

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

Church Hill, Crook, County Durham DL15 9DN

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 June 2025

Outcome

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

The executive headteacher is Paula Strachan. This school is part of Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust, which means that other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Stuart McGhee, and overseen by a board of directors, chaired by Yvonne Coates.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this welcoming school. Warm and caring relationships with staff help pupils to feel safe. Staff get to know pupils well. They support pupils to succeed by ensuring that they start the day ready to learn.

The school is ambitious for pupils' achievement. This begins in the early years, where children develop an interest in learning. Pupils study a curriculum that engages and supports them to develop their knowledge. Pupils typically achieve well.

Pupils behave well. They are kind and polite to each other and to visitors. When pupils do find it hard to manage their behaviour they are supported thoughtfully to learn the strategies they need to succeed. When pupils, including some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), find it hard to manage their behaviour, staff support them well. For example, approaches such as planned movement breaks help to equip pupils with the strategies they need to succeed.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities through roles such as the 'sports squad' and 'reading squad'. They make valued contributions to their local community through work with a local foodbank and charity work. This prepares pupils to become active citizens.

Pupils benefit from extra-curricular activities which develop their wider interests. These include various sports clubs, puzzles and games.

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

The school has designed a well-sequenced curriculum that meets the needs of mixed-age classes. The knowledge that pupils should learn is clearly identified across year groups. Staff routinely check on pupils' learning and address any misconceptions as they occur. In the most part, this is effective and supports pupils well in moving their learning forward. However, occasionally, some checks are not thorough enough. When this happens, teaching moves on before pupils have learned the knowledge they need. Where this happens, pupils can have gaps in their foundational and subject-specific knowledge.

The school prioritises reading. From Reception onwards, children are well supported to develop and apply phonics knowledge to read and write words. Teachers and teaching assistants have benefitted from additional training in the teaching of phonics. As a result, many pupils learn to read well. The school provides targeted and timely support for those pupils who need extra help in learning to read. This includes those who are falling behind and those who are pre-verbal. This helps them to catch up. Older pupils speak of their enjoyment of reading. They particularly enjoy the class reading books that teachers have selected for study. This encourages pupils to read widely and often.

Provision for pupils with SEND is well considered at this school. Pupils' individual needs are clearly identified. Staff make adaptations to the curriculum, such as having adapted texts for pupils to read or providing frameworks for writing. These strategies help pupils with SEND to access the curriculum and achieve well.

Staff have high expectations of how pupils can and should behave. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. Low-level disruption is rare. There is consistent application of the behaviour policy. Pupils love to earn 'St Cuthbert's Money' for positive attendance. They 'spend' this on rewards such as hot chocolate.

There is a planned approach to supporting pupils' broader development which goes beyond the academic. For example, pupils learn how to stay safe online and how to keep themselves healthy. They learn about the importance of diversity and equality. However, there are some aspects that are not as well established as they could be. This includes opportunities for pupils to learn about fundamental British values and to contribute more widely to the school.

Leaders at all levels know the school well. Trustees and governors are committed to their roles and have high ambitions for all pupils. They provide effective support and challenge. Staff feel valued and trusted. They appreciate that leaders are considerate of their workload and well-being. They are proud to work at 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 consistently check whether pupils have remembered what they have been taught before moving them on to new learning. This leads to some pupils developing gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The school should ensure that the assessment approach in each subject provides information about pupils' learning so that the curriculum can be adapted to meet their needs.
- Aspects of the personal development programme are not as well established as they could be. This limits how well some pupils contribute more widely to the school and develop skills such as leadership. It also limits their understanding of some aspects of life in modern Britain including knowledge of fundamental British values. The school should ensure that it further develops pupils' contributions to the wider life of the school and also strengthen pupils' knowledge of the diverse world of modern Britain, including the relevance of fundamental British values.

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 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 Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2017.

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	149057
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10346815
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	157
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Coates
CEO of the trust	Stuart McGhee
Executive Headteacher	Paula Strachan
Website	www.stcuthbertscrook.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The school's most recent inspection by the Catholic School's inspectorate took place in May 2024.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The executive headteacher is also the executive headteacher of one other school in the same trust.
- The school has nursery provision for three- and four-year-olds.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

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 have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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 of safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector met with the executive headteacher and other senior staff. They spoke with a representative of the diocese. They also met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors as well as representatives from the Board of Trustees, including the chair of the board.
- The inspector met with the chief executive officer of the trust.
- The inspector visited a number of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, attendance records, school development plans and school self-evaluation documents.
- The inspector considered the views of parents through responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspector gathered the views of staff through Ofsted's staff survey, as well as discussions with staff and pupils conducted throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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