



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Byermoor

URN: 140638

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Bishop Stephen Wright, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

26–27 June 2025

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

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

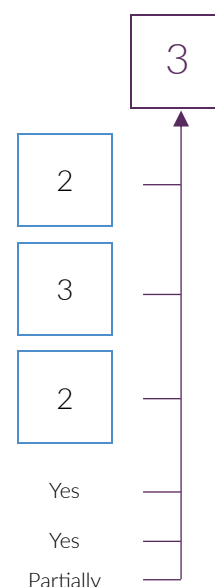
Collective worship (p.7)

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

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

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



Compliance statement

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School has partially responded to and met the area for further development which was identified during the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Pupils are happy to come to school and feel safe. They are given opportunities to act out the mission of the school. All in the community can articulate this mission.
- There is a clear community feel to the school. Parents are complimentary and appreciative of the education that the school provides.
- Pupils are increasingly knowledgeable when using Bibles, and the recent resourcing of these has had a positive impact within the classroom.
- Pupils undertake ministries willingly, both formally and informally.

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that robust self-evaluation of all key judgement areas is in place to facilitate planning for improvements
- Provide a systematic programme of support and training for all staff in religious education
- Ensure that the relationships, sex and health education programme is planned, delivered and monitored effectively.

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

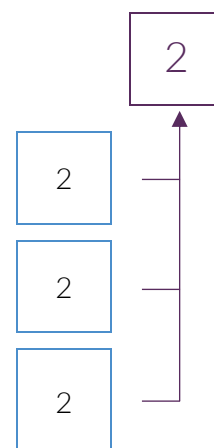
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 valued and cared for throughout the school. They clearly feel part of the Sacred Heart community, with one pupil stating that they, 'enjoy being part of their class and the whole school'. They feel safe, and can speak to staff and known adults when they are upset or worried. Pupils recognise how they have a responsibility to care for God's world. For example, the development of the polytunnel, which reflects their own personal growth, and the hedgehog houses in the forest school. Pupils respond to Catholic social teaching through their own and staff led ideas. An example of this is the recycled toy scheme and the sustainable Christmas crafts programme. Pupils who take part in the eco council are articulate in their role and the impact upon their local community and the wider world. However, pupils have a limited understanding of how theology and scripture underpin why they take part in these activities or events. The behaviour of pupils is consistently good throughout school, with all children showing good manners to both adults and their peers. However, pupils are not able to talk with confidence about other faiths and the opportunities to develop their understanding of these religions and cultures.

The mission statement, 'Growing Together, Learning Together, Achieving Together in Christ' - is well known to all. The review of the statement undertaken two years ago has ensured that all pupils, as well as staff and governors, were able to repeat and understand this. There is a sense of community throughout, with staff feeling very much a part of this. One member of staff stated, 'As a teacher at the school, Christ truly is in the heart of everything we do.' Staff are positive role models to pupils and provide good pastoral care, as well as providing their own time to develop pupils' faith, such as leading worship groups. The school provides a culture of welcome, with one parent stating they value the opportunities, 'to share in faith with the children'. The school environment shows that it is a Catholic school, with explicit signs of this. For example, displays around the school clearly show how pupils see themselves growing with God. However, the provision of relationships, sex and health education is inconsistent throughout school. There is

very little evidence of work shared from most year groups, with no evidence of monitoring or evaluating of the quality of the subject.

Policies in school demonstrate the Catholic identity and mission of the school. The Catholic life leader is very enthusiastic about this aspect of school life and some of the actions that he has instigated. This includes the development of outside areas to support the idea of sustainability in the environment. Governors have an active role in the Catholic life of the school and are present for many events. Parents are very positive and recognise the partnership between school and home. One parent stated that he, 'would give the school ten out of ten in how they have supported all of my children'. Support for parents in their role as first educators was identified as a strength by some parents, but this was felt to have lessened over recent months, and communication was not as frequent. There are clear links between the school and parish and a strong, relationship is being developed with the parish priest. Furthermore, the school welcome opportunities for events with parishioners. However, there is no consistency or systematic plan in terms of the evaluation of Catholic life and mission, either from leadership or from pupils, and as a result, cohesive plans based on previous learning are lacking.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

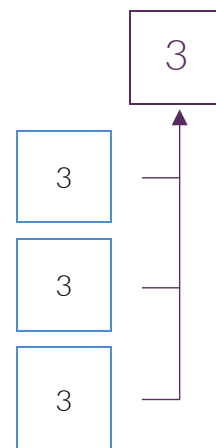
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 enjoy religious education in most classes and talk positively about their learning. Pupils in Reception speak about how they enjoy learning about Jesus and like acting out the stories. There was evidence in some classes of pupils speaking with increasing confidence, whilst using specific religious vocabulary. Pupils in Year 6 were able to articulate their understanding of pilgrimage, linking it to scripture, while Year 5 pupils were engaged in thinking about how the Beatitudes reflect their own lives. Behaviour in lessons is good in most classes and pupils were interested in what they were learning, with some evidence of effective questioning which enhance pupils learning. However, there are many inconsistencies as to how much pupils progress in religious education in some year groups, and the knowledge and understanding of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* is not developed sufficiently. As a result, there are a significant number of pupils who do not achieve as well as they should do, and religious education books regularly show a lack of care with both presentation and volume of work. Feedback given to pupils is inconsistent in all year groups, meaning children do not recognise how to improve their work.

