



St Charles Catholic Primary School Gosforth

URN: 148269

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

09–10 May 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

1

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

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

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

Collective worship (p.7)

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

What the school does well

- Christ is at the heart and centre of St Charles'. Pupils understand and embrace the distinctive Catholic identity and mission of their school. They are rightly proud of their school community and are happy, confident and feel secure.
- Pupils take a leading role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching. They put 'concern into action' as they 'see, think and do'. They willingly and enthusiastically undertake leadership roles.
- The prayer life of the school is embedded, intrinsic and authentic. Pupils undertake liturgical ministries with confidence, understanding and skill.

- The leaders and governors of the school, especially the headteacher are inspiring. Staff flourish under her guidance. They embrace their core leadership responsibilities and have high expectations for outcomes and provision.
- Pupils are religiously literate and engaged young people. From their starting points in Nursery to their end points in Year 6, they make outstanding progress. Their understanding of scripture and how it shapes their lives is commendable.

What the school needs to improve

- To provide well-planned and age-appropriate tasks for pupils, while taking into account progression across all year groups.

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

Pupil outcomes

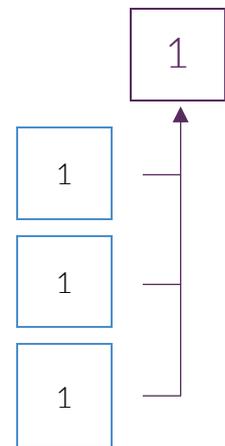
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils are articulate and incredibly enthusiastic when discussing the extent to which they contribute to, and benefit from, the Catholic life and mission at St Charles'. One pupil commented, 'This is our future, we want to live out Pope Francis' message and make our community a happier place to live.' Their active participation significantly enhances the life of the school. Pupils willingly contribute to the varied leadership roles on offer such as Laudato Leaders, the Gospel Group and Mini Vinnies. Pupils have a clear understanding that the school is committed to following the teaching and example of Jesus as expressed in the gospels. A member of the Gospel Group commented that they love helping the younger children to develop their understanding of scripture and described seeing a pupil hug her friends after discussing the key messages in The Prodigal Son. Pupils clearly express an understanding that they are valued and cared for. They are happy, confident and feel secure. They demonstrate a deep sense of respect for those of other religions as the school embrace and welcome pupils and staff from other faith backgrounds. Pupils confidently talk about their charitable links and fundraising efforts. They take a leading role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching.

Christ is at the heart of St Charles'. The mission statement, 'Together we follow in Jesus' footsteps in our living and learning', is regularly revisited and is known, lived, and witnessed to throughout the school. This is evident in the strength of the 'Monday Mission' books which are inspirational. There is a true sense of community which is lived through the quality of the relationships and the strong, embedded culture of welcome. The school celebrates those from various cultures and belief traditions, going the extra mile to understand their needs and enable them to live and pray in fidelity to their own religious commitments. Staff provide high levels of pastoral care for pupils and are excellent role models. This is witnessed in all parts of the school, from the warm

and welcoming embrace from the school office, to the care and dedication in classrooms, at break times and in wider curricular opportunities. During staff discussion, it was clear that staff feel the 'distinctive nature of catholicity at St Charles', the ethos of the school is part of our everyday life'. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education is carefully planned and effectively meets statutory and diocesan guidelines.

Leaders are outstanding in how they promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission at St Charles'. The headteacher is inspirational in her drive and commitment for pupils to flourish. Consequently, senior leaders are energised, determined and a source of inspiration for the whole community. The development of the Catholic life and mission of the school is embraced as a core leadership responsibility. Governors speak highly of the school and are proud to contribute to its success. The school has very successful strategies for engaging with families and as a result, parents have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. They feel that their children are happy, safe and enjoy going to school. One parent explained that, 'Sending my child to St Charles' is the best decision I have made and I know they will grow up to become a loving child of God.' Leaders are committed to their care for the physical and mental well-being of staff. Staff feel well supported and can ask for guidance at any time. The school's self-evaluation is a reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and honest self-challenge.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

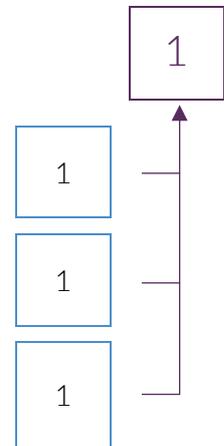
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

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

Leadership

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



Pupils make notable progress in religious education from their starting points. Through the use of the ‘Recap Retrieval Quiz’, knowing more and remembering more is well embedded and this is exemplified by the end of Key Stage 2 standards in religious education books. Throughout the school, pupils produce high-quality work aligned with age-related expectations. Pupils are developing excellent knowledge, understanding and skills that exemplify the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. In relation to their age, pupils are very religiously literate and can use religious vocabulary appropriately, fluently, and confidently. Pupils enjoy lessons and fully engage in their learning. Presentation in books reflects a great sense of pride and pupils know what they have done well and can make improvements. They enjoy their learning and approach lessons with great interest, passion, and enthusiasm. As a consequence, behaviour in lessons is outstanding from Nursery to Year 6, because almost all pupils enjoy religious education, and they remain fully engaged. Pupils can retell and recall a broad range of scripture, underpinned by the use of ‘Scripture Spines’. They can reflect spiritually discussing what they have learned in religious education lessons, using key concepts and subject-specific vocabulary.

