

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

Furness Road, Westfield, Workington, Cumbria CA14 3PD

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

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

The headteacher of this school is Sheryl Slack. This school is part of Mater Christi Multi-Academy 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), Jacky Kennedy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Elizabeth Mallinson. The school's headteacher is an executive headteacher, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school and attend often. They want to be here. This is because they have lots of friends, feel safe and enjoy their learning in different curriculum subjects. Pupils achieve well. This is because the school wants pupils to succeed. Pupils at the school develop important knowledge, beginning in the early years, such as how to play, think and talk.

The school helps pupils understand their responsibilities to care about other people's needs such as by charitable fundraising. The school enables pupils to learn about the world of West Cumbria, the Lake District and beyond. Pupils benefit from their educational visits such as to museums, theatres, castles and cities. They are thrilled to assist the work of the school such as by being librarians or supporting other pupils' well-being. Pupils benefit from special events such as the school's 'big night in' to watch films, explore new activities and eat special snacks.

Pupils listen to staff. They follow instructions well and are self-disciplined. Pupils understand the importance of following the school's clear behaviour charter. They recognise what bullying, including online, can look like. Pupils care for one another and show kindness and consideration.

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

In recent years, the school has experienced many leadership, staffing and curriculum changes. These negatively impacted the quality of education that pupils received. However, in recent times, the work of the school has improved significantly. Pupils behave well and now receive a high-quality education.

The school uses well-thought-out subject curriculums. It provides staff with valuable training and coaching so they can teach pupils skilfully. Staff know which key information they are teaching as well as when and why. Teachers carefully consider the activities that help to make learning memorable for pupils. Staff check if pupils know and remember the school's curriculum. They spot and support the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Staff give pupils extra help to understand important concepts. Children in the early years, and pupils in key stages 1 and 2, gain valuable subject knowledge.

Many pupils at the school learn to read well. The school is determined that every pupil develops this critical ability, so it has carefully introduced a new phonics programme. Leaders ensure that staff teach phonics effectively. The books that pupils read match the sounds they learn. Pupils who struggle with reading receive the support they need to catch up quickly with their peers. This helps them to become confident, fluent readers.

The school has successfully strengthened its focus on developing pupils' interest in reading. Starting in the early years, staff carefully choose high-quality fiction and non-fiction books to read often to children. Pupils across the school develop a love of reading. Nevertheless, the school's previous curriculum led to some weaknesses in pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar in their writing. To address this issue, the school has revised its English curriculum, expectations and teaching thoughtfully. However, it is too soon to see the impact of this on pupils' attainment.

The proportion of pupils in Year 4 who met the expected standard in the multiplication check in 2024 was below average. This was caused by weaknesses in the school's teaching of multiplication. The school has since made well-considered changes to its mathematics curriculum and instruction in all year groups. For instance, staff ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to practise using their knowledge of multiplication. Pupils, such as those with SEND, now understand mathematics securely.

Pupils are rarely absent from school, and they arrive punctually. The school checks carefully for any attendance issues. It acts quickly to resolve pupils' absences so they do not miss more time at school. The school does all it can to keep pupils' high attendance.

The school teaches pupils to respect other people. Pupils show positive regard towards one another. They learn from staff about differences between people. Pupils understand the importance of following rules. They value the roles of people who help the community, such as firefighters and the police. Nevertheless, some pupils do not

understand how families are different or about fundamental British values. This affects how well prepared they are for their future lives.

The trust supports the work of the school well. For example, it has strengthened the knowledge of the local governing board so it understands its role and is effective. Governors support and challenge the school on its priorities and impact. Leaders at all levels make sure St Gregory's is a happy and successful place for pupils and staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Past weaknesses in the school's English curriculum have led to gaps in pupils' knowledge of spelling, punctuation and language rules. This affects the accuracy of pupils' work in some subjects. The school should ensure that staff's teaching of its recently revised English curriculum enables pupils to consistently achieve a high standard of writing.
- Sometimes, the school does not make sure that pupils understand fundamental British values and how families can be different. This makes it harder for pupils to be well prepared for life in modern society. The school should ensure that it builds pupils' knowledge of these important topics securely.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in May 2019.

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	149246
Local authority	Cumberland
Inspection number	10378038
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Elizabeth Mallinson
CEO of the trust	Jacky Kennedy
Headteacher	Sheryl Slack (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.stgregorys.cumbria.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Several leaders, governors and staff are new to the school since the previous inspection.
- St Gregory's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2022. When its predecessor school, St Gregory's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The school is part of the Mater Christi Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school provides some places for two-year-olds in a dedicated classroom.
- The school does not use alternative provision for its pupils.
- This Roman Catholic school is in the Diocese of Lancaster. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of its religious character took place in March 2023.

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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the school, including the headteacher, the CEO and school development leader from the trust. Discussions included some curriculum subjects, early years, SEND, behaviour and the school's provision for pupils' personal development.
- The inspector spoke with representatives of the trust board, the local governing body, diocese and local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. He met with some groups of pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. He reviewed the responses from school staff to Ofsted's survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- 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

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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