



# St Patricks Catholic Primary School Stockton-on-Tees

URN: 148462

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

08–09 May 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### 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

1

## What the school does well

- The commitment of pupils to the school's mission, 'may Christ be seen in us', and their pride in belonging to this school are a strength; their behaviour is exemplary, and the respect and care shown for all is an outstanding aspect of the school.
- The enjoyment and engagement of the pupils in their religious education is palpable leading to high progress and attainment across all groups.
- The quality of relationships at all levels is outstanding and contributes to this being a happy and harmonious school where gospel values are unashamedly at the centre of school life.

- Religious literacy and high levels of oracy are evident in lessons and throughout discussions with pupils.
- Prayer and liturgy are a central part of school life and pupils play an active part in planning, leading, and participating in creative and joyful celebrations with high levels of confidence, understanding, and skill.

### What the school needs to improve

- Further improve outcomes in religious education for all groups of pupils through the provision of consistently rigorous monitoring.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in evaluating prayer and liturgy enabling them to identify how further improvements can be made.

## 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



On entering the gates, it is immediately apparent that it is a Catholic school where a strong, welcoming, and inclusive Catholic ethos pervades. Leaders have created a culture which inspires pupils to take a leading role, acting on their desire to help others, their active participation significantly enhances the school. One hundred percent of parents and carers who responded to the survey agreed that they fully understand the school's mission and are overwhelmingly positive. One parent commented regarding her daughter, 'She's excited about fund raising and looking after our earth, she talks about ways to show kindness and her knowledge of Christian values shows me how much they are rooted in her education. I can only thank them for what they do.' Pupils actively seek opportunities to grow in virtue through a wide range of pupil leadership groups, including Mini Vinnies, rosary leaders, mini chaplains and the Cafod club. Consequently, they can confidently articulate the theology underpinning their actions. Pupils are in absolutely no doubt that they are loved and valued in all their God-given uniqueness because the staff are so committed to caring for and nurturing every single child in their care. When asked what makes St Patrick's so special?', one pupil replied, 'Whatever we do, Christ is always at the centre.'

Christ is at the heart of this school. The school's mission, 'may Christ be seen in us', is a clear and inspiring expression of the mission of the school and the Church. Pupils understand it exceptionally well, and even the youngest pupils can confidently explain what it means to them in their daily lives. This extremely positive response from pupils is because of the example of leaders and staff who enthusiastically embrace the mission and are dedicated to securing it in all aspects of school life. As a result, behaviour of pupils is exemplary. Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and for others and have a well-developed understanding of the teachings of

Jesus. There is a deeply embedded culture where there is a sense of lived community; the school celebrates and values everyone, especially those with different cultural backgrounds. Pupils are keen to stress how, 'They always think about what God would do before they act.' Staff create an environment which reflects the Catholic character of the school and provides enriching opportunities for the spiritual formation of the pupils. A well-sequenced Catholic relationships, sex and health education programme has been carefully planned and implemented, meeting both statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders are inspirational in how they promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission at St Patrick's. The headteacher leads by example and is deeply committed to the school community, which is recognised by all stakeholders. Leaders are fully committed to being witnesses of the gospel, ensuring the partnership between the Church and the parish flourishes; together they show determination, ambition, and enthusiasm to serve their community. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and are very supportive of its work. One parent commented, 'Catholic life is intrinsic to the everyday running of the school. It is firmly embedded within the curriculum and the children are nurtured in a way that allows them to understand and authentically live their faith.' There is a shared vision and commitment from staff and governors to ensure the centrality of the Catholic life of this school. Staff new to Catholic education are invested in, so that they may develop their knowledge and skills. This leads to them feeling valued. One member of staff commented, 'Work is great, it's like spending time with your family.'

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

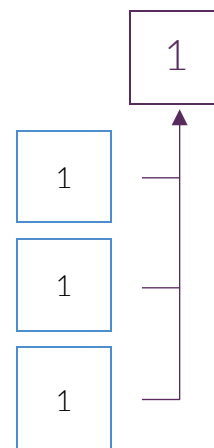
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



From variable starting points, pupils make sustained progress in each key stage with no significant variation between groups of learners. Vulnerable pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well because inspirational support is provided through the use of additional, well-trained adults. This leads to outstanding outcomes in all years. Pupils are religiously literate and use religious vocabulary appropriately, and confidently, at every opportunity. Pupils make links between sources, reflecting on how religious beliefs actively influence the actions of believers; they think ethically and theologically, showing deep awareness of religious commitment in everyday life. Aspirations and expectations in religious education are high and reflect the ambitious curriculum in place. Pupils comment on how 'lessons are calm with a peaceful atmosphere' and that lessons 'help us to reflect on why it is important to have God in our lives.' As a result, behaviour in lessons is exemplary, with high levels of engagement and concentration. Pupils' work is presented to a very high standard and meticulously well-presented. Pupils understand how they have done and what they need to do to make improvements. This is because all tasks have been carefully constructed and link directly to what has been taught. Parents appreciate the impact religious education has on their children. One parent stated, 'Faith is real and a lived experience in the school where religious education is the foundation stone which links to how to live in the wider world.'

