



St Cuthbert's Catholic High School

Gretna Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 7PX

School Unique Reference Number: **1379000**

Inspection dates:	14 – 15 June 2017
Lead inspector:	Mrs Meg Baines
Team inspector:	Ms Liz McGuire

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Cuthbert's Catholic High School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The school's Catholic Life drives everything that happens in the school. The school's mission statement, 'Faith Leadership and Learning', puts faith at the forefront of everything they do. The governors and headteacher model their vision for a vibrant and aspirational place of learning with Christ at the heart. There is a strong Catholic ethos, which permeates the school. A significant number of boys are involved in a variety of ministries. Catholic Life is evident in the way the students treat each other. The religious icons and symbols and the strong relationships that exist between staff and boys reflect the school's evident Catholicity. Excellent links with parishes and local clergy exist, benefitting all the school community.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. Students and staff lead prayer and liturgies throughout the school year. Prayer is a priority and a key part of daily life at St Cuthbert's. A genuine focus on prayer and reflection is keenly felt. The chaplain and school leaders work closely to provide high quality Collective Worship. The students pray formally three times a day and the chapel is open for use at any time. Students speak with knowledge and confidence about the church's liturgical calendar and the place it has in their lives.
- Religious Education teaching is outstanding. In Religious Education the progress and attainment for vulnerable students is consistently strong. Evidence shows a three year trend of rising standards. The attitudes of staff and students to teaching and learning is excellent. This factor and the excellent relationships that exist across the school community make a significant contribution to the high standards in outcomes and learning experiences for the students.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Cuthbert's Catholic High School is a larger than average boys' school located in the west end of Newcastle upon Tyne.
- The school converted to academy status in September 2011.
- There are 1,108 students including a sixth form of 184 students.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the last diocesan inspection.
- A new chaplain was appointed in 2016
- The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language (EAL) is above the national average. The number of students entitled to Pupil Premium (PP) is above national average. There are four students with Education Health and Care plans (EHC), three looked-after children (LAC) and 144 students on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) code of practice register.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Increase further the level of pupil participation in Collective Worship.
 - by continuing to develop opportunities for students to take the lead role
- Extend staff formation.
 - by continuing to develop opportunities for staff to explore and experience spiritual life within the context of school

