

# Inspection of St Wilfrid's RC College

Temple Park Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE34 0QA

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Inspection dates:	8 and 9 April 2025
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Sixth-form provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Catherine Lennox. 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.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2018. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

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

Pupils' experience at the school is mixed. Pupils know the 'St Wilfrid's Way'. Many strive to live up to the school's values of respect, responsibility and resilience. However, some pupils do not follow the school's rules and expectations. Pupils' learning is sometimes disrupted. Poor behaviour can also affect their social times. Pupils are safe at the school. Bullying is not common. However, pupils lack confidence in how well bullying or behaviour concerns are addressed.

The school wants its pupils to succeed at a high standard. In many subjects, pupils achieve well in national tests. However, this is not consistently the case. Pupils' experience and learning in the classroom from Year 7 to Year 11 are too variable.

In the sixth form, students enjoy learning and have positive relationships with staff. Overall, they achieve in line with their peers nationally. Students also progress from Year 13 to a range of interesting and ambitious destinations.

Pupils enjoy a broad programme beyond the academic curriculum. For example, pupils can join the student council or volunteer in the local community. Pupils also access 'active lunch' clubs and raise money for local charities. Student leaders in the sixth form act as positive role models for younger pupils.

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

Overall, the school has constructed an effective curriculum. It is well sequenced throughout the school. Many pupils achieve well to secure their next steps. However, some do not achieve as highly as they should. This is because some tasks in lessons do not extend pupils' thinking well enough. Some pupils struggle to explore more complex ideas or explain their thinking. This limits their ability to apply knowledge in different, connected ways.

For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, educational outcomes are not consistently strong. The school identifies pupils' needs well. However, for too many pupils with SEND, their knowledge of the curriculum is very variable. Teachers do not consistently put in place the advice from pupils' SEND support plans. Their understanding of pupils' barriers to learning is not secure enough. In addition, the way teaching checks how well all pupils have understood the curriculum in lessons, and over time, is not as effective as it should be. As a result, staff do not consistently address the specific gaps in learning that pupils have.

The school understands the importance of reading. Across the curriculum, there is a positive focus on the teaching of important vocabulary. Pupils who struggle with reading are identified at the earliest opportunity. There is some intervention in place that helps targeted pupils improve fluency and confidence. Reading is a daily part of school life. Staff read to pupils from a range of texts. In the sixth form, students read academic articles linked to their subjects.

In the sixth form, students attend well and are punctual to lessons. They show commitment to their studies. Students enjoy effective support and feedback from teachers. For younger pupils, attendance and punctuality are more variable. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. However, rates of absence are starting to improve. The school has put appropriate actions in place.

Over time, the behaviour of some pupils at the school has not been good enough. Parents and carers, staff and pupils share concerns about the impact of poor behaviour. Recent changes in leadership and practice are having a positive effect. Pupils and staff at the school recognise this. However, there is much more work to do. Improvements are not consistent or embedded. The school is striving to set high expectations, but this is yet to have a demonstrable impact.

The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education is effective. Pupils learn how to stay safe in an age-appropriate way. For example, sixth-form students learn about risks they might face at festivals. Pupils' careers education is also well developed. They enjoy a range of opportunities to learn about different options after school. This helps prepare pupils well for the future.

Leaders have a strong vision for the school. They are committed to improvements for the pupils and the community. Their journey of improvement, however, is at a very early stage. Trust leaders support the school well. Trustees and governors understand their roles and carry them out effectively.

Parents' views of the school are very mixed, and some have lost confidence in aspects of the school's work. Many staff enjoy working in the school. However, some would like more support in managing behaviour and other pressure that they experience.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Revised policies and practice have not had time to embed, and recent positive changes have not yet been communicated successfully to some stakeholders. Many pupils, parents and staff have negative views about the school's work. The school should ensure that there is clear and effective communication with stakeholders as they implement their improvement strategies.
- Occasionally, some pupils disrupt the learning and experience of others due to poor behaviour. This impacts negatively on pupils' progress through the curriculum and their enjoyment of school. The school should ensure that staff implement the behaviour policies of the school consistently well, including following up on behaviour incidents and pupils' concerns.

- The strategies staff use to check pupils understanding in the classroom, and the assessment of learning over time, are underdeveloped. Staff do not have a consistently clear picture of what pupils know, remember and can do. The school should ensure there is an effective and shared approach to checking pupils' understanding so that gaps in knowledge can be addressed and learning deepens over time.
- Implementation of the curriculum does not consistently support pupils to extend their learning beyond the simple recall of information. Some pupils struggle to apply their learning in different contexts and to make connections between different aspects of knowledge they have learned. The school should ensure that curriculum implementation supports pupils to extend and explain their thinking, make connections in learning and develop increasing expertise and independence in their subjects.
- Staff do not have a developed enough understanding of how to support the learning of pupils with more complex needs in their classrooms. Some disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND do not achieve as well as their peers. The school should work with subject departments to identify barriers to learning specific to pupils' needs and ensure teaching supports these pupils well to close gaps in learning and achieve more ambitious outcomes.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	142601
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10379396
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1,336
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	141
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Daniel O'Mahoney
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Brendan Tapping
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Lennox
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-wilfrids.org">www.st-wilfrids.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 February 2024, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.
- The school's religious character is Catholic. Its last section 48 inspection took place in October 2023.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2024.
- A small number of pupils currently attend two registered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, trust leaders and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also met with the CEO of the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, geography, physical education and modern foreign languages. 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 leader responsible for SEND, reviewed pupils' support plans and visited lessons to see support for pupils with SEND in action.
- An inspector met with the leader responsible for the sixth form.
- The lead inspector met a trustee and members of the local governing body. They also reviewed documentation related to governance, including minutes of meetings.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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.
- The inspectors met with groups of pupils and staff formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

## Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector

Julie McGrane

Nikki Heron

Bernard Clark

Jonathan Ferstenberg

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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