

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Columba's Catholic Primary School, Wallsend

Station Road, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 8EN

Inspection dates:

29 and 30 April 2025

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Rachel Quinn. 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 (CEO), Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at the school are caring and happy. The school has high expectations for what pupils achieve. The most recent published outcomes do not reflect the quality of education pupils currently experience.

Pupils behave well in classrooms and at breaktimes. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Staff celebrate pupils' successes and nurture their broader development. This is effective, and pupils are motivated to learn in a safe and supportive environment.

Pupils embrace a variety of leadership roles across the school, contributing meaningfully to school life. For instance, school council members successfully organise engaging playtime activities for their peers. Through these roles, pupils develop initiative and a strong sense of responsibility.

Pupils gain a clear understanding of fundamental British values. They confidently explain why these values matter and how they influence everyday life. The school teaches pupils practical ways to stay safe effectively. Pupils demonstrate a solid grasp of, for example, road, bike and internet safety.

Pupils take part in a variety of activities that nurture their individual talents and interests. These include extra-curricular clubs such as construction, football and multi-skills. The school teaches pupils about protected characteristics, which fosters a culture of respect, inclusion and empathy.

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

The school prioritises learning to read. Staff access effective training. This ensures they accurately model the sounds that make up words. Daily sessions ensure that pupils quickly develop their knowledge. Pupils practise reading using books that are matched carefully to the sounds they know. This supports their reading fluency and reading comprehension. The school regularly checks what pupils understand. Any gaps in knowledge are promptly addressed. As a result, pupils quickly begin reading well and express a genuine interest and enjoyment in books.

The curriculums in writing and mathematics are carefully sequenced. This ensures pupils learn the strategies they need before completing more complex tasks. Staff frequently check what pupils understand during lessons and at the end of units of work. This information is used to address misconceptions before moving on to new learning. Consequently, pupils now develop a robust understanding across writing and mathematics. This is evident in the work they produce and their verbal responses to questions.

The curriculums in other subjects are sequenced to ensure that lessons link together so pupils' knowledge builds over time. However, in some subjects, a few pupils still have gaps in their understanding that are not being addressed successfully in lessons. As a result, these pupils do not develop a clear understanding of the curriculum.

Teachers consistently communicate high expectations for pupils' behaviour. This reinforces and maintains pupils' focus on learning. As a result, pupils' engagement in classrooms is high.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are swiftly identified. The school collaborates effectively with external professionals to gain a clear understanding of each pupil's individual needs. The school uses this information well to ensure that pupils receive the support they need. This enables them to learn the curriculum successfully.

The school promotes pupils' broader development effectively. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. They are knowledgeable about different religions. This includes understanding different places of worship and religious practices. The school ensures that pupils benefit from regular and interesting residential trips. Pupils engage in activities such as canoeing and orienteering. This supports their resilience and teamwork skills well. Pupils learn about healthy and unhealthy relationships. They have a robust understanding of peer pressure and what to do if they experience it.

Children make a strong and positive start to their education in the early years. The early years is a hive of activity. Warm and nurturing relationships between adults and children

create an environment where children flourish. Staff demonstrate a deep understanding of each child's developmental needs and use this insight to plan purposeful and engaging activities. These activities encourage children to collaborate, explore and apply their growing understanding. As a result, children develop confidence and independence across all areas of the curriculum.

The school has recently appointed new senior leaders. They have brought a clear and strategic approach to school improvement. Their decisions and actions are already having a demonstrable impact. A strong culture of collaboration across the trust further enhances staff development. The school supports staff well-being and workload diligently. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to ensure pupils attend regularly.

Governors and trustees are effective. They provide robust support and challenge to leaders. This has ensured sustained accountability and development across the 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 subjects, staff do not address the gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly enough. As a result, some pupils do not successfully build a robust understanding of the curriculum over time. The school should ensure that staff identify and address gaps in knowledge swiftly so pupils develop a strong and clear understanding as they move through the curriculum.

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 Columba's Catholic Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in September 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 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	148816
Local authority	North Tyneside
Inspection number	10346781
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	194
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
CEO of the trust	Anita Bath
Headteacher	Rachel Quinn
Website	www.stcolumbasprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a breakfast club, overseen by the governing body.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2024.
- The school is part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust.
- The school is a Roman Catholic school, which had its last section 48 inspection in May 2019.

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 and members of the senior leadership team.
- The inspector met with the CEO, the chair of trustees and representatives of the governing body.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 Ofsted's online surveys for pupils, staff and parents. This included any free-text responses in Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Andrew Yeomans, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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