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Students spoke passionately about their love of their school and their roles in the everyday Catholic Life therein. Behaviour is excellent with a genuine sense of stewardship of their environment and each other. Parent and student surveys are regularly used to give evaluative feedback about mission and ethos to governors and school leaders, which enables effective planning and monitoring of Catholic Life of the school. During the inspection the year seven students were writing thank you letters to the residents of a local care home they had visited the previous week. This is a clear embodiment of the school's mission statement of, 'Faith, Leadership and Learning'. It places Christ at the heart of the community. The school chapel is physically at the heart of the school and open to the whole school community. During the inspection the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament took place in the chapel reflecting the importance of the forthcoming feast of Corpus Christi.
- Behaviour of the students is excellent both in and around school. Behaviour for learning in lessons is also excellent. Students are aware that they have outstanding opportunities for their own personal and spiritual development and take full advantage. For example, the school provides both day and residential retreat opportunities at the Emmaus Youth Village for all year groups. Students spoke frequently about how proud they were of their school. Students are highly knowledgeable about their own faith and vocations and how these are lived out today. In a recent student led initiative, they collected a large number of backpacks, filling them with essentials and distributing them to refugees in the local area. They have frequent visits from clergy and excellent links with local parishes. They take part in a range of charitable events many of which are originated by themselves. Staff also give freely of their time and expertise in this area.
- All students have a strong sense of personal worth. Students acknowledge the diversity present in school and are supportive, tolerant and respectful of each other's faith background. A profound sense of belonging was identified; younger students feel encouraged and empowered to play an active role in their community. Links with parishes and the wider community are highly developed including retreat days to Bede's World and Flame congress as well as pilgrimages to Lourdes. Students at St Cuthbert's are justifiably proud of their historic Catholic heritage and value the traditions and practices that the school celebrates and identifies. Many, including students of other faiths, were keen to talk about the relics, icons and artefacts present in the chapel and spoke at length about them.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The school's mission statement is known and understood by the whole school community. All documentation and school publications promote and raise awareness of the school's mission. The excellent relationships which are evident across the school ensure that this is a joyful community, which celebrates its successes and supports the community. Classrooms are bright and displays around the school reflect the Catholic ethos and support learning effectively.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are effective in planning for pastoral care and policies, which ensures the highest quality provision for all. Students spoken to stated that they felt safe in school. Students in vulnerable groups are cared for and closely monitored. Students who are new to the school are quick to integrate and feel part of the school. The house system plays a key role in this and is hugely successful at monitoring all aspects of pastoral care including attendance and behaviour both of which are outstanding. The school is attentive to the pastoral care of staff providing opportunities for reflection and shared retreat.
- Rooted in Gospel values, which are understood by all the Catholic ethos is reflected in the relationships between boys in the classroom and at play. Personal, social and health education and relationship and sex education programmes are in line with Canon Law and Catholic Education Service guidelines. They are sensitively designed and delivered in a variety of lessons throughout the school year.
- Induction of new staff is firmly embedded. The recently appointed chaplain spoke warmly of her induction process which was a previous recommendation, and her professional and open relationship with the headteacher with whom she works closely. Staff are aware that they are leaders in faith and play a part in developing the spiritual as well as the academic life of each pupil. Provision for staff development found in the continuous professional development (CPD) plans ensures that Catholic Life is a priority.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The school's leaders have a strong and authentic commitment to the Catholic faith. This has improved outcomes and opportunities for students and professional development for staff. During the inspection, the school received news that it had become a Teaching School and National Leader of Education/National Support School. This exemplifies the vision the school leaders have to continue to share good practice with other schools, thereby living out gospel values. The headteacher is supported by a highly professional and experienced governing body, which has a deeply held faith and a dedication to the continuing success and future growth of St Cuthbert's. The senior leadership team is highly capable and they are supportive of each other and the headteacher. Together they ensure that the spiritual, pastoral and academic needs of the students are met and that a truly Catholic education is available to all.
- Governors monitor the Catholic Life through reports from the lay chaplain and visits to school by the link governors for Religious Education, the chair and priest governors.
- The school's monitoring systems include a Catholic Life audit, which keeps them up to date with events. Regular visits by clergy/governors ensure a monitoring presence. This drives planning and allows for 'challenge and stretch', buzzwords in every planning document.

