

Inspection of Sacred Heart Catholic High School

Fenham Hall Drive, Fenham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE4 9YH

Inspection dates:	3 and 4 December 2024
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Sixth-form provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Suzanne Howell. This school is part of the 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.

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 November 2013. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils belong to a caring school community that welcomes all. The school values pupils for who they are. It celebrates pupils' different faiths and cultures. It also works in close partnership with parents and carers in the best interests of pupils. Pupils are polite and friendly. They show a pride in their school.

The school has high aspirations for what pupils can achieve, both at school and in their future careers. Pupils realise those high aspirations. They benefit from excellent teaching and become effective independent learners. Pupils achieve considerable success in their examinations.

Pupils behave in an exemplary manner. They take responsibility for their own behaviour and show respect and kindness to all. Pupils build strong friendships with each other and support each other's well-being. They also form positive relationships with staff. The school has created a culture in which pupils can thrive.

The school provides pupils with a diverse range of opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils enjoy educational visits that enrich their learning. They take part in extra-curricular activities, including sport, music and dance. Sixth-form students play a central role in the life of the school. Indeed, this is a school where pupils lead and give back to others.

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

The school has established a broad and ambitious curriculum. It has applied considerable thought to the content and sequencing of the curriculum. Pupils build their knowledge and skills in a coherent and progressive manner. They learn to work and think like subject specialists. At key stage 3, pupils gain the foundational knowledge they need for future success. At key stage 4 and in the sixth form, they deepen and extend their learning. Expert guidance supports pupils in selecting key stage 4 and 5 courses that meet both their needs and interests. A large proportion of sixth-form students progress on to higher education. While others secure apprenticeships and employment.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same curriculum as their peers. The school identifies pupils' needs with speed and precision. It ensures that pupils with SEND get the specific help they need. Pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well from their individual starting points. The school also identifies those pupils who need extra help with their reading. It provides these pupils with support that is matched to their reading development needs. This helps pupils to become confident and fluent readers.

Pupils read widely and often at school. The school promotes a love for reading through events, such as author visits and a reading festival. Sixth-form students help younger pupils with their reading. The school has established a culture of reading. This culture makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement.

Teaching is of a high quality. Teachers have expert subject knowledge. They use this to good effect in presenting new information to pupils. They revisit what pupils have learned before and build on that learning. Moreover, they adapt their teaching to consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In the sixth form, teachers' skilful questioning generates discussion and debate. Sixth-form students develop their skills of analysis and evaluation. They acquire a rich and deep body of knowledge. Pupils at all key stages achieve very highly.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exceptional. The school expects pupils to respect others and show commitment to their learning. Pupils meet these expectations. They benefit from a well-established school ethos, founded on the school's history and traditions.

The school's approach to pupils' personal development is exceptional. It has a clear intent to develop attributes such as resilience, confidence and compassion. In Years 7 and 9, pupils complete a programme entitled 'Girls' resilience in thinking'. In the sixth form, all students complete the Janet Erskine Stuart Award. This award recognises students' contributions to the life of the school and the wider community. Pupils learn about relationships, equality and diversity, and physical and mental health. They also get high-quality careers education and guidance. This helps them to make well-informed choices about their future careers.

The school is committed to its mission of enabling educational and future success for every pupil. It works with intelligence and determination to achieve such success. Trustees and local governors fulfil their responsibilities with appropriate rigour. They provide strategic oversight of the school's provision and hold school leaders to account. Supported by the trust, the school provides staff with excellent professional development. Staff enjoy working at the school. The school values staff. It ensures that staff workload is manageable and prioritises staff well-being.

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

Unique reference number	137708
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10346430
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Girls
Number of pupils on the school roll	1388
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	261
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
CEO of the trust	Anita Bath
Headteacher	Suzanne Howell
Website	www.sacredheart-high.org
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 November 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust. It became part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust in August 2017. The school converted to academy status in December 2011.
- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.
- The school is a Roman Catholic school in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle.
- The school's last section 48 inspection took place in March 2019. Section 48 inspections were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic and restarted in September 2021. The school's next section 48 inspection is due by March 2027.

- 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 inspector(s) 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, deputy headteachers and members of the senior leadership team. They also met with the chief executive officer of the trust, the chair of the board of trustees, the chair of the local governing committee and members of the local governing committee.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, modern foreign languages, geography, art and design and business and applied law. For each deep dive, the 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.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in history and science. They looked at samples of pupils' work in these subjects.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils and staff, and to the online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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