



## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St Cuthbert's Primary School, Seaham**

URN: 148626

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and Apostolic Administrator  
of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 12-13 July 2023

### 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



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 Catholic life and mission of the school are outstanding in every regard, underpinning every interaction and initiative.
- The delivery of Catholic social teaching is inspirational and permeates the whole curriculum and school life at St. Cuthbert's.
- Relationships throughout the school are based upon the highest level of care.
- The commitment and pride shown by all pupils in belonging to the school is a strength; their behaviour is exemplary, and the respect and care shown for all is outstanding.
- Senior leaders demonstrate clear ambition for the school to be exceptional and are relentless in ensuring that all pupils flourish.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school needs to improve:

- 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:.....

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 .....

1

Pupils demonstrate a real love for this inclusive school and find every opportunity to share this love with visitors. They know that they are part of a caring community with Christ at its heart and that all members of the school family are valued, cared for, and recognised as unique individuals made in the likeness and image of God. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is exemplary. Through a positive behaviour policy founded on forgiveness, honesty, respect, consideration, and responsibility, all pupils reflect on the choices they make. They report that everyone treats each other with kindness and respect. Pupils take on responsibilities with great enthusiasm and speak passionately of their roles as Rights Respecting Ambassadors, Wellbeing Ambassadors, buddies, liturgy leaders, and pupil police. They speak with great confidence of their care and concern for others, not just within their own school community, but also within the wider community, locally and nationally. Their words and actions demonstrate a clear understanding of Gospel values and a deep understanding of Catholic social teaching. They very successfully lead and talk about their fund-raising efforts for charities including Cafod, NSPCC, Autism Awareness, and local foodbanks, as well as the many events they have been involved with in supporting Ukraine. Pupils across school talk passionately about their work towards the 'Rights Respecting Award', 'Faith in Action Award', and their work towards the 'Live Simply Award', all of which are embedded throughout the curriculum.

Real strengths of St. Cuthbert's include the tangible sense of community, of family and the strong sense of welcome created and nurtured by leaders. These are commented upon positively by pupils, staff, and parents. One parent commented, 'The staff really care for our

children, and nothing is too much bother for them'. Pupil and staff welfare is given high priority and all in the community show extremely high levels of care for one another. Staff make exceptional contributions to the school's Catholic life and mission and there is a strong sense of vocation and belonging amongst all. They embrace the mission statement and are excellent role models for all. The school environment is fully reflective of its Catholic character; the many wonderful displays and iconography provide a stimulating environment in which to work, play, pray, and grow spiritually and morally. The provision for relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) are well met, and taught in line with statutory and diocesan requirements, firmly rooted in the teachings of the Church.

Leaders share a common vision for the school; they are highly ambitious, and totally dedicated to ensuring that all pupils experience an enriching Catholic education that provides excellent formation. They are relentless in their drive for St. Cuthbert's to be a beacon of Catholic life and mission and have clear action plans and strategies that continue to drive improvement. Leaders are highly committed to ensuring staff receive high quality training so that the Catholic life and mission of the school is always consistently strong. This has led to high levels of confidence amongst staff; one member of staff commented, 'Since being here I have been fully supported, valued, given lots of opportunities, and am now much more confident in everything I do'. Governors are passionate about their role within the school, supporting and challenging leaders, and ensuring that all policies reflect the Catholic mission of the school. They rightly see the school as a source of inspiration to the whole community and are ambitious about its contribution to the lives of the people it serves, striving for St. Cuthbert's to be the very best.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

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

1

### Provision

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

1

### Leadership

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

1

Pupils achieve well in religious education, making very good progress as they journey through the school, leading to excellent outcomes. They are developing into religiously literate young people as is clearly evidenced by their discussions in class. Pupils talk confidently about their learning, using religious vocabulary accurately and confidently. They display attitudes to all aspects of learning in religious education which are consistently positive, making a significant contribution to the progress they make. These attitudes ensure that there is no significant variation of progress between groups of learners. Pupils skilfully revisit prior learning, demonstrating their ability to know more and remember more during their lessons, thus achieving the best possible outcomes. Attainment in religious education is strong, with most pupils meeting age-related expectations by the end of key stage two (KS2). Pupils enjoy their lessons; they engage fully, and they participate with enthusiasm. They demonstrate a real commitment to learning, and a desire not only to deepen their knowledge and understanding, but also to link their learning with their daily lives.

Teachers plan lessons that are creative, engaging and which build upon prior learning and achievement. They have high expectations of their pupils and are skilled in checking understanding and addressing any misconceptions quickly and effectively. Planning ensures that pupils are given opportunities to present their learning in a variety of different ways including role play, responding to religious art and music, and writing for a range of purposes, including applications for jobs and witness statements. Staff know their pupils and their individual needs very well and adapt their teaching accordingly. Committed and experienced teaching assistants are extremely skilful in supporting all pupils but particularly those pupils with individual needs, ensuring that they too can reach their potential. All staff understand the

centrality of religious education to the spiritual and moral development of pupils, and this results in the high status they give to the subject. There is a culture of staff working together with dedicated support from senior leaders to ensure teaching is never less than good. Some staff members are actively engaged in study for the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) training which further supports deeper thinking and teaching in religious education.