- The school engages regularly with parents. The headteacher uses half-termly questionnaires to elicit feedback on a range of issues. Parents play a key role on the governing body. Those parents interviewed as part of this inspection were not governors but were supportive of the school, effusive in praise of its ethos and the sensitive way in which students are guided and led. They fully support the Catholic Life of the school. The governing body is proactive and views the Catholic Life of the school as a priority. They deliberate carefully over policies in order to ensure that the Catholic ethos is strong and uppermost in them all.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Acts of Collective Worship in school are many and varied. Examples include whole school Mass, classroom assembly, exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, year group and house assemblies. The school community takes part in opportunities offered to take a lead. The recently appointed lay chaplain plays a key role in coordinating all aspects of Collective Worship. Students were observed showing great respect and reverence during Collective Worship. They responded well to the prayers and showed prayerful silence in the moment of reflection.
- Students are knowledgeable of, and interested, in the liturgical life of school. They participate with reverence and respect, demonstrating their understanding by writing bidding prayers and planning assemblies. The older students stated that they were in no doubt that it was a key to their personal development and success; it gave them opportunities to speak publically and witness their faith. They stressed the relationship between prayer at school and their home life and parish. The heads of house coordinate assemblies and classes have an opportunity to prepare class Masses and assemblies. Music is used in worship, especially on big occasions, for example the Advent service that is held with feeder primaries in a church, the choir play an active and important role.
- The situating of the chapel geographically at the centre of the school in a sense typifies the status that Collective Worship has in school. It is clearly a major statement of faith. It is also a place for quiet reflection for all. An inclusive and welcoming space, students spoken to commented that those of other faiths feel happy to sit quietly and reflect in this space. The diverse population at St Cuthbert's does not diminish its Catholicity. Students respect and are tolerant of each other. Students live out their Catholic faith by acting inclusively in the classroom, the chapel, the dining hall and the playground. In shared areas, students of all ages mix well and show respect for each other.
- The curriculum enables students to gain first hand experiences of liturgical life through acts of Collective Worship, liturgies, Masses, retreats and visits to holy places, as well as giving opportunities to witness a wide diversity of other religious and belief communities.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The regularity and rhythm of prayer in the life of the school highlights the integral role it has in the life of this community. Students pray three times a day; morning, before meals and at the end of the school day. They are both led and guided by the staff who adopt the role of prayer ambassadors in the truest sense.
- Governors and senior leaders set the example of placing prayer at the heart of the school by example and involvement personally. They give it the highest priority in terms of planning and resourcing. Evidence was seen of planning for Collective Worship which was effectively monitored and the themes for the year reflect the church's liturgical year. The school also responds in its Collective Worship to current affairs and the needs of the community. Parents are invited to liturgical events throughout the school year and students and staff go into the community to celebrate and worship in acts of witness to their faith. An example is the forthcoming Education and Formation Mass at the Cathedral at which the school orchestra and choir will perform. Parents of students involved have been invited to attend.
- The lay chaplain, middle managers and all staff who support Collective Worship are skilled in helping plan and prepare for worship. Evidence of a variety of types of worship was found. House and whole school Mass, daily class assemblies as well as specific festival and feast days are planned for. Effective use of technologies for example video clips and films of the students bearing witness to their faith were seen and were effective in making the other students reflect. The lay chaplain is the lynch pin in the effectiveness of Collective Worship. The vision of the headteacher is communicated through the chaplain in their regular meetings and this cascades throughout the school. Following a house group liturgy in the chapel the Blessed Sacrament was left exposed with a member of staff in attendance. A number of students and staff attended during their lunch hour.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The community at St Cuthbert's benefit from having leaders and managers who have a deep understanding of their faith and the need for high quality Collective Worship. The transformational agenda of the headteacher includes the place of Collective Worship and her vision of bringing 'the church to the boys'. The aim is to give the students different opportunities in school to experience and develop their faith. Quality experiences are planned and effected. Students are ready to participate and are keen to develop their own ideas about worship. Liturgical leadership amongst the school community is viewed with high regard and is encouraged by the governors. Staff CPD has Collective Worship as a focus and at least annually, it is the only topic on the agenda thus promoting a truly Catholic community with a sense of its own worth.
- Staff are generous in giving their time to events outside of school hours and occasionally outside of their own parish. A number of staff are Eucharistic ministers
- Leaders, managers, and the lay chaplain were highly visible during Collective Worship observed bearing witness to their faith and acting as strong role models.
- Regular reviews of Collective Worship in school take place throughout the year. In November each year, the lay chaplain reports formally to the governing body. Throughout the year, the governors are kept up to date with events and liturgies through the report to governors from the lay chaplain and the termly audit of Catholic Life. The role of priest

