

Inspection of St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, Sunderland

Grindon Lane, Grindon, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR4 8HP

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 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 head of school is Alex Steele. This school is part of 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. There is also an executive headteacher, Jane Ward, who is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

St Cuthbert's motto is 'once a part of St Cuthbert's, always a part of St Cuthbert's'. This creates a sense of belonging in a school where pupils know that staff care for them. Pupils are proud to attend the school. They play a central role in the welcoming culture. Pupils are keen to interact with each other and visitors. They enjoy attending this caring school and feel safe. The school welcomes hearing from pupils who have left the school some time ago. It is proud to celebrate their achievements. Pupils of all ages know that they are part of the St Cuthbert's 'family'.

Pupils meet the school's high expectations. They are quick to settle into learning. They relish the opportunity to contribute to class discussions. Pupils achieve well in end-of-key-stage examinations. Staff are committed to nurturing pupils' self-belief. Pupils are keen to share their ambitious aspirations for the future.

Pupils love to take part in a wide array of trips and visits. Pupils in Year 2 learn about rural life in their visit to a local farm. Children in the early years enjoy their visit to a local post office. These visits help pupils to gain a broad understanding of the world.

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

The school ensures that pupils quickly learn to read from the earliest age. Expert staff ensure that phonics lessons benefit all pupils. Pupils who are not quite keeping up with reading are swiftly identified. Effective support is put in place. This means that pupils catch up with their peers. Pupils have a love of reading. They are excited to speak about their favourite books. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy their class book 'Cloud Busting'. They learn about how it links with the theme of bullying. The school carefully selects books that help pupils to understand the world. This helps pupils explore sensitive topics and how they could deal with them.

The school has a well-sequenced curriculum. It helps pupils gradually build their knowledge over time. For example, in mathematics, children in Reception use circle time to learn to count to 10. Pupils in key stage 1 build on this knowledge as they learn about number bonds. The curriculum in foundation subjects has been mapped out in the same logical way. This ensures pupils deepen their knowledge over time.

In some subjects, the school is developing its approach to assessment. In these areas, the identification of what pupils know and remember is not precise. This limits teachers' understanding of what pupils need to recap or learn next.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from effective support. The school works with pupils and their families to meet their needs. The school also ensures that adults know how to support pupils with SEND. For example, some pupils use communication boards to help them to explain their needs to adults.

Children in early years are quick to settle in school. This is helped by the school's clear transition process. The school quickly understands children and their families. Children

enjoy attending Nursery and Reception. Adult-led sessions are purposeful and children love to join in. For example, in mathematics, pupils are keen to show how they use their fingers to represent number. In less formal activities, staff do not consistently identify or draw out the key knowledge children should be acquiring. This means that children sometimes complete activities without getting the most from this learning.

The school's unique approach to trips gives pupils lasting memories. The school offers sequenced residential visits for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6. Each visit is carefully planned. Pupils develop a range of important skills and qualities. Over time, pupils become more independent and resilient. This is an important part of the school's coherent and exceptional approach to character development.

In addition, the school identifies '101 things' they want pupils to experience by the time they leave school. These include learning to ride a bike and connecting with a local business. These thoughtful experiences help pupils to flourish and discover new interests. Pupils also enjoy learning about different careers. This helps them connect learning to future dreams. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy their visit from the local fire service. Year 6 pupils excitedly recounted their workshop on palaeontology. This rich set of experiences gives pupils a sense of wonder about the wider world.

The school, governing body, trust and diocese work collaboratively in the best interests of pupils. They are determined to provide pupils with the best possible life chances and a rich set of experiences. Staff at St Cuthberts are valued and 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, the school's assessment procedures are still being embedded. This means the school is not clear on what pupils know and remember in some areas. The school should continue its work to embed effective assessment practice so that it has an accurate view about what pupils have learned.
- Some activities in early years are not linked clearly enough to the key knowledge that children should learn. This means that, on occasion, children's consolidation of their foundational knowledge is not as effective as it could be. The school should carry out further work to get the most from learning activities, particularly in less formal or continuous provision.

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	149036
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10323157
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	228
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel O'Mahoney
CEO of the trust	Brendan Tapping
Headteacher	Jane Ward (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.stcuthbertsprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is designated as having a religious character. It is inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The last section 48 inspection of the school was in May 2019.
- St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in March 2022. When its predecessor school, St Cuthbert's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding for overall effectiveness.

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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, art and mathematics. 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.
- An inspector met with the executive headteacher, head of school and deputy head of school.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator.
- An inspector spoke with the CEO of the trust and vice chair of the trust. They also met with the local governing committee, including the chair.
- An inspector met with the trust's chief standard's officer.
- An inspector spoke with the acting deputy director of education for the diocese.
- 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.
- A range of school documents were reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils through meetings held with them.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff through meetings and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Andrew Gibbins, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Diane Buckle

Ofsted Inspector

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