Teachers have a profound understanding of the impact religious education has on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and their ability to meaningfully make sense of their experience of the world. Therefore, teachers give pupils space and time for purposeful reflection in lessons, the use of the ‘purple pen’ supports this. Teachers use questioning skilfully during lessons to identify precisely where pupils are in their understanding of the religious education curriculum. A robust Teaching and Learning policy underpins pedagogy and high expectations of the teaching strategies used throughout the school. This policy is underpinned by evidence-based research: the Education Endowment Foundation’s ‘five-a-day’ approach and Rosenshine’s

principles of instruction. Staff have been fully supported to embed these strategies to ensure outstanding teaching in religious education across the school. Any staff who are new to the school are given access to high quality professional development, mentoring, and coaching to ensure consistency in standards is maintained. Teachers work collaboratively to plan tasks carefully to ensure that pupils across all year groups are given extensive opportunities to present their learning using a wide variety of forms, therefore pupils are highly motivated. The use of spiritual art is an example of this.

Senior leaders, including governors, recognise the strengths of the school and prioritise professional development to maintain the skills and knowledge of the staff. There are clear structures in place to induct new members of staff so teachers feel well-supported. There is a planned response when teaching is less than outstanding so learning is not compromised for extended periods. Supported by the Catholic Education Trust and diocese, the local governing committee has access to valuable information and training which enables them to monitor the school. Governors are regular visitors to the school and, as a result, are well informed when making decisions. They are extremely supportive, but also confident in their ability to challenge and guide where necessary. They are unwavering in their expectations that, 'Every child will be the best they can be.' Leaders and governors ensure that religious education has at least full parity with other core curriculum subjects, which includes professional development, resourcing and timetabling. Senior Leaders have a clear understanding of curriculum expectations and standards and work exceptionally well as a team to ensure that religious education is carefully planned to meet the needs of nearly all pupils and each phase is structured to build on and enhance prior learning.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

The experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school engage pupils deeply and leads them to full, active, and conscious participation. This is evident in the quality of prayerful silence observed, pupils' attentiveness and confident response to prayers, both traditional and creative. Singing is a pleasure and a privilege to listen to at St Charles'. The pupils' engagement in communal singing is outstanding along with the variety of hymn choices available. Pupils work collaboratively with others, such as teachers and other pupils to prepare creative and well-constructed experiences of prayer and liturgy. The stillness and calmness felt throughout school during times dedicated to pupil-led liturgical prayer is inspiring and a true witness to the school's provision for liturgical formation. Pupils across the school lead and participate in prayer with confidence, relative to their age. They were able to explain why they chose certain scripture readings and the appropriate responses and mission. One child commented, 'I remember our thanksgiving liturgy, I learnt to thank my parents when they do things for me.' Pupils have a developed capacity for evaluating the quality of the prayer and liturgy they have planned and, in Key Stage 2, can identify how to improve next time.

Well-constructed prayer and liturgy is central to school life. Staff undertake professional development and are therefore well-equipped to lead prayer and liturgy, acting as excellent role models for pupils. Music, scripture, reflection, and silence are typical features of liturgical prayer. Staff make imaginative and creative use of the prayer spaces available within classrooms, the hall and in the forest school. These are owned by the pupils who are proud of their focal points, especially the 'Praying in Paradise' space used during lunchtimes and led by the pupils. Staff ensure that families feel welcome to join the school community in celebrating worship and this is highly valued by parents who feel that they are, 'very much included in religious celebrations'. Parents commented highly on recent Lenten reflections saying, 'The opportunity to visit the

Stations of the Cross in school was a wonderful occasion for families to come together. The activities planned for the children to lead at each station were very thoughtful and certainly helped my children relate their knowledge to real life.' In partnership with the parish of St Charles', pupils in Year 4 are prepared for receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist.

School leaders plan and embed a varied programme of prayer and liturgy across the year which clearly links to the liturgical calendar where significant days in the Church's year are prioritised. Leaders, including governors, place the highest priority on inspirational professional development for all staff that focuses on liturgical formation and the planning of prayer and liturgy. As a result, all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy to school life, with a staff member commenting that, 'Celebration of the Word gives me time for reflection and helps my own spiritual journey. I enjoy staff prayer reflecting on the Sunday gospel.' Pupils and staff are able to provide prayer and liturgy opportunities that are engaging, of a consistently high quality and are accessible, meaningful, and relevant for the whole community. The spiritual development of pupils is well-supported as leaders have a clear understanding of the different levels and skills of participation that are reflective of the age of pupils. The voice of pupils, parents, and staff are an integral and a valued part of the school's evaluation cycle. The varied ways of collecting responses ensure that planned improvements begin with feedback and are rooted in the principles of self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Charles Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148269
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3913472
Full postal address of the school	St Charles Catholic Primary School, Regent Farm Road, Gosforth, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE3 3HE
School phone number	01912852553
Headteacher	Louise Nealings
Chair of Local Governing Body	Maureen Block
School Website	www.stcharles.newcastle.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Claire Garbutt
Mary Cunningham

Lead
Team

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