Teachers have strong, authentic subject knowledge, well informed by their ongoing training and the support of the subject leader. They make skilful use of questioning to respond to each individual pupil's level of understanding, and lessons are adapted to meet pupils' unique needs. Planning is informed by pupil's current assessment leading to consolidation of learning and constantly improving outcomes. Staff have a profound understanding of the impact of religious education on pupils' spiritual and moral development and this is reflected in the high status that

they give to teaching and learning in religious education. Teachers ensure that pupils are provided with a vast and exciting array of opportunities to present their learning with drama, discussion, dance, artwork, and outdoor learning all being part of the school's creative approach. Pupils enthusiastically comment that lessons at St Patrick's 'are interactive and fun.' The use of high-quality resources is maximised to ensure learning is inclusive and optimised for all pupils. High levels of engagement have been carefully cultivated through an approach that celebrates effort. Pupils enthusiastically welcome teacher feedback and engage in rich discussion exploring how to improve their work.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is at the heart of the curriculum ensuring that it is delivered to the highest standard. They ensure that the curriculum is a faithful expression of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012. It is given at least equal status to other core subjects in terms of funding and resourcing and has a very high status amongst everyone in the school community. One staff member captured how religious education is the driving force in school by commenting that the mission statement, 'permeates throughout St Patrick's. Everybody works together to make the love of Christ known, and, by our actions, reflected to those we meet both inside and outside of our school.' Leaders have ensured that the school takes full advantage of regular, high-quality training and development opportunities which have been successfully used to continually improve teaching. Governors hold school leaders to account and provide very effective challenge to avoid complacency. However, some monitoring documents lack precision and next steps aren't always clear.

## 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 experience of prayer and liturgy in the school fully engages the pupils and leads to full, active, and conscious participation. As pupils progress through the school, they develop their capacity to lead prayer and liturgy and, as a result, are well-skilled in doing so. Pupils present well-planned liturgies with confidence in their classes and to parents through 'stay and pray' sessions. Pupils participate with enthusiasm, reverence, and respect. They understand why they are present in the spiritual occasion and have a deep understanding of the wide variety of ways of praying that are part of the Catholic tradition. Pupils are aware of the Church's liturgical seasons and are able to articulate key colours and symbols associated with them. They can articulate the ways in which prayer and liturgy are influenced by both the curriculum and wider life of the school, and how it has shaped them. Pupils are beginning to develop their skills when evaluating acts of worship, identifying how they can make further improvements. Older pupils confidently articulate how their spiritual experience has inspired them to act positively in the world. Pupils in Year 6 enthusiastically undertake the Faith in Action award. When questioned whether the award was important to them, one pupil commented, 'We would do it anyway as Christians, we don't need a book or a badge – it is the expectation of our faith.'

Prayer and liturgy are the heartbeat of this school community. There is an embedded daily pattern of prayer that faithfully reflects the rhythm of the prayer life of the Church. Creative and imaginative use of 'sacred spaces', along with the centrality of religious displays within school, are used reverently. The spontaneous prayer stations are well used by pupils, with one commenting, 'We go if we want to be still; this helps us to walk in God's footsteps.' Pupils appreciate and enjoy the creative range of prayer and liturgy that is skilfully provided by staff which links the liturgical calendar through carefully chosen scripture choices. Prayer times offer

pupils a wide range of creative and engaging experiences, highlighting the breadth and richness of the Catholic tradition. Parents are very supportive of the school, valuing the contribution they make to the spiritual formation of the children. One parent commented, 'St Patrick's is a lively and vibrant school which is the heartland for the children's faith to be developed.' The school works hard to ensure a flourishing partnership with the local parish to help pupils to participate more fully in liturgy. Canon Cooper and Deacon Wood are regular visitors to school; their visits enhance the prayer life of the school community.

The school calendar revolves firmly and naturally around the liturgical year and there are regular opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist all year round, in addition to key liturgical times and religious feast days. The formation of staff and leaders is given the highest priority. Leaders, ably supported by governors, work together to ensure that staff are provided with inspirational training. As a result, all staff fully understand the centrality of prayer life to the school. Newer members of staff recognise they would benefit from continued opportunities to observe and work alongside leaders to develop their practice further. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is carefully planned and regularly reviewed. There is a clear understanding of how prayer develops through age-appropriate participation among the pupils and how this helps them to mature to the level where they can support their peers. Monitoring and evaluation are highly effective and drive continuous improvement. Prayer and liturgy are given high priority when budgets and resources are being allocated.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Patricks Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148462
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8083316
Full postal address of the school	St Patricks Catholic Primary School, Fairfield Road, Stockton-on-Tees, TS19 7PL
School phone number	01642580850
Headteacher	Steven Williams
Chair of Local Governing Body	Nicholas Mitchinson
School Website	<a href="http://www.stockton.schoolgrid.net/3316/">http://www.stockton.schoolgrid.net/3316/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth 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	May 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

David Miller  
Paul Craig

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