



St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School Hartlepool

URN: 148380

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

01–02 May 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

- St Cuthbert's is vibrant, welcoming and inclusive, where Catholic life and mission is evident throughout the school. The mission statement is a lived experience where all strive to 'let the light of Christ shine.'
- Relationships throughout the school are based on the highest levels of pastoral care where everyone is welcomed into the school family.
- The deputy head teacher is the religious education curriculum leader and, together with the headteacher, shares a clear vision and commitment to improve teaching and learning across the school. Together they inspire all stakeholders to achieve well.

- Senior leaders are excellent role models to other staff and pupils in relation to prayer and liturgy and demonstrate firmly that Christ is at the centre, and at the heart of their vision.
- The school environment bears strong witness to Catholic social teaching which reflects pupils' deep commitment to making a positive commitment to their local community and beyond.

What the school needs to improve

- To provide opportunities to allow pupils to demonstrate their depth of knowledge ensuring that the level of challenge in religious education lessons deepens and extends key learning.
- To promote pupils' ability to work together to plan, prepare and lead prayer and liturgy with age-appropriate independence, understanding there are a variety of contemporary and creative ways to pray.
- To include pupils in the evaluation of prayer and liturgy as part of the cycle of self-evaluation.

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2

2

Pupils at St Cuthbert's are willing participants in the Catholic mission statement of their school. 'Let the light of Christ shine in us all' pervades; it is known, lived out, and witnessed throughout the school community. As a result, behaviour in lessons and throughout the school is exemplary. Pupils know that this distinctive Catholic nature makes their school unique. When asked, 'What makes St Cuthbert's special?', one pupil replied, 'Everyone looks out for you because we share love for one another like Jesus.' Pupils know that they are valued and cared for. Leaders' commitment to Catholic social teaching inspires pupils and enables them to act on their desire to help others. Pupils were proud to discuss how they 'try to be like Jesus by following in his footsteps'. As a result, pupils actively seek ways to grow in virtue, for example fundraising for Cafod and Macmillan. New pupils are welcomed into the school family with open arms. Pupils recognise ways in which all pupils are cared for as unique persons made in the image and likeness of God. There is a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths and cultures. Pupils are happy, confident, and safe; this view is supported by 100 percent of the parents who replied to the survey.

The Catholic life and mission of the school is central to school life. Staff are fully committed to ensuring the mission statement is a lived experience for all. Christ is at the heart of the school. 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. Staff are committed to the Catholic life of the school and are positive role models. Parents comment on how, 'Staff know the children very well as individuals.' There is a deep sense of community, and a culture of welcome and belonging evident in the quality of relationships. The environment reflects its Catholic identity. Each classroom has a prayer

space and there are numerous areas for spiritual reflection throughout school. These spaces contribute positively to the formation of the pupils and reflect the dignity of each person as an individual. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and are very supportive of its work. One parent commented, 'It is lovely to drop my son off and know that he doesn't look back – he feels like he belongs.' Teachers are delivering the relationships, sex, and health education curriculum using *Ten:Ten*. This is contributing towards a strong moral and social education.

Leaders have an infectious enthusiasm for Catholic education ensuring that all pupils experience an education which helps them to be the best they can be. They 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. Staff feel valued and talk positively about systems in place. Teachers comment on the support they receive from the religious education leader and appreciate her open-door approach and willingness to help. Those new to Catholic education are invested in. This leads to them feeling valued. One member of staff commented, 'The school is a nurturing and warm place to be.' The school's self-evaluation is an accurate and coherent reflection, contributed to by all stakeholders. Governors are frequent visitors to school, providing challenge and support for leaders. However, leaders of different subject areas do not yet work collaboratively to plan opportunities to deepen pupil understanding across the wider curriculum.

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

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

1

2

Pupils are developing secure knowledge and understanding, and the skills that reflect the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012*. From variable starting points, most pupils make good progress in relation to their age and stage of development, with no significant variation between groups of learners. They are developing the skills that enable them to think ethically and theologically, and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Vulnerable pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported through the use of additional, well-trained adults. Pupils understand how well they are doing and what they have achieved but are not as confident when articulating what they need to do to improve their work. Most pupils can speak with increasing confidence about what they have learned, showing an awareness of key concepts, and using some subject specific vocabulary, highlighting improving religious literacy. Pupils are engaged in lessons and can work independently. As a result, pupils produce work that is well presented, showing good awareness of how this learning applies to their everyday lives.

