

# Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Primary School, South Shields

Claypath Lane, South Shields, Tyne and Wear NE33 4PG

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Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of  
the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Carol Devine. 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, Brendan Tapping, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel O'Mahoney.

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

St Bede's is a thriving school community where pupils flourish and feel safe. The Catholic values are evident in all aspects of school life. The school recognises each pupil as a unique individual. Staff have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The highly ambitious curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. They love being part of the St Bede's family. The school supports pupils and their families to ensure that there are no barriers to regular attendance. As a result, pupils' outcomes at the end of Year 6 are significantly above national levels.

The school's skilfully crafted wider curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to make a difference to their own school, community and wider world. The school's vision of 'excellence in all that we do' and values such as courage and respect permeate this school. Pupils live out this vision and values through leading assemblies, caring for the environment and fundraising for charities.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. They are kind, responsible and respectful. Pupils show a deep appreciation of the many differences that exist between people. This begins in the early years. Pupils support each other consistently. Older pupils take on the role of play leaders, organising games for other pupils to enjoy at lunchtimes. Some become peer mentors and are trained by specialists to help support other pupils' mental health.

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

The school helps pupils seamlessly transition to the local secondary school. Primary and secondary colleagues work in partnership to produce sequences of learning that help pupils develop a deep and rich body of knowledge over time. Pupils practise and recall prior learning in every lesson. As a result, they make secure connections within their learning. Using the school's 'three questions in three minutes' approach, teachers rigorously identify and address any gaps in pupils' learning. Pupils apply the knowledge they have developed across all subjects. Pupils with SEND study the same curriculum as their peers. They achieve equally well. This is because they receive precise support to ensure that they achieve the best possible outcomes.

For pupils to access such an ambitious curriculum, leaders have made the teaching of reading a high priority. Right from Nursery, children begin to learn letters that match sounds. Reception-age children quickly learn and build new sounds. They blend unfamiliar words and sentences. They apply their phonics knowledge to write accurately. This helps them access more demanding tasks. Pupils in Year 1 read with fluency. The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 in 2023 was significantly above the national average. Staff effectively support pupils who fall behind to catch up quickly. Older pupils fluently read a range

of texts and styles. They share their love of reading by reviewing their favourite books, including making video recommendations.

The school ensures that the curriculum for all subjects starts in the early years and builds, step by step, from Nursery through to Year 6. Children in Nursery and Reception develop their counting skills through songs and rhymes. They learn about their personal history through the lens of family and familiar people. Consequently, children have the building blocks to communicate their ideas about history in future years. Leaders ensure that children have the opportunities and vocabulary needed to be excellent communicators.

The school's support for pupils' wider development is exemplary and is threaded through the curriculum. Pupils learn how to take good care of themselves physically and mentally. They gain first-hand experiences that bring the curriculum to life. For example, pupils sing in a cathedral and discuss democracy with the mayor at the local town hall. The curriculum prepares pupils for their life beyond school. Staff raise pupils' aspirations through visits from a range of professionals. As a result, pupils are ambitious for their future lives. The school provides a vast array of sporting opportunities for all pupils, including those with SEND. For example, pupils with SEND take part in the Panathlon Challenge with pupils from other schools and compete in boccia competitions. Staff develop strong links with local sports clubs and forensically track participation in sport to ensure that no pupil misses out.

Teachers benefit from the high-quality training that leaders provide. They regularly join other teachers from the trust for professional development events. As a result, teachers have a very strong subject knowledge. They present information clearly and evoke pupils' interest and curiosity through a range of stimulating resources. Staff share leaders' relentless pursuit of excellence. They are proud to work at the school. Staff morale is high. They feel well supported.

The school, governing body and trust show exceptional commitment to providing an exemplary education for pupils at this school. They support and challenge in equal measure. Parents describe St Bede's as a wonderful place to be, where children not only learn subjects but learn how to be better humans as well.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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>	148486
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	10323132
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Daniel O'Mahoney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol Devine
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stbedessouthshields.co.uk">www.stbedessouthshields.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- This school is part of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust. There are 30 other schools in the trust.
- St Bede's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in April 2021. When its predecessor school, St Bede's Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- There is an on-site breakfast club.
- The school uses two registered alternative providers.
- The school has a Catholic ethos and is within the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point in time judgement 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 inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with all senior leaders, a number of teaching and support staff, governors, a representative from the trust and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. 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 considered a range of other subject documentation.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documents, including leaders' evaluation of the school and priorities for school improvement.
- 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 took account of the views of pupils, staff and parents and carers, as gathered through discussions and Ofsted's surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Lisa Ponter, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Rowena Sykes

Ofsted Inspector

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