

Inspection of a good school: St Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Dipton

North Road, Dipton, Flint Hill, Stanley, County Durham DH9 9BB

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 April 2024

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 be outstanding if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Jill Burgess, who is responsible for this school and one other. This school is part of Bishop Wilkinson 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, Nick Hurn OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Angela Boyle.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at this school embody the school's values of the 'Three Rs'. They are respectful, responsible and ready to learn. Pupils of all ages are polite and considerate. Pupils benefit from the positive and nurturing relationships fostered by adults. They are safe and happy. A committed team of well-trained staff do all they can to keep pupils safe. One pupil told the inspector, 'There is nowhere in school we don't feel safe.'

Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. The extremely positive learning environment in the school reflects these high expectations. Pupils achieve well as a result of high-quality teaching. Pupils enjoy the leadership chances on offer. The pupil leadership team, for example, are proud to work to improve the school using pupil voice from their classmates. Pupil leaders talk about improvements to breaktime as a result of pupil voice.

Pupils and staff are proud to belong to the school community. Behaviour in classrooms and at breaktimes is positive. Pupils have a clear understanding of what constitutes bullying. Bullying is rare. Staff deal with it quickly and effectively if it does happen. Pupils have a keen sense of equality.

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

From their first days in Reception, talented staff immerse children in a vibrant and positive learning environment. Adults model language clearly for children. Children then use this language with confidence. They plan exciting and engaging activities. Children show high levels of engagement with these tasks. Pupils, for example, spent an extended period of time sketching and painting daffodils using their observational drawing skills. There is a tangible love of reading. Children enjoy opportunities to access the reading area. They love having stories read to them. Children are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Leaders have developed a bespoke phonics programme to meet the needs of all pupils. Highly trained staff teach the programme consistently well. Consequently, it has exceptional impact. High-quality teaching allows pupils to gain the knowledge and skills they need to progress. They quickly become fluent and confident readers. Staff identify those pupils who need additional support. This support is effective in allowing pupils to keep-up. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading. They enjoy the opportunities they have to read for pleasure.

The school's curriculums are ambitious and well-sequenced. There is a clear progression in skills and knowledge across time. This means that pupils have a strong base for further learning. Staff have secure subject knowledge. They make adaptations to the curriculum to ensure that pupils of all abilities can succeed. Pupils enjoy high-quality lessons and achieve highly. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported.

In mathematics, pupils work quickly and effectively to solve mathematical problems, using knowledge they have learned in previous lessons. The school has recently reviewed its geography and history curriculums. They have noticeable impact. Pupils in Year 2 accurately identify human and physical features in photographs. Year 4 pupils understand the eruptive process in volcanoes. Other pupils talk about Cleisthenes and his impact on democracy in ancient Greece. Ambitious vocabulary is prevalent. Teaching is exciting. This increases pupils' enjoyment and engagement. Lessons proceed without disruption, due to positive behaviour and attitudes in classrooms.

Leaders have high expectations for attendance and punctuality. Attendance is in line with national figures. However, the school and trust have very high ambitions for attendance. They are taking effective action to improve attendance even further.

The school's provision for pupils' broader development is carefully considered. It is of high quality. Pupils develop a secure understanding of different faiths and cultures. They visit a gurdwara and a synagogue. A visitor from a local mosque helped pupils to gain a better understanding of Islam. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to take on leadership roles, including the pupil leadership team, eco-warriors, digital leaders and the mission team. The latter supports school leaders in the delivery of the school's Catholic ethos. Pupils learn about a wide range of social and moral issues. They develop a tangible sense of equality. There is a wide range of after-school clubs open to pupils. These are well attended.

Leaders, including governors and trustees, share high expectations and ambitions for all members of the school community. The school is aware of the potential impact of these high expectations on staff. They ensure that staff are well supported to fulfil their roles in school. Staff workload and well-being is a high priority for leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, to be good in January 2013.

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 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	148609
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10297549
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	145
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Angela Boyle
CEO of the trust	Nick Hurn OBE
Headteacher	Jill Burgess
Website	www.dipton.durham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Patrick's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in May 2021. When its predecessor school, St Patrick's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is one of 47 schools in the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school does not have nursery provision. Children enter school in their Reception year.
- The school operates a breakfast and after-school club. This is managed by the governing body.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in February 2018.
- The head of school is currently seconded to another school in the trust. An assistant headteacher is deputising at present.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the assistant headteacher, other school leaders, school staff, a representative of the governing body, representatives from the trust and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: 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 some pupils from Year 1, 2 and 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- 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 considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector also spoke with some parents.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online staff and pupil questionnaires, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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