

Inspection of St William's Catholic Primary School

Elwick View, Trimdon Village, Trimdon Station, County Durham TS29 6HY

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 June 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Michael Tiplady. This school is part of Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run the chief executive officer (CEO), Mike Shorten, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Yvonne Coates.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St William's Catholic Primary School as an academy under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 as, until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection of the predecessor school.

What is it like to attend this school?

St William's is a small school at the heart of a small community, where everyone is made to feel valued and special. Pupils are happy and safe here. They enjoy attending school enormously. They explain that people treat each other with respect and everyone is unique. Pupils' spirituality develops alongside their understanding of their school's virtues. The compassion of the school's virtues can be seen in the warm relationships between staff and pupils. A number of parents and pupils describe the school community as being like 'one big family'. Staff, parents, governors and pupils alike explain their pride at being part of something special.

Leaders have high aspirations for pupils at St William's. The school ensures that pupils are encouraged to aim high. Pupils and staff alike have high expectations of behaviour and effort. Everyone is expected to do their best. Pupils enjoy meeting these expectations, in both their learning and participation in the wider life of the school. Pupils are proud of the sporting events they take part in. They also enjoy contributing to their local community, such as litter picking, planting trees and collecting for the local food bank.

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

Pupils achieve well at St Williams. Pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 are consistently above national average. The curriculum that pupils learn in the classroom is enhanced by real-life experiences to make learning memorable. Older pupils practise what they have learned in mathematics to help them run a bakery. Pupils of all ages become confident and capable mathematicians through a carefully structured curriculum.

Pupils learn to read effectively. Staff are well trained in how to teach pupils to read. Staff make sure that any pupils who find learning to read more difficult receive the extra support they need to keep up with their peers. Reading is seen as a priority in school. Older pupils talk fondly about the stories that they love and choose books to enjoy at playtime. Pupils of all ages enjoy story time at the end of the day. They talk with engagement about the stories that adults share with them. The school has successfully nurtured a widespread love of reading.

Across the foundation subjects, the school has carefully considered what pupils will learn and designed an ambitious curriculum. However, due to mixed-age classes, some pupils learn the curriculum in foundation subjects in a different order or will have studied different topics. This makes it difficult for some pupils to make links with what they already know. The school is already developing systems to manage this. However, there is still more to do to ensure that pupils can make links between prior and new learning.

Staff are well trained to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff understand pupils' needs well and ensure that barriers are removed for these pupils, including children in the early years. The

school ensures that pupils with SEND access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers and are fully included in all aspects of school life.

Generally, the curriculum is taught well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and deliver new content effectively. However, there is some inconsistency in this. Sometimes, explanations are not clear or teachers do not check pupils' understanding often enough. This means that, sometimes, gaps in pupils' knowledge are missed.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength of the school. Pupils behave with maturity and treat each other kindly. They explain that bullying is not a problem in this school and that you should treat others as you would like to be treated. Pupils are confident that teachers would take any bullying seriously. Pupils attend well. They enjoy coming to school.

Children in the early years are well prepared for key stage 1. Leaders have thought carefully about the curriculum and what children will learn. Children are confident and enjoy explaining to visitors what they are learning about. Children develop a good vocabulary and understanding of the world they live in.

Pupils at St William's have a strong understanding of equality and tolerance. They explain that 'everyone deserves to be treated equally'. Pupils understand the importance of 'having a voice' in school. The school council has been instrumental in fundraising for a new bike shed and organising British Sign Language and first-aid courses for older pupils.

Governors are closely involved in the life of the school. They are well equipped to support and challenge school leaders. Staff explain that they feel extremely well supported. They value the approachability of leaders. Staff know that their well-being is carefully considered.

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 foundation subjects, due to mixed-age classes, pupils experience the curriculum in a different order. This means they are sometimes missing foundational knowledge that they need for new learning. As a result, some pupils are not able to build securely on what they already know. The school should continue to develop the curriculum so that pupils are able to make links between prior and new learning in all subjects.
- There is some variability in how well the curriculum is taught in classrooms. On occasion, explanations are not sufficiently clear or teachers do not routinely check

pupils' understanding. This means that gaps in understanding may not be as identified as quickly as they could. The school should ensure that ongoing professional development for staff means that teachers deliver the curriculum 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	147402
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10323108
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	136
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Coates
Headteacher	Michael Tiplady
Website	https://stwilliams.bhcet.org.uk/
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This school joined Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust in 2019.
- The school uses no alternative provision.
- The school received its last Catholic Schools Inspection in October 2017. The school is now due for its next inspection.

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 the headteacher, the school improvement officer, the CEO

and both deputy CEOs. They also met with representatives from the trust board, including the chair, and spoke with the deputy director of education from the diocese by telephone.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. 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 discussed the curriculum and looked at planning in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with staff about the provision for pupils with SEND, early years, behaviour and attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors observed the behaviour of pupils at social times.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, staff and parents through online questionnaires.

Inspection team

Katie Spurr, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Richardson

Ofsted Inspector

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