

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Primary School

Ridge Terrace, Bedlington, Northumberland NE22 6EQ

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Therese Worrall. 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, Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison.

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education pupils receive is not good enough. The school has not set out the knowledge that pupils need to learn in all curriculum subjects.

Pupils enjoy attending school. They play together well. Pupils know what it means to be a good friend. However, some pupils do not follow classroom rules consistently. Sometimes, lessons are disrupted when pupils are demotivated. Usually, this is because the planned learning activity has not been considered carefully by the adults in school. Pupils sometimes miss vital new learning because they do not listen to staff. On occasion, they talk over staff. The school has not ensured that all staff have the same expectations of pupils' behaviour in lessons. Also, the school has not ensured that low-level disruption is dealt with consistently. Low-level disruption affects pupils' learning detrimentally when staff do not address it straight away.

There is a warm, nurturing ethos at St Bede's. Staff know the pupils well. They have created an environment in which pupils feel safe and secure. As one pupil said, 'The adults look after us.' Most parents and carers are positive about the school. They appreciate the care and support their children receive.

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

Leaders have recently changed the approach to teaching reading. Children in the early years begin to enjoy stories and rhymes in Nursery. They start learning to read formally when they start in Reception. Staff encourage pupils to use their knowledge of phonics to read unknown words, words with complex spelling patterns and whole sentences. These approaches help pupils to read fluently. Staff ensure that the books that pupils read at home are matched to the sounds they know.

The school has not broken the curriculum down into small, progressive steps in all subjects. This means that pupils do not systematically build their knowledge and skills over time. In some subjects, staff routinely revisit pupils' prior learning. In geography, for example, staff regularly return to topics that have been taught in previous years. The school has not made sure that this 'recall practice' happens in all subjects. As a result, pupils sometimes remember the activities they have taken part in rather than the important knowledge that they need to retain.

One of the school's priorities is to develop children's communication skills in the early years. Despite this priority, some staff do not make the best use of opportunities to consolidate and extend young children's spoken language. The school has not provided staff with the training that they need to do this well. In some curriculum areas in key stages 1 and 2, the school has not provided staff with the training necessary to develop their subject knowledge and deliver the curriculum effectively.

The school makes sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive the help they require. Staff think carefully about the support that

pupils with SEND need to be emotionally ready for learning. However, the school does not consider well enough how curriculum adaptations should be made to support the progress of pupils with SEND.

Pupils' behaviour sometimes distracts and hinders others' learning. The school has not ensured that staff have consistent expectations of pupils' behaviour. Staff do not deal with low-level disruptive behaviour consistently well.

The school's work on personal development is helping to prepare pupils for their future lives. Staff teach pupils to recognise how they are feeling and how to deal with their emotions. Pupils understand how to keep themselves healthy. They know what to do if they feel unsafe. However, there are inconsistencies in the way staff teach some elements of the personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum, including aspects of relationships and health education. These limit pupils' understanding of equality and diversity in society.

All staff are positive about the support they receive to manage their workload. They benefit from the collaborative work in school and with other schools in the trust. The trust has assured itself that safeguarding arrangements and the provision for pupils with SEND are effective. However, the trust knows that it needs to continue to make checks to ensure that the quality of education is, at least, good across the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not fulfil a clear and ambitious vision to provide a broad and balanced high-quality education for pupils, including children in the early years. Some of the knowledge that pupils learn does not prepare them well for future work. The school should ensure that the curriculum sets out the crucial knowledge that pupils need to know and remember.
- The school has not ensured that staff have the expertise required to deliver the curriculum across school, including in the early years. As a result, pupils do not reach their curriculum goals in all subjects. The school should ensure that staff access appropriate training and improve their pedagogical and content knowledge.
- Teachers do not know what pupils know and remember in the curriculum. This means that the tasks set for pupils do not build on their prior knowledge seamlessly. The school should ensure that teachers assess pupils' progress incisively.
- The breadth and ambition of the school's curriculum is not securely and consistently matched to the needs of pupils with SEND. Therefore, pupils with

SEND do not gain the essential knowledge and skills they need to prepare them for their next steps. The school should ensure that teachers make adaptations to ensure pupils with SEND benefit from the teaching and learning in school.

- Some pupils are not as attentive as they should be in lessons. This inattentiveness leads to low-level disruptive behaviour, which slows learning. Leaders should ensure that the school's behaviour policies and expectations are adopted universally.
- Pupils do not understand aspects of the diversity in our society. This limits pupils' preparation for life in modern Britain. Leaders should ensure that they equip staff with the necessary training and confidence to teach all aspects of the school's curriculum.

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	148283
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10269145
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	215
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
CEO of the trust	Anita Bath
Headteacher	Therese Worrall
Website	www.st-bedes.northumberland.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is a Roman Catholic primary school in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. The most recent section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in April 2016, prior to the academy conversion. New schools are usually inspected within two to three years of opening. However, inspection dates have been delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- St Bede's Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in December 2020. When its predecessor school, St Bede's Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust.
- The school runs a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a graded (section 5) inspection under the same Act.

- 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. 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: reading, mathematics, science and geography. 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 also discussed the curriculums for PSHE, including relationships and health education, with leaders.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, trust leaders, subject leaders and a sample of teaching and support staff. Inspectors met with the leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, the early years, behaviour and personal development.
- 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.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents and policies, including leaders' self-evaluation and documentation relating to governance and to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The lead inspector met some trustees, including the chair of the trust. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of the Ofsted survey for staff.

Inspection team

Catherine Beard, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alison Aitchison

His Majesty's Inspector

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