



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Philip Neri Catholic Primary School, Dunston**

URN: 148810

Carried out on behalf of the Rt Rev Stephen Wright, Bishop of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 19-20 October 2023

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- This school has a tangible sense of community where everybody feels welcome, valued, and recognised as a member of God's family.
- All members of the school community have a powerful attachment to the school's mission.
- The school has a strong inclusive approach which recognises the worth of each individual; pupils are able to access support at the right time and the whole family is embraced.
- Pupils' pride in belonging to the school, their commitment to making a positive difference, and the joy they show in their participation in school life is a strength of the school.
- The vision of the headteacher, who leads with compassion, ambition and dedication, is a significant driver of improvement and is a strength of the school.

What the school needs to improve:

- Improve teaching and learning of religious education so that learning tasks match intentions and that pupils can present their learning in a wider variety of forms beyond the written task.
- Fully implement the skills strategy for prayer and liturgy to achieve stronger consistency, more frequent opportunities to pray together, and to develop greater confidence in pupil leadership of liturgical prayer.
- Improve monitoring across Catholic Life and Mission, Religious Education and Collective Worship by leaders and governors to give clearer direction about areas for improvement, to enhance self-challenge, and to ensure the monitoring cycle is central to the school's evaluation of its work.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement
 grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Provision

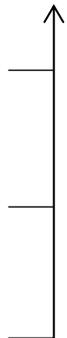
The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2



Pupils at St Philip Neri are proud to belong to this school. They clearly express their understanding of the school's values of love, trust, and respect for all members of the community. They recognise ways in which all pupils are cared for as unique persons made in the image and likeness of God. Pupils are happy, confident, and safe; this view is supported by 100 per cent of the parents surveyed. Pupils have a clear understanding of how the school teaches them to follow the example of Jesus. As a result they gladly embrace opportunities to care for our common home, pursue the common good, and serve those in need. However, pupils are not yet able to consistently articulate links between their charitable activities, caring for the earth and for each other, and the theology of Catholic social teaching. During the inspection, pupils enthusiastically responded to food collections for a local charity. Pupils value the school's chaplaincy provision and actively participate in opportunities provided by the school chaplain. They have a well developed sense of respect for each other. This is evident in school gatherings where older pupils provide care, support, and guidance for younger pupils. Pupils have a deep respect for those of other faiths and for those of none. Behaviour in and outside of classrooms is exemplary.

The school's mission statement, 'Living and learning together with a joyous heart', is prominent around the school. It is known by all pupils and staff and is a tangible touchstone which shapes the Catholic life of the school. The mission is embraced by pupils who enthusiastically support and participate in activities which reflect the mission. It has a significant impact on the life of the school. One staff member described the school's mission as being, 'in the air that we breathe'. Many parents confirmed that the school goes

the extra mile to provide an exceptionally supportive community where all are valued, especially those who are most vulnerable. Strong supporting evidence of this, in the form of powerful testimonies from staff and parents, was witnessed during the inspection. Staff are exemplary role models and live out the mission with their participation and strong commitment. Through the quality of relationships with each other and with pupils, they consistently bear witness to the school's Catholic life and mission. The quality of pastoral care for pupils is of the highest level and the school is passionate about ensuring the right provision is in place to enable all pupils to succeed. The school environment explicitly reinforces the school's mission and Catholic values. Each classroom has a prayer space, often designed with the involvement of pupils, and there are numerous spaces around the school, designed and maintained with care and attention, where pupils can pause for prayer. These spaces contribute positively to the formation of the pupils.

Leaders articulate the Church's mission and are held in high esteem by parents as models of Catholic leadership. They truly embrace the principle that parents are the first educators; leaders work diligently to support parents in this role. The Catholic curriculum is in development and leaders are ambitious for pupils to learn about the richness of Catholic contributions in history, geography, and other areas of the curriculum. Self-evaluation of the Catholic Life and Mission of the school is under-developed. Governors are not yet fully active in the monitoring of the school's work and therefore there is no coherent approach to evaluating progress of agreed priorities for improvement. There are limited opportunities for pupils to be involved in plans for improvement. Induction processes for new staff are thorough and reflect the deep commitment of school leaders to support new staff.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement
grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious
education.....

2

Provision
The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious
education.....

2

Leadership
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for
religious
education.....

3



Pupils are able to work independently and they concentrate well in lessons. Where pupils can ask questions of adults and their peers it enables them to enhance and develop their learning. Pupils enjoy learning and they approach their lessons with interest. Therefore behaviour in lessons is good. Pupils are very attentive, listen well, and are supportive of each other. Teachers demonstrate skilful modelling and encourage their pupils to improve. Adults and pupils demonstrate positive relationships and pupils value their learning in religious education. One pupil commented, 'We know we are children of God, because our teachers look after us.' However, pupils do not always know how well they are doing in their lessons. They are unsure about what they need to do to improve and therefore they are less reflective than they could be. Pupils are not consistently encouraged to develop their knowledge in religious education, using accurate and topic specific vocabulary and, as a result, the level of challenge is inconsistent. Opportunities to express their learning through a variety of different creative media such as through art, music, drama, theatre are limited. The school is developing pupils' knowledge of the Bible although this area is not yet fully resourced.

