

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

Coniston Road, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear NE28 0EP

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Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

## **Outcome**

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

The acting headteacher of this school is Rachel Lalor. This school is part of Bishop Bewick 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), Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy at this calm and nurturing school. There is a warm welcome waiting for pupils each morning. Pupils are proud of their school and value the learning and support that they receive.

Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and when moving around school. From the time that they start in the early years, children quickly learn routines and settle in well to school life. They are keen to meet the high standards that the school sets for their behaviour.

The school helps pupils to deepen their learning and produce good quality work. Pupils benefit from strong teaching of reading that helps them to read well. On some occasions, teaching is not adapted to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as well as it could.

Pupils benefit from a range of additional activities linked to the school's focus on helping others. Pupils have raised money for a number of charities in the UK and in Kenya. They

have helped with a local food bank and in visiting and sending messages to a local care home for the elderly. This develops their sense of responsibility for others.

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

Pupils benefit from a good and improving curriculum. Leaders review the curriculum carefully. They have taken intelligent action to address gaps in pupils' learning that became evident in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The school has placed a strong emphasis on the importance of remembering important knowledge and subject-specific vocabulary. The curriculum carefully links new learning to past knowledge. This enables pupils to build knowledge from Reception to Year 6.

The school's curriculum is sequenced carefully. In some subjects, such as English and mathematics, curriculums have been adapted to support pupils with SEND and pupils who need further opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills. For example, in mathematics, some pupils use equipment, such as counters, to consolidate their understanding of number.

The school has placed a strong emphasis on reading. It has introduced a rigorous early reading curriculum that is taught well. As a result, children learn to read well. Children learn phonics as soon as they start in the Reception class. The books that pupils read accurately match the sounds that they are learning. Staff get the right training to teach early reading effectively.

Children love stories right from the Nursery, where they learn rhymes and explore new words at every opportunity. Older pupils enjoy the new library area, the library café and reading clubs. Pupils receive tailored support that helps them to learn to read successfully.

Teachers demonstrate and explain key ideas clearly. For example, in mathematics they guide pupils through how to apply their number facts to solve problems. By checking pupils understanding systematically, staff have rapidly raised pupils' fluency with numbers. Pupils benefit from the regular repetition and checking of important knowledge. In a small number of subjects, teachers do not consistently adapt the work they provide to ensure that all pupils can develop their understanding. In these subjects, pupils' knowledge is less secure.

Staff are skilful at identifying those pupils who would benefit from further support around their well-being and readiness to learn. They work tirelessly in supporting these pupils to enable them to access learning. On occasion, some pupils with SEND do not receive the precise support they need to build their knowledge.

Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. The school works closely with families to understand and overcome the potential barriers to attendance. This has been particularly successful for disadvantaged pupils, who in turn enjoy the benefits of more time in school. Although attendance remains a concern, the school continues to do all it can to promote the importance of attending well.

Pupils are knowledgeable about the school values and how they should behave. They understand the fundamental British values. They have a clear understanding of their school's statement, 'to come in and learn with Jesus; go out and serve with love'.

The trust and local governors understand the strengths of the school and provide effective support to address the next steps of school improvement. The whole team works well together to make the necessary changes happen. Leaders focus on staff development. Staff feel valued and recognise how their workload has been taken into consideration through a time of change. They appreciate the training they have received and share the trust's ambition for their pupils.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In a small number of subjects, teachers do not consistently ensure that the work they provide for pupils is adapted so that they can learn the curriculum. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should continue to develop teaching adaptations so that all pupils achieve and learn well across the whole curriculum.
- Some pupils are persistently absent too often. This means that they miss out on the education and wider opportunities that the school provides. The school should continue the work it has begun to ensure that persistent absence, particularly of vulnerable pupils, reduces further.

## **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 Aidan's Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in September 2014.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	148814
<b>Local authority</b>	North Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10346780
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	219
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Harrison
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Anita Bath
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Rachel Lalor
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.staidans.school">www.staidans.school</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust.
- As the school is designated as having a religious character, it is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, most recently in February 2024.
- The acting headteacher took up this post in September 2024.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

## 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 this evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work, met with a number of school staff, school leaders and those responsible for governance.
- 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**

Catherine Beard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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