Leaders and governors maintain religious education at the heart of the curriculum. They ensure that the curriculum fully meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012*, and that the required amount of time is given to religious education. The content of religious education is carefully and skilfully mapped, linking with many other curriculum subjects, so that learning is effectively sequenced to build upon prior learning and has full parity with other core curriculum subjects. A detailed tracking system for monitoring religious education is securely in place with regular lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and data analysis, all of which are used effectively to further enhance pupil learning. The school's religious education subject leader, who only recently took up this role, has strong subject knowledge and leadership skills. Along with the headteacher, the subject leader for religious education has an inspiring vision to further improve teaching and learning as well as providing high quality support to all staff. Together they provide quality resources, and ensure that staff receive regular, pertinent training and updates. They have a clear and accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development in religious education and take effective action to secure improvements.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

### 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



The experiences of prayer and liturgy provided by the school engage pupils deeply and lead them to full, active, and conscious participation. Pupils experience a wide variety of prayer and liturgy opportunities. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of the shape and meaning of the Church's liturgical year and how it is expressed in the prayer life of the school. Reverence and respect permeate all liturgies. These times of prayer captivate pupils' interest and they are inspired to respond with sincerity. Pupils are confident in preparing and leading prayers, liturgies, and reflections. They work well with staff and each other and are excellent role models for younger pupils. Pupils recognise prayer as an essential part of school life; they write thoughtful prayers and reflections and discuss their faith eloquently, articulating their genuine spiritual relationships with God. They understand that prayer is their opportunity to talk to God and that it can happen anywhere, at any time. Pupils are beginning to develop their skills when evaluating acts of worship, identifying how they can make further improvements.

Prayer and liturgy are an integral part of all school life at St. Cuthbert's and are the heartbeat of this school community. The rhythm of the school day is built around regular prayer which is valued and respected by all. There is a clear policy for prayer and liturgy which is effectively planned and resourced to reflect the Church's liturgical year, offering a variety of quality opportunities and experiences for all pupils. The rich provision for the school's prayer life makes a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the whole school community. Scripture passages are central to prayer and liturgy and are carefully chosen to address the theme and liturgical season. All staff are highly skilled in providing a spiritual and inspiring model of prayer and liturgy which allow pupils time for reflection, leading to a commitment to 'go forth'

and act differently. All parents are welcomed to prayer and liturgies in school and many parents say that these opportunities are highly valued. One parent commented, 'It is a great privilege to be invited to the services, I feel fully included in the whole prayer life of the school'. The school works incredibly hard to secure the flourishing partnership with the local parish to support pupils and their families to participate fully in the liturgy.

School leaders place great importance on securing high quality liturgical prayer and worship throughout the school. The formation of staff and leaders is given the highest priority and leaders and governors work together to ensure that all staff are provided with inspirational training. This leads to staff being confident when leading prayer and liturgy themselves. The dedicated headteacher and other senior leaders prepare pupils to become confident leaders of prayer and liturgy. Leaders ensure that prayer and worship are relevant, have a clear purpose and message, and relate to the lived experience of the school community. An in-depth knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year is demonstrated by all leaders, thus ensuring that the school marks all significant events in the Church's cycle of seasons and feasts. Governors both support and challenge senior leaders to ensure the cycle of monitoring and evaluation drives constant improvement. This leads to outstanding outcomes in prayer and liturgy across the whole school. The voices of pupils and all relevant stakeholders are an integral and valued part of the school's evaluation process. The inspirational senior leadership team and governors ensure that St. Cuthbert's school continues to be a faith-filled community, inspiring all its pupils, and preparing them for the next stage in their journey.



## Information about the school

|                                                |                                                                                       |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full name of school                            | St Cuthbert's Primary School                                                          |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 148626                                                                                |
| Full postal address of the school              | Mill Road, Seaham, County Durham, SR7 OHW                                             |
| School phone number                            | 0191 5813090                                                                          |
| Name of head teacher or principal              | Nicola Noble                                                                          |
| Chair of governing board                       | Kelly Lamond                                                                          |
| School Website                                 | <a href="https://www.stcuthbertsprimary.com/">https://www.stcuthbertsprimary.com/</a> |
| Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable) | Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust                                              |
| Type of school                                 | Primary                                                                               |
| School category                                | Academy                                                                               |
| Age-range of pupils                            | 4 to 11                                                                               |
| Trustees                                       | The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle                                                   |
| Gender of pupils                               | Mixed                                                                                 |
| Date of last denominational inspection         | February 2017                                                                         |
| Previous denominational inspection grade       | 2                                                                                     |

## The inspection team

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| Elaine White | Lead inspector |
| David Miller | Team inspector |

## Key to grade judgements

| Grade    | England              | Wales                                            |
|----------|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b> | Outstanding          | Excellent                                        |
| <b>2</b> | Good                 | Good                                             |
| <b>3</b> | Requires improvement | Adequate and requires improvement                |
| <b>4</b> | Inadequate           | Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement |