



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Godric's Catholic Primary School, Thornley

URN: 147928

Carried out on behalf of the Canon Peter Leighton V.G., Diocesan Administrator of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 25-26 January 2023

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

✓

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

✓

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

Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- The school's mission statement is central to the day-to-day life of the school and evident in every interaction between pupils, staff, and the wider community. Staff ensure that all pupils thrive, are known as individuals, and enable every child to, 'shine like stars lighting up the sky'.
- Pupils behave well, show respect and enthusiasm, and are proud of their school.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They appreciate its calm, joyful atmosphere and the care staff give to each pupil.
- The headteacher's vision and commitment to the school's continuous development is appreciated by all stakeholders.

- The quality of pupils' work in religious education is of a good standard, reflecting the school's high expectations for the subject.

What the school needs to improve:

- Develop the monitoring and self-evaluation of the Catholic life of the school to ensure that the provision is further enhanced.
- Establish a process for the monitoring and self-evaluation of prayer and liturgy to ensure consistent and clear expectations in provision.
- To review and update policy and programme for prayer and liturgy and agree on clear expectations in provision to ensure consistency across the school.

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:.....

2

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

Pupils, understand and live out their mission statement and take pride in knowing that this is at the heart of their school community. During discussions with pupils, they speak positively about how each child is treated as an individual and that they are all an important part of their school family. Pupils talk about the different school groups that they are involved in such as Mini Vinnies and Acorn Club and the importance of them in serving those in need and in taking responsibility for looking after the earth. They show great respect for each other and the staff in the school and this is evident through the caring and nurturing approach of older children. The behaviour of the children across the school is good and they can articulate why it is important to be part of a community where love and acceptance are at the heart of their school. Pupils are actively engaged and are full participants in the chaplaincy opportunities offered. They have opportunities to take the lead in developing their faith through fundraising opportunities and links with the parish and the wider community.

The mission statement, 'You must shine among them like stars in the sky,' is embedded in the school and evident in aspects of school life. Pupils are engaged in taking part in activities which help them grow spiritually and take a full role in developing their own faith. There is a strong sense of community where everyone is made to feel loved, valued and welcomed. One pupil said, 'Everyone is treated as an individual. We feel loved and supported to be just who we are.' Staff are excellent role models. They demonstrate the importance of caring and supportive relationships. The pastoral care offered to children is nurturing and the school's understanding of each child's need or vulnerability a strength. Throughout the school, the mission and individual identity and uniqueness of each child is celebrated.

Leaders and governors of the school are passionate about the school and their role in leading the mission of the Church. There are close links with the parish priest and the parish community and these help to further develop the community. The parish priest speaks for many adults and pupils in the school when he reports that, 'There is a lot of joy in this school.' Leaders have ensured that they have fostered strong relationships with parents, and this is very evident through discussions with parental groups and at the school gate. The most vulnerable pupils have their needs addressed. Governors are actively involved in the Catholic life of the school and are regular visitors. The school's monitoring and evaluation of its Catholic life and mission needs to become more embedded as part of the planning cycle to build on the evident strengths. Professional development around Catholic life and the mission of the school is effective and well-planned and based on staff development and any emerging school improvement needs. Pupils, parents, staff, and governors all speak about the key role the headteacher plays in leading the school with a clear faith-centred vision and determination that each child will be successful.

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.....

2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and make good progress from their starting points. Effective teaching helps them to know more and remember more. Behaviour for learning is good and the work in pupils' books is well-presented and of a good standard. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and are challenged to do their best. This is evident in their response during lessons where pupils are motivated and keen to take part. They enjoy discussing their learning and can articulate their knowledge by giving appropriate references to Bible stories they know. As pupils grow in knowledge and experience, they are able to make links with scripture and the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils are guided by effective marking and feedback. Therefore, they know what they need to do to improve their work. As a result, pupils achieve in line with age-related expectations across the school.

Teachers have good subject knowledge and know their pupils well. Sound induction systems ensure that new staff are supported to plan challenging learning sequences. Lessons are planned around pupils' prior knowledge and the work is pitched well to the age and abilities of pupils. For example, in a lesson about Jesus being lost in the temple, younger children dressed up in the role, other children retold the story with figures, and older children created a storyboard. There is a strong culture of adults working together to ensure teaching is of a good quality. A termly curriculum letter is sent home to enable parents to understand what pupils are learning and this is valued by parents. Key vocabulary for new learning is prominently displayed alongside other useful resources. This enables children to deepen their learning. Teachers work well with support staff and skilfully question pupils understanding. Teachers build opportunities to reflect on pupils' moral and spiritual development in lessons. An effective system for monitoring progress enables teachers and school leaders to identify

gaps in learning and helps staff to focus on how pupils are progressing towards their targets. Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012*. The subject is given a high profile within the school's professional development calendar and the school's improvement plan.

The new subject leader's recent focus on monitoring teaching and learning has led to rapid progress in the quality of religious education in some classes. This needs to be embedded in the school's self-evaluation cycle with monitoring of identified areas for improvement being shared with school leaders and governors. Governors have a good understanding of standards through regular visits to school and through information provided by school leaders. They are clear about the strengths of the school. Leaders have developed marking and feedback well so that it guides pupils' learning and develops their understanding. Leaders have a clear vision for religious education and a clear plan for current and future developments. The curriculum is well-resourced, timetabled and staffed. It is comparable with other core curriculum subjects in relation to the esteem within which it is managed across the school.

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

2



Prayer and liturgy play an important part in the life of the school. Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy the varied opportunities for prayer and they show reverence and respect. They participate readily by planning and leading prayer, and by joining with responses, and singing enthusiastically. Pupils show a good understanding of the liturgical cycle and of the various seasonal school and parish traditions. As pupils progress through school many take advantage of opportunities to plan and lead whole-school liturgies and show their commitment to this by readily giving up free time to do so. Liturgies are planned using the four-part structure of welcome, sharing of the Word, reflection on the Word and mission. Liturgies often end with pupils taking a physical object, like a message, to reflect on how they can follow the teachings from scripture. The mission statement is a central feature and reference point in many prayer and liturgy opportunities. Each Friday, older pupils prepare and lead the whole-school liturgical prayer. Parents value opportunities to join pupils and staff for prayer. The school has increased opportunities this academic year following the restrictions of recent years.

Staff and pupils create a calm, prayerful atmosphere during prayer and liturgies. Varied prayer styles, music and focal points are used. Staff are good at modelling how to pray and they support pupils well to plan liturgies. One staff member commented that, 'Many members of the community or visitors to the school often comment on how well-behaved our children are.' Weekly emails to parents highlight the scripture for the week and provide support for parents to help their pupils to understand this at home. Scripture passages are central to prayer and liturgy and are chosen to reflect the liturgical season. They enable all pupils to actively participate. Every class has a space that is used for prayer and liturgy. Resources to support

these activities are well-used and help pupils to pray. There are close links with the local parish and the weekly parish newsletters are published on the school website. Pupils show enjoyment and enthusiasm when discussing school Masses with the parish priest. The pattern of prayer and liturgy across the week is inconsistent between classes and the school needs to secure consistent practice and fidelity to the agreed timetable.

Leaders ensure that the school's prayer and liturgy are planned through a yearly calendar linked to the liturgical year. Staff are provided with opportunities for professional development that includes liturgical formation. New staff are supported in the planning and leadership of prayer and liturgy. Leaders are models of good practice for staff and pupils in planning and providing quality acts of worship. They ensure that pupils have opportunities to develop the skills to lead and to participate in liturgical prayer as they progress through school. As a result, pupils can lead prayer and liturgy opportunities that are engaging, of high quality, and are relevant to pupils. Pupils are supported in their preparation for the sacraments, and this is highly valued by parents. School leaders have an action plan which accurately identifies the need to review the policy for prayer and liturgy and to systematically monitor it, as part of the school's self-evaluation processes. Monitoring of prayer and liturgy is not yet systematically evaluated to help further drive the existing good provision.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Godric's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	147928
Full postal address of the school	Thornley Rd, Wheatley Hill, Co Durham, DH6 3NR
School phone number	01429820333
Name of head teacher or principal	Julie Hill
Chair of governing board	Michael Facchini
School Website	https://www.st-godrics.durham.sch.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Chadwick 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	15-16 June 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Michael Ewing

Lead inspector

Sonia Fraser

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