

Inspection of St Paul's Catholic Primary School

Wolviston Mill Lane, Billingham TS22 5LU

Inspection dates:	5 and 6 November 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Sheena Sinclair. This school is part of 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.

Ofsted has not previously inspected St Paul's Catholic Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged St Paul's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness, before it opened as St Paul's Catholic Primary School as a result of conversion to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils speak fondly about this school. They are safe and happy. Staff build warm and supportive relationships with pupils.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. There are clear routines in place to support good behaviour. Pupils refer positively to the 'code of conduct'. Pupils know how to be 'ready, respectful and safe'. They know that it means being kind, listening to teachers and making safe choices. Pupils move in a calm and orderly manner around the school. They respond to the high expectations that staff have of them.

Pupils develop their sense of responsibility. For example, the school gives pupils opportunities to be well-being champions. These roles enable pupils to support each other and act as mediators during disagreements. Pupils value this role and recognise that it makes lunchtimes more relaxing.

The school has high expectations of what pupils can achieve in their learning. They benefit from an ambitious and engaging curriculum. Typically, pupils achieve well. The school ensures pupils have access to an impressive careers education. This gives pupils a comprehensive understanding of the career pathways available to them in their local community.

The school provides leadership opportunities for pupils. For example, pupils can be play leaders, school councillors and reading ambassadors. These leadership responsibilities give pupils the chance to make positive contributions to the school community.

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

The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Leaders have carefully mapped the vocabulary, knowledge and skills that it wants pupils to acquire. There are clear expectations for what pupils should know and when they should learn it. The school adapts the curriculum delivery for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). For example, in physical education (PE) some pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) find the concept of losing difficult. The school reminds pupils what it means to be a 'good winner and loser' before applying PE skills in a competitive game. This supports pupils to accept victory or loss gracefully. Typically, pupils with SEND learn successfully across the curriculum.

The school ensures that staff routinely use strategies that promote effective learning. Staff provide frequent opportunities for pupils to revisit their previous learning. This helps pupils to make links between prior and current learning. For example, pupils recognise that the multiplication and division facts they learned in Year 5 mathematics support the more complex factor work they experience in Year 6. Pupils behave well in lessons and respond quickly to instructions.

Staff check how well pupils know and remember through effective assessment processes. Staff use the information that they gather from assessment to identify and subsequently address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. This is particularly effective in the transition between the Reception class and Year 1.

Staff are passionate, knowledgeable and experts in the subjects they lead. Their determination to provide a high-quality education for pupils, including those with SEND, is admirable. The school offers many professional development opportunities for staff. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school's engagement with them. The school is mindful of their workload. The supportive and reflective culture within the school supports staff to manage their well-being.

The school prioritises developing pupils' ability to communicate well from Nursery with the introduction of oracy and communication skills. The school intervenes early when it identifies concerns about children's speech and language. The school provides additional support for children with SEND.

Pupils who need more help consolidating their phonics knowledge receive extra practice. Pupils read books that match their phonics knowledge. Pupils use their phonics knowledge to sound out new and unfamiliar words successfully. However, learning activities to support writing for some pupils are not matched to their ability or needs. Therefore, some pupils do not get the practice that they need to develop into accurate and fluent writers.

Pupils' personal development is exceptional. The school refines the curriculum on an ongoing basis to better meet the needs of the pupils. The school engages pupils in a focus group to enhance the personal, social and health education curriculum. This has influenced the content of the curriculum, such as responding to pupil requests to explore topics such as body image and artificial intelligence. Pupils value the opportunity to debate. Their eyes light up when they talk about recent debating opportunities. They are confident to disagree with the majority, knowing that others respect their opinion.

The school supports pupils to understand the qualities that shape their character. Pupils set themselves personal targets that motivate them to do their best. Pupils discuss these targets and how they support their development, such as developing confidence to contribute to class discussions. Pupils participate in an enterprise project each year. They plan and promote their own project. They donate some of their profit to local charities. This gives them a heightened sense of responsibility.

The trust and local governing committee have a clear oversight of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They provide leaders with an effective balance of support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, tasks for pupils at the early stages of writing do not accurately match their needs or ability. This means pupils do not get the practice they need to consolidate their phonics knowledge and develop their emerging writing. The school should work with staff to better set tasks that help pupils to become more fluent writers.

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	142739
Local authority	Stockton-on-Tees
Inspection number	10346579
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	224
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Yvonne Coates
CEO of the trust	Stuart McGhee
Headteacher	Sheena Sinclair
Website	www.stpauls.bhcet.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school joined Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust in December 2019.
- As the school is designated as Roman Catholic, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The school was last inspected February 2019. Inspections are usually every eight years, however, the timescales for reinspection have been extended because of COVID-19.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND is closing this academic year. The base supports pupils with SEMH needs.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other leaders from the school and representatives of the trust.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the local governing committee, the CEO of the trust and a representative of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and PE. For each deep dive, 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. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. Inspectors spoke with groups of staff and pupils to gain their views about the school.

Inspection team

Alison Stephenson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Cottrell

Ofsted Inspector

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