is given the highest priority. Leaders recently introduced a new phonics scheme. They have provided staff with the training they need to deliver the scheme well. There are useful resources available to help parents and carers to support their children at home. Pupils who are not keeping up with the phonics programme are identified quickly. Adults provide effective support to help them catch up quickly. There is a clear programme for reading throughout the school. Pupils are excited about the newly developed, well-resourced library. There are themed days to 'hook' the children and develop a love of reading. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the 'Oliver Twist' day when everyone, including staff, dressed up as a character from the book.

Leaders have improved the curriculum across the full range of subjects. The curriculum sets out what pupils will learn from the early years to Year 6. The knowledge and skills that pupils will learn, and revisit, are mapped out in well-defined steps. Pupils learn important vocabulary that they can use in context when talking about the subject. They benefit from wider learning experiences. For example, in history, the pupils worked with local historians as 'Heritage Heroes', exploring their local area. In a minority of subjects, the school's work is at an earlier stage of development. Leaders are aware that these subjects lack the strengths of history and geography and need further thought.

The school has established clear systems to identify the individual needs of pupils with SEND. Staff know pupils well. They adapt their teaching and use bespoke approaches and resources to help pupils succeed. Staff access support from outside agencies to ensure that all pupils with SEND have a rich learning experience in school. The school prides itself on its inclusive culture.

The curriculum supports pupils to be confident, resilient and independent. Pupils have many opportunities to broaden their understanding of the world around them. There is an expectation that every year group has at least six educational visits every year linked to the curriculum. Pupils say they have enjoyed going to the local mosque to find out about Islam. They can remember visits to Tynemouth Priory and the Laing art gallery. Pupils know how to stay safe online and they know to go to a trusted adult if they have a worry. They have a clear view that 'gospel values' help them to be kind and respectful. Pupils' attendance is improving to be more in line with the national average. The school has clear monitoring systems in place. It works closely with families to show how important it is to come to school every day.

The school is well supported by the local governing body and the trust. They know the school well and challenge leaders effectively. Leaders are committed to staff development. Staff say that they are very supportive in their approach to managing workload. They appreciate this. The school holds reading cafés and open mornings to involve parents in their child's learning in school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some curriculum subjects, the school has not identified the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn. Teachers are still developing their curriculum expertise to help them deliver these subjects successfully. This means that pupils do not develop a deep understanding in these subjects over time. The school should ensure that, in all subjects, they identify the knowledge that pupils need for later learning and support teachers to deliver this subject content consistently well.

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	148444
Local authority	Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Inspection number	10297525
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	98
Appropriate authority	The board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
Chair of governing body	David Hastie
Headteacher	Anne Bullerwell
Website	www.stgcps.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St George's Catholic Primary school converted to become an academy in April 2021. When its predecessor school, St George's RC Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The executive headteacher leads both this school and St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, Newcastle.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it received its last inspection under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in March 2019. Inspectors judged the school to be good overall. The next inspection will be due before March 2027.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 met with leaders, members of the local governing body and members of the trust, and spoke to the diocese.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives into phonics and reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they discussed curriculum plans with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took into account views of leaders, pupils and staff; 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 during lessons and around the school site.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate. They also considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including school improvement plans and governing body minutes.

Inspection team

Debra Murphy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Julie Hall

Ofsted Inspector

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