

Inspection of English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College

Catcote Road, Hartlepool TS25 4HA

Inspection dates:	7 and 8 January 2025
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Colette Hogarth. This school is part of the Bishop Hogarth 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 (CEO), Stuart McGhee, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Yvonne Coates. There is also an executive headteacher, Donna Hubbard-Young, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is calm and orderly. Most pupils show respect for others. Staff work diligently to build positive relationships with pupils and their families. The school is establishing a culture in which pupils can achieve. Pupils value this. They are safe at school.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils at all key stages experience a curriculum that gives them the knowledge they need to succeed. However, this curriculum is not yet embedded. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have gaps in their knowledge. Also, high levels of absence mean that several pupils miss too much of their education and do not achieve well.

Most pupils behave in an appropriate manner. They work hard in lessons and conduct themselves sensibly. However, there is a significant minority of pupils whose behaviour is disruptive outside of lessons. Occasionally, this behaviour affects other pupils' learning.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and activities, including sports and creative arts. They benefit from educational visits to places of cultural interest, both at home and abroad. Pupils take on leadership roles, such as prefects, school councillors and house captains. Indeed, pupils make a valuable contribution to both the life of the school and the local community.

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

The school is working in a context that provides significant challenges. It is experiencing the impact of local social and economic issues. This impact is most evident in regard to attendance and pupils' social and emotional needs.

The school has established a broad and ambitious curriculum. In several subjects, it has made recent changes to the content of its key stage 3 curriculum. These changes are providing pupils with a strong foundation for their key stage 4 studies. The school's curriculum is well sequenced. It provides pupils with the opportunity to build a coherent body of knowledge.

At key stage 4, most pupils study the group of subjects that make up the English Baccalaureate. The school also offers a range of vocational courses that meet pupils' needs and interests. The school has ensured that pupils can continue to study these vocational subjects, either in the sixth form or at a local college. Students who take vocational courses in the sixth form achieve highly.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. The school identifies pupils' needs well. It ensures that pupils with SEND get the additional support they need. Most pupils with SEND make appropriate progress from their starting points.

The school prioritises reading. It provides pupils at an early stage of learning to reading with extra help in phonics and reading comprehension. Pupils gain the skills they need to

become confident and fluent readers. Moreover, the school promotes a love of reading. Pupils read widely and often at school.

Teachers have secure subject knowledge. They revisit what pupils have learned before, explain new learning and give pupils helpful feedback. However, sometimes in key stages 3 and 4, teachers do not check pupils' understanding or use questioning well enough. In the sixth form, students benefit from subject-specialist teaching. They enjoy the opportunity for discussion and debate. They also receive individual support from teachers that helps them improve their work.

The school is developing a culture based on respect and kindness. It does not tolerate low-level disruption in lessons. However, there is a significant minority of pupils who display persistent disruptive behaviour outside of lessons. The school is addressing such behaviour with rigour and intelligence. It is beginning to improve the behaviour of some of these pupils.

The school is also addressing high levels of absence. It has increased the size of the pastoral team to enable designated staff to work with pupils and families. Its work is beginning to have some impact on improving pupils' attendance.

Pupils' personal development is central to the school's ethos. The school provides pupils with a comprehensive, age-appropriate programme. Pupils learn about relationships, equality, diversity and fundamental British values. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils receive high-quality careers education and guidance. This enables them to make well-informed choices about courses and future careers.

The trust has acted with appropriate urgency to meet the school's improvement needs. It provides the school with substantial and additional leadership capacity. This is beginning to have an impact on the quality of provision. Trustees perform their statutory duties well. Together with local governors, they hold school leaders to account. School leaders have created a positive staff culture. Staff value the priority the school gives to their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, particularly in key stages 3 and 4, teachers do not check pupils' understanding systematically enough. Also, sometimes they do not use questioning well enough to deepen and extend pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that it

provides teachers with the professional development they need, both in pedagogy and pedagogical content knowledge, to secure, deepen and extend pupils' learning.

- Levels of absence and persistent absence are high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. This means that a significant number of pupils are missing too much of their education. It also means that by the end of key stage 4, these pupils do not have the knowledge they need to achieve well in their examinations. The school should ensure that it sustains its rigorous approach to improving pupils' attendance.
- The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils is persistently disruptive. This means that these pupils miss too much of their education through being suspended or removed from lessons. This affects their ability to achieve well. Also, the behaviour of these pupils sometimes disrupts learning. The school should ensure that it provides these pupils with the support that they need to improve their behaviour.

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	140867
Local authority	Hartlepool Borough
Inspection number	10346544
Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1466
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	159
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Coates
CEO of the trust	Stuart McGhee
Headteacher	Colette Hogarth
Website	ems.bhcet.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and executive headteacher of the school have been in post since June 2024.
- The school is part of the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust.
- The school uses three registered providers of alternative provision and four unregistered providers of alternative provision.
- The school is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in December 2019. Section 48 inspections were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic and restarted in September 2021. The school's next section 48 inspection is due by December 2027.

- 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

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, executive headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust and other trust leaders. They also met with the chair of the board of trustees, members of the board of trustees and members of the local governing body.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, science, art and design, physical education and health and social care. For each deep dive, the 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.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in geography and computing. They visited sixth-form lessons in French, geography, computer science, religious education, law and business studies.
- 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff, and to the online survey for parents and carers, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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