

Inspection of a good school: St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Gateshead

Colegate, Leam Lane, Felling, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear NE10 8PP

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 July 2024

Outcome

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Gateshead, continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Gabrielle Lynch. 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 Martin Gannon.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils achieve well at this inclusive and welcoming school. They meet the high expectations that the school has for them. Staff build positive relationships with pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school, where they are happy and safe. They are eager to learn. In lessons, they are attentive and keen to contribute.

Pupils are courteous and respectful. Their behaviour is extremely positive throughout the school. Guests are welcomed with cheerful smiles. There is a strong sense of community. Older and younger pupils play together positively at playtimes and lunchtimes. There are plentiful opportunities for pupils to engage in exciting activities in the extensive school grounds. Many of these activities are supported by adults or older pupils.

Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain. They benefit from a variety of clubs, visits and memorable experiences. There are multiple opportunities for pupils to undertake leadership roles as school councillors, reading buddies and play leaders. They thrive in these roles, which develop their social skills and their leadership skills.

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

The school's impressive curriculum is broad and highly ambitious. The curriculum gives pupils access to a wide range of knowledge and skills. It follows a clear sequence of learning from the early years to Year 6. Pupils build their knowledge well over time. For example, in history, pupils revisit historical themes, such as 'continuity and change' and 'power and empire'. There is a particular focus on the development of pupils' vocabulary.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive excellent support to access the curriculum. The school's mathematics curriculum is a particular strength. Children in nursery start to build their mathematical knowledge and skills through well-planned activities, such as making repeating patterns. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and provide mathematics lessons that have a consistent structure.

Teachers make regular checks on pupils' knowledge and address gaps in a timely and focused way. However, on occasions, teachers do not consistently check and correct pupils' letter formation.

The school puts a strong emphasis on pupils learning to read. Teachers use the chosen phonic scheme expertly and consistently. Pupils develop fluency by practising reading with books that are closely matched to the sounds that they know. The school promotes a love of reading. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors.

Pupils behave extremely well. They demonstrate high levels of engagement and attentiveness in lessons. Children in the early years respond well to routines and the high expectations that adults have of them. They quickly develop independence. They cooperate well with each other, playing and learning positively.

The early years curriculum is rich and well considered. Children thrive in an environment that is tailored to their interests and needs. Adults interact purposefully with children. They use songs and rhymes to enrich children's learning experiences. Children take pride in the things they make, write and can do. Children with SEND are supported very well.

Pupils have a strong understanding of fundamental British values, such as democracy and respect for others. They accept and celebrate the fact that everyone is different. They have a secure knowledge of different religions. Pupils share their experience of their different faiths in assembly. The school makes exceptional use of its extensive and well-resourced grounds. There are opportunities for pupils to build dens or use mini-diggers.

Staff provide pupils with exciting and enriching learning experiences beyond the curriculum. For example, older pupils see the world beyond their own community on a school visit to London. They gain important life skills from the experience, for example, by using public transport and staying in a hotel.

The school benefits from its relationship with a range of partner schools and organisations in the trust, the diocese, the local authority and beyond. Leaders ensure the professional development of staff is a strong focus. Leadership at all levels is prioritised and developed. This is reflected in the strength of subject leaders. Recent training has had a positive impact on classroom practice. Lessons are carefully structured and include regular opportunities to recap and build on pupils' previous knowledge. Teachers expertly use questions to deepen and extend pupils' understanding. Leaders at every level, including governors and trustees, share the same high ambition and commitment for pupils to achieve their best.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not consistently address weaknesses in some pupils' letter formation well enough. This means that some pupils do not develop the fluency they could with their handwriting consistently well. The school needs to ensure that teachers clearly communicate their expectations for correct letter formation and that these expectations are applied consistently across all classes.

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 Augustine's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School to be good in June 2012.

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	148605
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10323134
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	334
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Martin Gannon
CEO of the trust	Nick Hurn OBE
Headteacher	Gabrielle Lynch
Website	www.staugustinesprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust.
- This school has a Roman Catholic denomination. The school is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2023.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspector carried out this graded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of the 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of their work. The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector held discussions with representatives of the trust, including the deputy CEO. He held a discussion with representatives of the local governing body, including the chair. He also held a discussion with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspector examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans, records of governance and documentation relating to attendance and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector took account of responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, the pupils' survey and the staff survey. The inspector spoke informally with parents at the end of the school day.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with groups of pupils, both formally and during less-structured parts of the day.
- 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.

Inspection team

Dughall McCormick, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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