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and have benefited from a comprehensive training package to ensure teaching is of good quality. All staff show a commitment to the value of religious education and recognise the impact this has on pupils' spiritual and moral development. They appreciate and value the support they receive from the religious education leader. Teachers are beginning to adapt the curriculum in a creative way to provide pupils with opportunities to express their learning through a variety of different creative media such as art, music, and drama. However, pupils do not always use their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect more deeply and spiritually. Where learning is most successful, the pace is strong and teacher talk is limited and questioning focused.

However, in some lessons, the level of challenge does not always deepen or extend learning because the tasks are not planned to allow pupils to demonstrate their depth of understanding. The use of assessment to monitor progress and identify any gaps in understanding is more embedded since the previous inspection with planning now directly linked to pupils' current assessment. Consequently, pupils learn well. Ongoing visits to the school from Canon Paul support the religious education curriculum in creative ways.

The subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision for teaching and learning and a high level of expertise in securing this vision. Leaders and governors maintain religious education at the heart of the curriculum. They ensure that the curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012* and that it is given parity with other core subjects in terms of funding, resourcing, and professional development. There are clear structures in place to induct new members of staff so teachers, especially early career teachers, feel well-supported. Leaders and governors are committed to providing training that is of the highest quality so that teaching and learning in religious education continue to improve and be of the highest possible standard. They ensure that the school takes full advantage of all of the training and development opportunities provided by Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust (BHCET). Robust and focused leadership has ensured that significant improvements have been made across the curriculum since the last inspection; content is now carefully sequenced and new challenging concepts are introduced systematically. Self-evaluation is informed through a range of regular monitoring exercises resulting in forensic analysis reports. Leaders have a clear and accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development. They take effective action to secure improvement.

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

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

2

2

Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils. Every experience involves the use of scripture, symbols, reflection, and music. Pupils understand that prayer is their opportunity to talk to God and to learn how to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. They are confident in their knowledge of traditional prayers. Innovative strategies such as class 'proud clouds' ensure that weekly missions, derived from a carefully planned prayer and liturgy programme, are fully understood and acted upon. One pupil commented, 'The proud cloud gives us a mission and makes us think deeper about how we can respond during the day.' Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and describe how they are celebrated in school. Examples include the Month of Mary, Pentecost, and Saul's spiritual transformation into Paul. Consequently, pupils undertake liturgical ministries willingly, are involved with the planning and delivery, and can articulate how the liturgical calendar influences the prayer life of the school. They are willing readers and take on roles planned for them but do not fully plan independently and opportunities to evaluate the quality of prayer are limited.

Appropriately planned prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and form part of daily gatherings, resulting in good levels of interest and engagement. Whenever prayer and liturgy take place, there is stillness, calmness, and a prayerful atmosphere. Parents are very supportive of the school and value the contribution they make to the spiritual formation of the pupils. One parent commented, 'We have been invited regularly to worship opportunities. My boy's faith is nurtured at school, this helps with his understanding of who he is. He can see the links between what he does in school and what happens at Mass.' Seasonal themes and scripture chosen for worship reflect a good understanding of the liturgical year as well as the Catholic character of the school. Pupils understand the importance of sacred scripture. One pupil commented, 'It helps us connect to the Lord; it's a time to reflect.' The school makes good use of areas available to provide prayer spaces within classrooms and communal places. These are well cared for, are purposeful, and are conducive to prayer. There are very strong parish links. Canon

Paul's awareness and passion for the work of the school is clear. Pupils comment on how 'he makes sure everyone is part of our special family.'

The head teacher is committed to her faith and passionately leads the prayer life of the school. Leaders display a secure understanding of different ways to pray, which is relevant to the school community, the Catholic tradition and these are reflected in the good quality planning of prayer and liturgy. All staff are provided with regular opportunities for professional development that includes liturgical formation. New staff are well-supported in the planning and leadership of prayer and liturgy and have accessed professional development from the school and BHCET to help them in their role. As a result, staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well formulated and used readily by staff when preparing sessions for the pupils. Because governors are regular visitors to the school, they have a secure understanding of the carefully planned steps of future improvement required. Leaders recognise the value of prayer and liturgy when setting budgets and allocating resources such as time, staffing, and facilities. Leaders are developing an understanding of the strengths and areas for further development in prayer and liturgy. However, this monitoring does not yet take into account pupils' views and evaluations.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148380
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8053322
Full postal address of the school	St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, Stratford Road, Hartlepool, TS25 5AJ
School phone number	01429275040
Headteacher	Joanne Wilson
Chair of Local Governing Body	Karen Merifield
School Website	https://stcuthbertshartlepool.bhcet.org.uk/
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	January 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

The inspection team

David Miller
Lisa Hoey

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