



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Hartlepool

URN: 148279

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

02–03 July 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

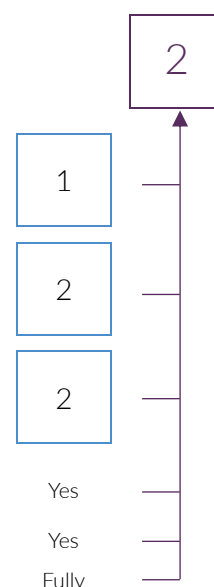
Collective worship (p.7)

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 the requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School has responded to and met the areas for further development which were identified during the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Pupils are a real strength of the school, both academically in relation to their engagement in lessons, the quality of their discussions and their use of religious vocabulary, but also in relation to their attitudes and behaviour. They love their school and see it as a community that loves and cares for them and wants them to do well and therefore, they embrace every opportunity
- Pastoral care is of high priority. This is evident through the interactions between staff and pupils and also through interactions between the pupils themselves, showing care and respect that they show for each other. Designated wellbeing spaces and groups are also well developed to support pupils and also their families. Parents speak very highly of the care, love and nurture that their children receive.
- Teachers are skilful in their lesson delivery. They use recap and retrieval along with effective questioning to support pupils in knowing more and remembering more.
- Leaders are effective role models for prayer and liturgy and support staff well, providing them with the skills and confidence to lead prayer and liturgy opportunities for year group phases and their own classes.
- Leaders, on every level, have a clear vision for the school. They have worked well to direct improvements and have a clear idea of how they would like the school to develop further and how this will be implemented.

What the school needs to improve

- Enhance lessons by embedding creative task design opportunities
- Ensure the consistency of feedback so that all pupils know how to make improvements to their work and how this impacts on their daily lives.
- Strengthen and embed the structure for pupil led liturgy, allowing older pupils to have more independence in planning and leading

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

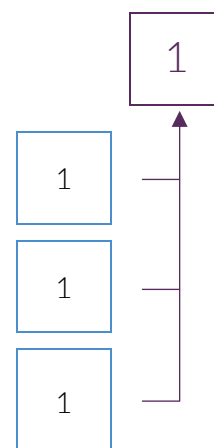
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School understand and embrace the school mission statement. They understand its pastoral message and can articulate how it is lived every day, giving practical examples of where it is seen within their own community. They understand that they are created, known and loved by God. Pupils speak about being grateful for the staff and the opportunities which they are given. As a result, all pupils show a deep respect of human dignity, both in relation to themselves and others. They fully embrace the school's Catholic identity and actively live out its mission. Due to the increased focus on Catholic social teaching, pupils actively engage in responding, supporting local, national and global charities. The Mini-Vinnies are keen to take the lead in promoting both support for charities and working as 'agents for change'. Pupils take a role in choosing charities to support or fundraising activities such as the food collection for 'Mission to Seafarers' and the family coastal Lenten Walk. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their involvement and the importance of helping others.

The newly launched mission statement, 'Love one another, as I have loved you', was developed and created through collaborative discussion involving all stakeholders. Adults and pupils worked together to co-construct a statement which incorporated the school's educational mission and the mission of the Church. It is fully embraced by staff, pupils, parents and governors, and is visible throughout the school. The sense of community is rich and acknowledged by all stakeholders, valued greatly by parents and pupils alike. 'Staff know children and parents, it is like being one big family.' Staff are exemplary role models to the pupils, showing high levels of pastoral care, one parent stated, 'Sacred Heart guides children to follow Christ and live by Jesus' example every day.' There is clear direction and vision within chaplaincy. Specially trained staff lead 'Nurture Nest' and bereavement focused sessions to

support individual pupils, and in some cases parents. The distinctive Catholic nature is tangible within the physical environment, through the wealth of sacred spaces, prayerful displays and inspirational quotations. Rich displays value the pupils and their work whilst also serving as reminders of the mission of the Church. Relationship, sex and health education meets diocesan requirements and is firmly rooted in Church teachings. Parents have been involved in consultation and lessons are delivered using diocesan approved resources.

Leaders at all levels have a clear vision and direction for the school. They understand the Church's mission and see it as their responsibility to nurture this within their pupils. Governors are very supportive and highly ambitious; they are actively involved in school daily life as well as the evaluation of its mission. Leaders respond and engage with diocesan initiatives and policies. The school works closely with parents, supporting them as the first educators of their children. Parents are proud to be part of the school, 'It is a very happy and caring place, built on the fundamentals of the Catholic faith.' There are very strong parish links, Canon Paul Douthwaite is a regular visitor to school. Leaders are inspirational witnesses to the gospel; decisions are based on careful consideration of the pursuit of the common good and the service of those in greatest need. Staff value the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust (BHCET) virtues and emphasis on Catholic social teaching, and willingly engage in practical acts of service, such as providing hampers at Christmas and Easter time. Self-evaluation involves stakeholders at all levels, it is an honest reflection of the journey the school has been on, with a clear direction for the next steps in that journey. Leaders are committed to supporting new staff, both the early careers teacher and staff who recently joined the school felt well supported, citing an effective ongoing induction programme.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

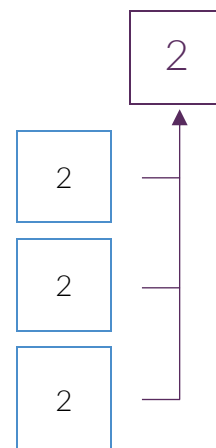
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 are developing secure knowledge and understanding of religious education which reflects the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Pupils throughout all age phases enjoy religious education lessons, they engage well in their learning, participating with interest and enthusiasm, 'you learn about all of the amazing things that God has done'. Pupils, relative to their age, speak confidently about their learning within lessons, using religious vocabulary and showing an awareness of key knowledge. The clear focus on standards and expectations have resulted in pupils knowing more and remembering more, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and disabilities. Pupils are religiously literate, using subject specific vocabulary to share their learning and engage well with their learning. Behaviour for learning throughout school is good, any instances of low-level disengagement were swiftly and sensitively addressed. Work within pupils' books throughout the school is presented well, and staff have clear expectations in relation to the expected standard. Pupils understand how well they are doing; they refer to the feedback box within their books and this is supporting most pupils to make progress. Their achievement is in line with other core subjects and there is an upward trend in attainment due to the increased focus on standards.

