

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St James' Catholic Primary School, Hebburn

Solway Road, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear NE31 2BP

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

St James' Catholic Primary School, Hebburn has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Francesca Heslop. This school is part of the Bishop Chadwick 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), Brendan Tapping, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel O'Mahoney.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of what they achieve at this close-knit and friendly school. Staff have high expectations for pupils' academic success. Many pupils rise to this challenge and achieve well. Pupils at the school are kind and caring. They celebrate one another's achievements and behave well. There are many leadership opportunities for pupils, such as curriculum ambassadors, reading buddies and school councillors. Pupils make a positive difference to the school and wider community.

Staff know pupils and their families well. Pupils feel safe and have an adult they can talk to if something worries them. The school ensures that all pupils experience a wide range of opportunities beyond the classroom. These include trips to art galleries, places of worship, museums and a local care home to support residents. Through these opportunities, pupils understand and appreciate those who are different from themselves.

From joining the school, children in the early years enjoy a creative and ambitious curriculum. Staff establish clear routines so that children are ready for their next stage in education. Older pupils benefit from this strong start at school and grow into confident, resilient and imaginative young adults.

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

The school has designed a curriculum which clearly sets out the important knowledge and skills pupils will learn over time. Subjects such as science, art and modern foreign languages give pupils a broad and balanced education. The curriculum enables pupils to learn about how artists, scientists and writers work. This helps pupils to develop their own ideas and to think creatively. The school fosters pupils' talents and interests.

In most subjects, pupils learn and remember the curriculum well. However, in some subjects, such as mathematics, pupils' knowledge is less secure. Where staff do not explain new learning well, pupils are not developing their knowledge and skills as well as they might. This is particularly the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Most staff routinely check on what pupils know and can do. They revisit prior learning to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge before moving on to new learning. However, this is not consistent across all subjects. As a result, some pupils struggle to remember what they have been taught over time.

Pupils begin learning to read as soon as they join the school. Children in the early years learn familiar stories and rhymes. This helps to improve their vocabulary. Pupils learn and remember new sounds well. If they fall behind, they receive the help and support they need to help them to catch up quickly. As pupils move through the school, they read a wide range of texts with increasing accuracy and fluency.

The school understands the needs of different pupils. In the early years, staff develop children's language skills through thoughtful activities and interactions, such as through seasonal cooking, observational drawing and role-play. Staff know the needs of both younger children and pupils with SEND well. In most cases, they provide the right support at the right time to help pupils achieve their best.

The school is determined that all pupils attend school regularly. Staff continually support families and listen to any issues they might face. The school celebrates improving attendance in order to encourage all pupils to come to school as often as possible. This has led to significant improvements for some pupils who were persistently absent in the past. The school recognises there is more to do to achieve their ambitious targets for attendance.

Pupils learn a wide range of topics that help to enrich their lives. These include learning about different faiths, cultures and families. Visiting speakers help pupils to appreciate those who are different from themselves. Pupils respect these differences. Important topics are regularly discussed and debated by pupils. This helps pupils to listen and understand others' opinions.

Governors know the school well. They regularly visit the school to monitor and support the work that takes place. Governors provide appropriate challenge and support to ensure

that the school continues to improve. Staff are extremely positive about the support they receive from the school. Staff benefit from ongoing training and development opportunities.

Despite the school being closed for almost a year due to the presence of reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC), staff worked tirelessly to ensure pupils continued to get the best education and pastoral care possible. Parents praise the school for its dedication to pupils throughout this period.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Implementation of the curriculum is variable across the school. Staff do not always adapt learning well to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. This means that some pupils do not learn the curriculum as well as they might. The school should ensure that staff understand how to implement the curriculum effectively for all groups of pupils.
- Some staff do not check what pupils know and can do before moving on to new learning. For some younger pupils, gaps in knowledge and skills have developed over time. The school should ensure that all staff check pupils' understanding before moving on to new learning so that any gaps are quickly identified and addressed.

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 James' RC Voluntary Aided Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in November 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 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	148778
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10323149
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	170
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel O'Mahoney
CEO of the trust	Brendan Tapping
Headteacher	Francesca Heslop
Website	www.stjameshebburn.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has undergone significant change since the last inspection. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and several other leaders are new to post.
- The school joined the Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust in October 2021.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school is a voluntary-aided Catholic school. The most recent Section 48 inspection took place on 30th November and 1st December 2017.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this ungraded inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 lead inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in this evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, the special educational needs coordinator, groups of staff and pupils. The lead inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, the local diocese and the chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also met with leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND and the early years foundation stage.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The lead inspector considered the responses from parents to Ofsted Parent View. This includes the comments submitted via the free-text facility. The lead inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's online pupil and staff surveys.

John Linkins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Hall

Ofsted Inspector

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