Effective oral questioning is evident in some classes, meaning teaching is moving some of the learning forward. In Year 1, questioning was developed so that pupils were able to discuss how we aim to, 'love one another'. The new approach to teaching and learning is in its infancy in school, with some teachers able to deliver this at a good standard. However, most lessons observed gave pupils very little time and opportunity to complete work in books, meaning significant learning time was lost. Pupils are consistently praised for their efforts throughout the school, meaning that they feel good about their responses. However, there is limited feedback in books and as a result pupils are not able to make progress in their religious understanding. There was evidence of some teaching linking the Catholic social teaching principles to scripture, while the introduction of the 'Bible Quiz', where pupils had to quickly find a specific Bible passage, has impacted on the pupils' ability to locate scripture. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own spiritual and moral development were also witnessed in some classes. However, gaps in

staff religious knowledge and understanding led to some misunderstandings and low-level learning taking place.

The school uses the *Come and See* resource to deliver religious education, in line with diocesan expectations, and timetables evidence that the expected 10% of teaching time is spent on the subject. This ensures that a sequential curriculum is available for all pupils. However, the subject leader recognises that some activities within classes do not match the desired learning outcomes and stated that he had plans to develop this, whilst also aiming to provide a wider array of creative learning opportunities for pupils. The early career teacher in Early Years Foundation Stage has had a wide range of professional development and induction, which has impacted upon the quality of provision in the class, and values the support given to her. Pupils' needs are effectively planned for in some religious education lessons and some pupils with special educational needs receiving adapted work. However, the subject leader of religious education has not sufficiently planned for the development of the subject to ensure that outcomes for pupils in religious education are at least good. Monitoring and evaluating the quality of religious education at Sacred Heart is inconsistent, resulting in staff not knowing what or how to improve in the subject.

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

3

2

Pupils at Sacred Heart are given a number of opportunities to engage in the prayer and liturgical life of the school. This includes the Children of the Eucharist sessions for older pupils in school, utilising both the parish deacon as well as the church itself. Pupils worship in a variety of ways, including prayer, meditation and reflecting in silence. They undertake various ministries willingly and enthusiastically, both in and out of school. Pupils are eager altar servers, and some pupils in Year 5 are keen to share their role in initiating and delivering the Our Father prayer group. They work together to plan class-based worship regularly, using a standardised format, and are beginning to do so independently without support. However, pupils are not yet able to effectively plan prayer in line with the liturgical year, as well as inconsistencies in the regularity of class-based worship in some year groups. Pupils are also beginning to evaluate this worship, particularly as they get older, but many pupils are unable to identify the impact of the prayer on both themselves and others.

There is a daily rhythm of prayer throughout school, including four daily prayers, and pupils are able to talk about this regularity. Key celebrations in the liturgical year are central to life at Sacred Heart; for example, Advent and Lent services are an integral part of school celebrations as a community. Seasonally appropriate scripture is used for adult and child led worship. Pupils are becoming increasingly competent in using Bibles as part of this. However, there are clear opportunities missed to enhance prayer and liturgy by using music and other art forms. Outside support from the parish priest has been utilised well to support the pupils in their prayer life, and opportunities are given for pupils to reflect during his worship. Prayer spaces are evident in each classroom, and these are well cared for, which reflects the importance of daily prayer, while regular use of the local church provides pupils with a beautiful space to experience God. Families are welcome to participate in the prayer life of the school and appreciate these opportunities to share in their child's faith experience. Staff join in with worship, but there are limited occasions where staff are able to lead missing the opportunity to set an example for the pupils.

The school has a policy for prayer and liturgy, which is available to all and identifies the expectations for staff. There is also a prayer and liturgy document in place identifying the end of year group expectations for all pupils, which includes a clear strategy for building up these skills of participation. However, these documents are not fully implemented and therefore have had limited impact. Holy days of obligation and opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist are planned throughout the year, and a planned programme for the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered. New sets of school Bibles and additional resources have been purchased to support the prayer life in school. However, the rigour in evaluating the effectiveness of prayer and liturgy is limited by all leaders, and a lack of a strategic plan for liturgical development means that the school does not recognise what support or guidance is needed for either staff or pupils in planning and leading experiences of prayer and liturgy. As a result, pupils and staff lack confidence in planning or leading prayer and liturgy, and this limits the quality of the prayer and liturgy opportunities.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	140638
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3903329
Full postal address of the school	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Byermoor, Burnopfield, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE16 6NU
School phone number	01207270396
Headteacher	Sean Woods
Chair of local governing body	Clare Iles
School Website	http://sacredheartbyermoor.bwcet.com
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Paul Craig
Louise Nealings

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