

Inspection of St Cuthbert's High School

Gretna Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear NE15 7PX

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Sixth-form provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Daniel Murray. 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?

Pupils benefit from the school's vision of 'forming great men'. They enjoy a variety of thoughtful opportunities to develop their character. Pupils are happy and show commitment to their learning. They have comprehensive pastoral support. They feel safe at school.

Pupils' quality of education is a central priority in the school. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' achievement. Pupils increasingly benefit from a relentless focus on improving the curriculum. Students in the sixth form have a positive educational experience. They develop expert knowledge about the subjects they study.

Pupils, including sixth-form students, are clear that behaviour has improved significantly. They enjoy a culture of clear expectations. Pupils are proud of the journey of improvement since the last inspection. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school during social times. They show respect for others. Pupils and staff do not tolerate bullying and discrimination.

Pupils' experience extends beyond the academic curriculum. They enjoy access to a wide range of clubs and activities. Students in the sixth form take part in timetabled enrichment sessions. These include political debates, learning Mandarin and professional sports coaching. Pupils' personal development is also supported by high-quality careers advice.

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

The school has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is well-designed and sequenced across subjects in key stage 3. Important knowledge and skills are carefully mapped out. Staff are clear about the subject vocabulary pupils need to know and understand. Pupils use these terms confidently. In science, Year 8 pupils recall prior learning about oxidation. They use terms, including endothermic and exothermic, to explain the process. However, changes to the curriculum are not fully embedded across all key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), do not achieve the best possible outcomes in public examinations. However, the curriculum is starting to have a positive impact on what pupils know and can do. Staff understand the needs of SEND pupils well. They adapt learning where necessary. Pupils are positive about the support they receive.

The school swiftly identifies pupils who struggle with reading. Pupils receive focused intervention from well-trained staff. Pupils rapidly catch up with their peers. The school's decision to create a school library has been well received. Pupils enjoy having a space dedicated to reading.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. A programme of bespoke professional development enhances this further. Year 13 English students debate with their teacher. They explore complex ideas about how the English language has evolved

over time. Teachers probe pupils' understanding in lessons with skilful questioning. Pupils respond to this with enthusiasm. However, the checking of pupils' progress is not consistently effective. The school does not have a clear picture of how all elements of the curriculum are supporting pupils to learn.

Leaders from the school and trust have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. This has led to a much-improved culture. Pupils and staff understand the behaviour policy. A focus on relationships is central to the school's expectations. Pupils show respect for staff and for each other. When poor behaviour does occur, staff take effective action. Routines are now embedded in the school. For example, pupils line up sensibly after lunch to return to lessons with their teachers. The school has developed a strong pastoral team. These staff work closely together to identify the cause of any poor behaviour. They swiftly put personalised interventions in place. Suspensions in the school are reducing. Pupils' attendance is high compared to national and local averages. This reflects pupils' positive engagement with their school.

St Cuthbert's is a diverse community. The school teaches pupils to celebrate diversity. A carefully planned personal development curriculum underpins this. Pupils are proud of their cultural differences. Sixth-form students act as role models and mentors. They are sports leaders and support younger pupils with reading. Students benefit from a rounded education. The school prepares them well for their ambitious next steps.

Leaders have transformed the school since the last inspection. With targeted support from the trust, they have made the school a better place for pupils. They are clear on what they need to do next. Staff are proud of the journey the school has been on. They enjoy working in an environment where their well-being is a priority. Governors know the school well. They have provided extra support and challenge during intense change. Many parents value improved communication and behaviour. They feel well informed about the school through weekly updates.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Recent work to improve the quality of the curriculum is not securely embedded across all key stages. Some pupils, including those with SEND, do not achieve as well as they could. The school should intensify actions to implement the revised curriculum.
- Assessment is not consistent across the school. This limits the understanding the school has about the impact of some elements of curriculum on pupils' learning.

The school should continue its work to embed a consistent approach to assessment.

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	137900
Local authority	Newcastle upon Tyne
Inspection number	10297363
Type of school	Secondary Comprehensive
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	1234
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	195
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	David Harrison
Headteacher	Daniel Murray
Website	www.st-cuthbertshigh.newcastle.sch.uk
Date(s) of previous inspection	30 June – 1 July 2021, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust. It's last section 48 inspection took place in June 2017.
- St Cuthbert's High School converted to be an academy in August 2012.
- The school does not use providers of alternative provision for its pupils.
- 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.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement 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 and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also held a meeting with the chief executive officer.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the board of trustees and one other trustee. They also met with the chair of the local governing committee and four other governors. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from trust board meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, science, physical education, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also visited a sample of lessons in other curriculum areas and spoke to additional subject leaders.
- An inspector met with the leader responsible for sixth form.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and visited a sample of lessons to look at the support given to pupils with SEND.
- To inspect the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and responsible deputy headteacher. Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and the school's single central record. Inspectors spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding in school. They considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for personal development and visited tutor sessions.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and students formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- A range of school documents was reviewed, including the school's self-evaluation and the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires.

Inspection team

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