

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Aloysius Catholic Infant School, Hebburn

Argyle Street, Hebburn, Tyne and Wear NE31 1RZ

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 May 2025

Outcome

St Aloysius Catholic Infant School, Hebburn has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Anna Tumelty. 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. The executive headteacher is responsible for this school and one other.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' eagerness to learn at this school is infectious. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary. Across the school, pupils are role models to each other in different ways. They are caring and considerate of each other. Pupils value how everyone is able to get along. These kind behaviours start in the early years. The school supports pupils to feel safe and cared for. Pupils spend the day enjoying learning and playing together in this welcoming school.

The school's curriculum is ambitious. Pupils rise, with ease, to the high expectations the school sets. They talk with passion and precision about their learning. They achieve exceptionally well. Staff enable children to thrive through carefully planned learning opportunities.

The school's work to develop pupils into caring and considerate citizens is exceptional. Pupils have a secure and age-appropriate understanding of the world they live in. Children in the early years, along with older pupils, are subject ambassadors. Through assemblies, clubs and school events, pupil leaders help other pupils, families and the wider community to be more involved in the wider life of the school. Pupils know how the school is helping them to be the best they can be.

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

A highly ambitious and carefully sequenced curriculum enables pupils to achieve highly. In the early years, well-designed learning activities help the youngest children to be focused, independent learners. For example, children in the Nursery take their learning about minibests into their own bug hunts with their friends. In Reception, children delight in using their writing skills. For example, they write postcards linked to their learning about the world and apply their phonics knowledge when writing their own menus.

The school has carefully considered what is taught, and in what order, across the curriculum. Staff have strong subject knowledge. They are supported by knowledgeable leaders. Together, this ensures that the curriculum is implemented effectively. Teachers check pupils' understanding to help them know more and remember more over time. Pupils explain their learning in detail and with pride. For example, they use precise language when comparing different artists' work. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities they have to apply their mathematical knowledge. For instance, the school's 'use your head' activities regularly help pupils to problem-solve and reason.

In the early years, children benefit from high-quality adult interactions. Adults carefully shape questions and their support to meet children's communication needs. This helps to sustain children's attention and interest in their learning. Children in Reception make a bright start to learning to read. They are eager to share the sounds they know. This continues as pupils move through the school. Staff are highly skilled in the teaching of phonics. They use consistent language and strategies linked to the school's phonics programme.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from skilled support. Careful monitoring ensures that pupils with SEND are supported as soon as possible. Staff identify and understand pupils' needs and, when necessary, make appropriate adaptations to meet these needs. When needed, the school engages with a range of professionals to enhance and evaluate its support.

Pupils are proud of their work and their school. They should be. Pupils set a great example to each other in their behaviour for learning and their behaviour in and around school. Pupils enjoy the ever-increasing range of activities on offer during breaktimes. Social times are positive and happy.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in their local area and when online. Ongoing safety education is enhanced further by visitors to school. This means that pupils understand and recognise the dangers they might face. For example, these include the local Metro line and the river. The school's programme for personal development provides pupils with ample opportunity to know and understand fundamental British values and protected characteristics. Pupils show remarkable skills in debating these in an age-appropriate way. The school's 'secret garden' supports outdoor learning. It is also one of the many after-school clubs pupils enjoy, alongside photography and British Sign Language.

Leaders are highly effective. They are sharply focused on ensuring the school's offer is as strong as it can be. The school supports other leaders and schools on their improvement journeys. Staff are positive about their roles. They are supported well to develop as leaders themselves. Well-being is carefully considered by leaders and those responsible for governance, enabling staff to feel highly valued.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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 outstanding 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Aloysius RC Voluntary Aided Infant School, to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in January 2019.

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	148275
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	10268015
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel O'Mahoney
CEO of the trust	Brendan Tapping
Headteacher	Anna Tumelty (Executive Headteacher)
Website	www.st-alloysius.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 is federated with St Aloysius Catholic Junior School Academy. The two schools share a local governing body and an executive headteacher.
- There has been a change of executive headteacher and head of school since the previous inspection.
- The school has a religious character as a Roman Catholic school in the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. Its last section 48 inspection took place in March 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection will take place within eight years of that inspection.
- The school has nursery provision for three-year-olds.
- The school offers a breakfast club and a wraparound care club, which are run by the school. This offer is located at St Aloysius Catholic Junior School Academy.
- The school does not 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 their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector spoke with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other leaders in the school.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work. The inspector held discussions with leaders responsible for attendance and behaviour.
- 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.
- The inspector gathered the views of parents in person and through their responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and free-text responses. The views of staff were considered during meetings and through Ofsted's staff survey. Pupils' views were considered through pupil meetings.
- The inspector spoke with representatives from the local governing body, trustees and other representatives from the trust.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classes and at social times.

Inspection team

Emily Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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