Religious education teaching follows the *Come and See* resource. Lessons are planned sequentially and show progression. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, showing good understanding as to how pupils learn. Lessons are structured and includes elements linked to the school's whole curriculum drive to consolidate standards and embed quality-first teaching. This focus is continuing to ensure that religious education teaching and learning is of a good standard. All lessons begin with reviewing prior learning, recapping previous teaching and key vocabulary being used before moving onto new learning, this is supporting pupils in

knowing more and remembering more. Teachers use questions to clarify knowledge and understanding as well as to support deeper thinking and making links between aspects of learning. Task design has focused on the quality and quantity of written responses based on raising standards. Now this is embedded, teachers are focused on reviewing where a more creative approach could be applied. All staff use the agreed format for feedback, which has been developed this year, which seeks to encourage pupils to think more deeply or consider how their learning through faith can be put into action in their everyday lives. Pupils' books show how this is becoming more consistently embedded and is becoming a tool to raise standards and attainment.

Leaders and governors speak of religious education as the core of the core curriculum and ensure that it is a faithful expression of the Directory. They ensure parity to other core subjects in relation to timetabling, professional development, staffing and resourcing. Staff have had access to diocesan professional development opportunities, including involvement in trialling some of the new materials for the new curriculum. Leaders work in partnership with the diocese and BHCET in their efforts to offer quality provision. Leaders have a clear vision for religious education which is evident within lessons and monitoring. Now embedded, leaders are focusing more on ensuring engaging enrichment activities are used to enhance teaching and learning. The headteacher takes a lead in monitoring and evaluating religious education lessons and is rigorous in her approach. She is supported by the subject leader and the BHCET school improvement model in the overall self-evaluation of curriculum religious education. This strategic approach has resulted in raising standards and good outcomes for pupils.

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

Pupils respond reverently and respectfully to the prayer and liturgy opportunities which are provided. They know that prayer is central to being part of a Catholic community and talk about it, 'giving us time to reflect' and 'bringing us closer to God'. Pupils sing joyfully and enthusiastically, join in with community prayers and silently reflect in prayer. They understand and can talk about the Church's liturgical seasons and articulate how prayer and liturgy influence and are also influenced by the wider life of the school. Pupils work closely alongside staff to plan weekly prayer for their class. This is well embedded, and older pupils are now ready to take on greater leadership in planning and delivering independently. The younger children work closely with their teachers to plan for class prayer and liturgy; staff carefully lead them with their choices to ensure that liturgies are meaningful and linked to the school format. Pupils embrace liturgical ministries willingly and are keen to be involved in delivering prayerful opportunities within their classes. In some classes, pupils are beginning to reflect on their experiences of prayer and liturgy and with the support of staff can think about how to enhance these opportunities moving forward.

Staff are aware of the centrality of prayer within the life of the school and ensure that the school day is punctuated by a routine pattern of prayer. Scripture, linked to the Church's liturgical seasons, is central to all prayer and liturgy opportunities and this is proclaimed reverently. Pupils and staff use their gifts to enhance the prayer life of the school, especially music. The musical talent of staff enhances the richness of the prayerful experiences and is received enthusiastically by the pupils, who sing with great joy. There are strong links with the parish. The half termly parish Mass is very well attended and valued by pupils and their families. Canon Paul Douthwaite acknowledges the work of the school in promoting and encouraging opportunities for families to be more activity involved in the parish. Sacred spaces, linked to the liturgical season, are visible

in all classrooms. Prayer stations have been created around school to provide opportunities for pupils to pray spontaneously. Artwork is used to enhance prayer and liturgy including the recently developed display of the new mission statement and the mosaic linked to the Jubilee Year which contains a tile from every member of the school community. There is also a dedicated prayer room.

The policy for prayer and liturgy is well formulated and accessible to staff. Leaders have developed an overview of prayerful opportunities throughout the school year, including weekly school-based liturgy and Masses which are held at the school. Pupils and their families also join the parish once every half term on a Sunday, to lead the parish Mass, an event that is very well attended and enjoyed by the parish community and school family alike. Significant times in the liturgical calendar are marked, for example the school recently marked its feast day with a whole school Mass which was very well attended by parents. Professional development opportunities linked to liturgical formation are provided both at a diocesan and school level. The headteacher has proved a strong role model in the delivery of celebrations of the word. Teachers are now able to confidently lead engaging key stage prayerful gatherings with a strong focus on reflecting upon the word. One staff member shared, 'The school is alive in Christ and the Spirit is moving in our midst on a daily basis. Thanks be to God!' School leaders and governors are involved in the self-evaluation and review of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy; they are ambitious in their plans to create a prayer garden to further enhance prayerful opportunities.

Information about the school

Full name of school	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148279
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8053321
Full postal address of the school	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Hart Lane, Hartlepool, TS26 8NL
School phone number	01429272684
Headteacher	Amanda Palmer
Chair of governors	Christopher Collins
School Website	https://sacredheart.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	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Leigh-Anne Young
Lianne Peart

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