Teachers are committed and value their role in the teaching of religious education. Teachers have strong subject knowledge, appropriate to the phase they are teaching. Teachers recognise the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of their pupils. Pupils of all faiths and of none are actively encouraged by their teachers to celebrate their own experiences and beliefs. Classrooms are attractive learning environments where all pupils feel safe and secure. They actively reflect the Catholic character and warmth of welcome in the school. Where teachers excel at adapting their explanations to help all pupils improve their learning, they are excellent role models

for their colleagues. In some lessons there is an over-reliance on pupils who know the answers to questions, rather than developing the knowledge of those who do not fully understand. Tasks are not consistently or accurately matched to the learning intention, resulting in pupils not always being secure in knowing what they need to do to evidence their understanding. Assessment and moderation are not fully developed to support teachers' ability to plan lessons more accurately linked to current assessments. Therefore, all pupils are not challenged in their learning.

Leaders ensure that religious education is given the appropriate professional development, staffing, and timetabling required. It has equal prominence and is comparable with other core subjects. Policies such as marking and reporting are equitably applied across all core subjects. Leaders ensure that the school curriculum for religious education is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012*. The newly appointed head teacher is passionately committed to improving outcomes and provision in religious education. She has an unswerving and faithful vision for the school which is soundly rooted in core Gospel values. Leaders have started to develop a core offer of professional development opportunities. They recognise the value of enabling colleagues to observe best practice within the school. All staff report that they feel their contributions are valued. One member of staff summarised the views of staff, 'Our head teacher understands each of us individually and personally. She is always able to offer appropriate support personally and professionally. We have total trust in her.' The self-evaluation process to assess the impact of whole school priorities is insufficiently informed by monitoring and analysis. Leaders and governors are aware that the cycle of monitoring and self-evaluation of religious education is underdeveloped and is a target for improvement.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....	2	
Pupil outcomes How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship	2	
Provision The quality of collective worship provided by the school	2	
Leadership How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship	3	

Pupils respond well to opportunities to participate in prayer and liturgy provided by the school. They enjoy participating in class and whole school prayer and do so with enthusiasm. Pupils readily join in with community prayer and sing with confidence. They understand a variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition and enjoy the opportunities to meditate and reflect. All liturgies involve the use of scripture, symbols, reflection, and music. Pupils work under the guidance of the chaplain and other staff to lead engaging experiences of prayer and liturgy although opportunities to evaluate the quality of prayer are limited. Pupils enjoy inviting their parents to join them for prayer and liturgy. A well attended liturgical prayer, linked to the theme of Black History Month, was witnessed during the inspection. Parents are invited to record comments in a book and these are shared later with pupils. Pupils undertake liturgical ministries willingly. Opportunities to develop the capacity of pupils to plan and lead prayer and liturgy with independence, confidence, and skill are under-developed and inconsistent. Pupils can describe parts of the Church's liturgical year and can articulate how this influences the prayer life of the school.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and form part of routine gatherings of pupils and staff. Significant moments of joy and sorrow, of which the school has recent experience, are identified and are used as a powerful means to connect the school community in word and prayer. Daily patterns of prayer reflect the Prayer and Liturgy policy which has been recently revised. Scripture is central to liturgical prayer and care is taken to ensure that the passages chosen enable the full and active participation of pupils. The potential for pupils to use their skills to enhance the school's prayer and liturgy is not fully realised. School has developed good spaces for prayer and liturgy both indoors and

within the school grounds, although opportunities to use outdoor spaces are not consistent across all classes. The school calendar includes some opportunities to celebrate Mass with the parish in the local church which is located next to the school. On these occasions pupils participate more fully in the liturgy.

School leaders have devised a strategy for developing pupil skills in line with the revised Prayer and Liturgy policy, but this has not yet been fully implemented. As a result, there is a limited understanding of the different levels and skills of participation reflective of the age and capacity of pupils. The Prayer and Liturgy policy is fit for purpose, accessible and used by relevant staff when preparing prayer and liturgy. Leaders and governors are inconsistent in their review of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy. Reviews are not yet central to the school's cycle of self-evaluation. Pupils have limited opportunities to contribute their views to the school's self-evaluation. Consequently there is a limited strategic overview, and accountability about planned priorities is under-developed. Opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are planned into the school calendar. On these occasions members of the school community are able to access Mass, although there is scope to enhance opportunities for this to take place with greater frequency. Leaders have provided staff with professional development in order to plan and lead with greater confidence and skill. As a result, all staff understand the importance prayer and liturgy has as a central part of school life.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Philip Neri Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148810
Full postal address of the school	Ellison Road, Dunston, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 2QU
School phone number	0191 460 4378
Name of head teacher or principal	Sarah Williams
Chair of governing board	Amanda Stewart
School Website	http://stphilipneriprimary.org/
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Michael Ewing	Lead inspector
Allyson Thorpe	Team inspector

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement