

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, South Shields

Nash Avenue, Whiteleas, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 8NS

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Inspection dates: 28 and 29 January 2025

## Outcome

St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, South Shields has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Dominic Woodhouse. This school is part of 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.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Oswald's are welcoming, proud and happy members of the school community. Pupils of all ages are excellent ambassadors for the school. They exemplify the school's vision of recognising and developing the dignity of each pupil. Their behaviours and attitudes towards each other are highly positive. As a result, pupils work and play together in harmony. There is a real sense of family at St Oswald's.

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils persevere in lessons and produce high-quality work. They have impressive recall of their recent learning. Pupils of all abilities get the support they need to succeed.

Pupils embody the school's high expectations for behaviour and conduct. Where a small number of pupils have occasional difficulties with their behaviour, the school puts sensitive support in place.

Well-trained staff ensure that pupils are safe. Across the school, pupils develop a keen understanding of personal safety. Pupils love to come to school. They talk enthusiastically about 'teachers always helping' and everyone being 'treated equally'.

Parents and carers are positive about the school. They talk about staff who demonstrate 'care and compassion', the school being 'such a positive experience' and of children who 'feel valued'.

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

Leaders have developed a high-quality curriculum. It takes account of children's starting points in early years, building their knowledge and skills throughout their time in school. This curriculum is ambitious for all. The school's approach to identifying the needs of pupils is thorough. Support from staff is effective and allows the majority of pupils to achieve highly. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Effective professional development enables staff to teach the curriculum with confidence. Pupils approach their work with diligence. They take pride in the quality of their written work.

Lessons are calm and purposeful. In early years, children benefit from a clear focus on communication and language. They quickly develop confidence in their own speaking skills. Their relationships with staff and other children are highly positive. Children are proud to welcome visitors to their 'café' and 'noodle shop'. They use language effectively to describe the different shapes and textures of their playdough noodles. Children in Reception enjoy being 'maths detectives' to show off their understanding of number and mass. In other lessons, pupils show a detailed understanding of musical notation and rhythm. Older pupils use effective problem-solving strategies to prove whether calculations are correct or not. They are able to debate whether punishments in Victorian England were proportionate to the crime. However, although pupils' recall of their recent learning is secure, their retention of knowledge from previous years is inconsistent.

Pupils at the early stages of reading have every opportunity to succeed. Those who may fall behind get the support they need to catch up. They develop a secure base of phonics knowledge to prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils become confident and fluent readers as a result.

The school has taken effective steps to improve attendance. Leaders have well-established systems and procedures in place to check on absence. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms is positive and respectful. Focus and engagement are high. This is helped significantly by knowledgeable staff making inspiring and exciting choices as to how the curriculum will be taught.

Pupils at St Oswald's are very well prepared for life beyond the school and for life in modern Britain. They have exemplary attitudes towards those from different backgrounds or faiths. Equality shines out across the school. As a result of a high-quality approach to mental health and well-being, pupils know the importance of a healthy diet, restful sleep and exercise. Pupils know their voice is heard across the school. For example, the school council were instrumental in creating a new set of values for the school. Other pupil leaders, including the head girl and the 'buddies', talk with pride about their roles in school. Pupils talk of numerous opportunities for educational visits and visitors into school.

These carefully planned experiences broaden pupils' own development and understanding of the world.

Leaders across the school and the trust have taken effective action to sustain and, in some areas, improve performance across the school. Governors are knowledgeable and well informed. They offer appropriate challenge and support to the school. There are clear lines of communication between the school, governors and the trust. Leaders at all levels understand their responsibilities. Staff workload and well-being is a high priority for the school. Staff feel supported and valued.

## **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 areas, checks on pupils' retention of knowledge do not identify where pupils' knowledge is insecure. As a result, gaps in pupils' understanding are not addressed and pupils do not securely retain knowledge in their long-term memory. The school should ensure that checks on pupils' knowledge are consistent over time so that any gaps can be addressed, and pupils can recall more of their prior learning.

## **Background**

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 Oswald's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2014.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148911
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10346791
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	224
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Daniel O'Mahoney
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Brendan Tapping
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dominic Woodhouse
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-oswaldsrcsch.co.uk">www.st-oswaldsrcsch.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy on 1 February 2022. When its predecessor school, St Oswald's Roman Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is one of 30 schools in the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.
- The headteacher has been appointed since the predecessor school's last inspection.
- The senior leadership team has undergone a recent change. The deputy headteacher was seconded to another school within the trust in December 2023. Two assistant headteachers were appointed in January 2024 as a result.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- A breakfast club operates on site under the management of the school.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is also inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The predecessor school's last such inspection was in November 2017. The school's next section 48 inspection is due before November 2025.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 headteacher, other senior leaders, some other school staff, members of the local governing committee, representatives of the trust, the director of education from the diocese and the CEO.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector listened to some pupils from Year 1 to 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 considered the responses to the online staff and pupil questionnaires and spoke to some staff about their workload and well-being.

## Inspection team

Richard Beadnall, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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