governor plays a key part of the monitoring of such events. The lay chaplain reviews the progress of plans for Collective Worship in the classrooms and at house meetings. The headteacher line manages the chaplain with whom she meets formally every half term and informally weekly. The views of students, staff, parents and carers are sought regularly and issues arising are dealt with systematically and appropriately.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The large majority of students at St Cuthbert's spoken to enjoy their Religious Education lessons. A number of students reported it as one of the most important parts of their week. Without exception behaviour in lessons observed was outstanding. Behaviour for learning is outstanding. All lessons seen proceeded without incident or interruption. Students are aspirational and work hard in their lessons. Students know and understand the school's 'code of practice' which is their behaviour policy.
- Groups are set and a variety of lessons was observed. A variety of approaches by staff to the delivery of the lesson were appropriate to group being taught, with appropriate differentiation and planning seen. An imaginative approach and breadth of pedagogies demonstrated a deep understanding of the needs of the students and the efficacy of teaching using appropriate styles. The Religious Education department's GCSE results last year were outstanding. 83% achieved A*-C. A three-year upward trend in results was seen in annual diocesan data return progress documentation. At key stage three students are making excellent progress. Students are aware of their own levels of attainment and what to do to improve. Displays on the Religious Education classroom walls support learning. Students from disadvantaged groups make very good progress. Results show that they outperformed all other subjects at GCSE last summer. A level data at key stage five for L3VA results from 2014-2016 show a three-year trend within limits. Following two years of 100% pass rate. Students observed were quick to acquire knowledge and asked questions when they did not understand. They are developing a wide range of skills and are able to demonstrate retention of information originality and independence in their learning. Evaluation skills were demonstrated in their exercise books as they comment or reply to marking comments by staff. Students make excellent progress in Religious Education.
- Standards in attainment are high. In 2016, Religious Education outperformed all key stage three subjects for SEN, PP, EAL and WBM. This was following a three-year improvement trend. In GCSE in 2016 results were significantly positive at both A*- C and A* - A. During this period A level Religious Studies results were at or above national averages.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The quality of monitoring and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding. The head of Religious Education ensures that schemes of work are in line with Bishops' conference and meets regularly with the headteacher for a keep in touch meeting, where progress is evaluated and staff performance is monitored. Monitoring and assessment files are kept up

to date and include tracking data from all classes. Learning walks, lesson observations and scrutiny of pupil books all take place throughout the year.

- Lesson observations by senior staff ensure creative and appropriate teaching methods are being used. Support is given where necessary.
- Homework is regularly set and effectively marked using the school's marking policy. This is a particular strength helping the students to make progress and if appropriate to provide 'stretch and challenge'. Discussions with students reinforced the view that they all know exactly where they are and how to make progress. Students are listened to and their concerns noted. They are given opportunities to respond to their marking or test results and encouraged to plan for improvement.
- Evidence was seen of pupil achievement being celebrated. The headteacher writes postcards home to congratulate individuals on success at any level. Heads of house celebrate success within the house group. There is a real sense of pride in the achievement of others at St Cuthbert's.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- Leadership and management at St Cuthbert's have high expectations for students. They are aspirational and ambitious for the boys in their care. Ambitions for standards of progress and attainment are agreed and the programmes of study reflect these ambitions. Self-evaluation of Religious Education is rigorous and challenges the staff and students to be the best they can be. Targeted planning has enabled the Religious Education department to continue raising standards and has produced a series of outstanding results for students and some outstanding outcomes for teachers who themselves have gone on to benefit the Catholic community outside the school by teaching Religious Education and becoming leaders. The Religious Education department enjoys a high profile within the school and is actively involved in whole school initiatives.
- Thorough, imaginative and detailed curriculum planning ensures it meets the needs of a wide range of students. Religious Education is well resourced in terms of staffing with highly qualified specialists delivering a strong curriculum. It is afforded curriculum time in accordance with the Bishops' Conference requirements. Students at St Cuthbert's have access to sacramental preparation as well as having the sacraments taught throughout curriculum. Excellent links with parishes enable a flow of cooperation and information between the school and parish. The lay chaplain plays an active part in sacramental preparation at her own and other parishes.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**1****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**1**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

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The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**1**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

1

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

1

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Cuthbert's Catholic High School
Unique reference number	1379000
Local authority	Newcastle
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Ms Bridey Rutherford
Choose School Leadership Type	Mrs Carol Davison
Date of previous school inspection	December 2011
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