



St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148609

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

16–17 October 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

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 general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

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

Yes

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

Fully

1

Compliance statement

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

What the school does well

- Pupils have a clear understanding of the principles of Catholic social teaching and are able to articulate how they live them out on a daily basis.
- Engagement and behaviour in lessons is consistently outstanding in all classes.
- Pupils are adept at planning and leading prayer and liturgy and do this confidently.
- Leaders are passionate about ensuring that religious education is the core of the core curriculum in school and are an inspiration to others.

What the school needs to improve

- Offer a range of reflective feedback opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of their success in relationships and health education.
- Ensure pupils have the opportunity to self-assess their own learning in religious education, identifying what they need to do to improve.

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

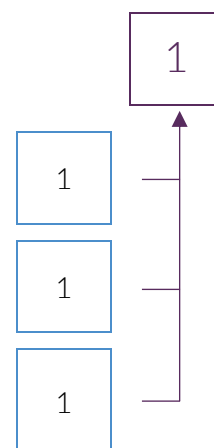
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



St Patrick's is a loving Catholic school. Pupils are happy and safe in this school environment. They delight in explaining how they live out their mission statement on a daily basis, with one pupil in Year 5 stating, 'I haven't been baptised but it doesn't matter as I'm still a friend of Jesus.' Pupils have a clear understanding of Catholic social teaching and are able to explain precisely how these principles affect their day to day lives. The mission team are true leaders of faith and work alongside the religious education subject leader to support others both locally and globally, for example the Pact House foodbank and shoebox appeal. Pupils are ambitious to take on leadership roles in school, such as school council and eco club, and are proactive and keen to have a positive impact on others. Pupils have a good understanding of scripture and can explain the theology underpinning their actions. Pupils show a deep respect for their own personal dignity and that of others including those of other faiths. They have the opportunity to visit the local mosque, synagogue and gurdwara to further develop their understanding and this is valued by the pupils and their families. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary in lessons and throughout the school.

The school mission statement is known to all and impacts positively on relationships and practice within school. Staff are strong faith role models, and parents and pupils appreciate that they are part of an inclusive, caring and ambitious community. One parent commented that, 'Staff are wonderful role models and go above and beyond for our children, to nurture and support, not only their education but their well-being. I'm very proud to say that my child attends St Patrick's.' Pastoral care for all in the school community is strong, with outside support and guidance welcomed, especially for the most vulnerable. School parish links are strong; pupils attend Mass and visit the church regularly, including reading at Sunday Mass. Staff who are not from the

Catholic faith are supported and have secure subject knowledge. Staff value their spiritual development. Relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) provision is planned for the long term, and pupils enjoy their lessons. However, discussions with pupils shows that whilst RSHE is effective and rooted in Catholic values, feedback does not always ensure the pupils know how well they are doing. Additional opportunities, such as first aid training, are effective in enhancing the curriculum.

Leaders and governors are role models who inspire both pupils and staff to be the best that they can be. They are determined that all in the community get the opportunity to experience Christ. Leaders are determined that all decisions made are based on the principles of Catholic social teaching. Professional development occurs frequently, is well planned and effective. There is positive support for school leaders from parents. School fully recognise parents as first educators of their child, but appreciate that there are further opportunities to develop this area. The work of leaders in ensuring that Catholic social teaching is embedded across the curriculum as a whole is exemplary. Governors are highly ambitious for the Catholic life and mission and lead by example in their consistent focus on this area as a school improvement priority. Pupils and teachers recognise and discuss elements of Catholic social teaching in both religious education and in other subjects. Staff feel extremely well supported by school leaders, with their wellbeing always at the forefront when decisions are made. One member of staff stated, 'I really feel that gospel values are not just taught but are genuinely lived out every day here.'

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

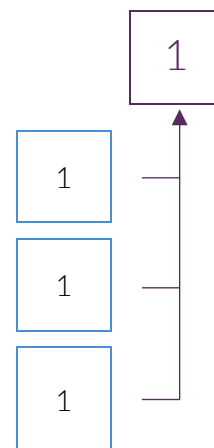
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 fully enjoy their religious education lessons, meaning that behaviour and interest is consistently exemplary in all year groups. They are confident and articulate in their understanding of what they have learned, and they make good progress during lessons. In most year groups, pupils achieve at a level above expectations. They produce work of a consistently high standard, which is well presented in all year groups. Pupils are rightly proud of their books. Children of all ages concentrate exceptionally well during lessons and are curious, interested learners. Pupils in Year 1 were able to clearly talk about the symbols on the baptismal candle, whilst older pupils in Year 6 enjoyed making connections between scripture and religious language. They get many opportunities to further their subject specific vocabulary, while the consistent review sessions through school ensure that pupils remember more and know more. Pupils have a good understanding of the Bible, with pupils in Year 3 locating appropriate scripture with ease and confidence. Pupils get the opportunity to discuss their work and attainment with staff and peers but are sometimes unsure about what they need to do to progress their learning further.

Staff at St Patrick's have very good subject knowledge and as a result of this they are confident in their delivery of the subject. Staff in Year 4 were able to confidently explain to pupils some of the challenging vocabulary used in the lesson. Staff plan engaging, well-structured lessons. The implementation of the review part of the lesson ensures that the children have the opportunity to reflect on previous learning, whilst giving teachers an opportunity to assess prior learning. Teachers have high expectations and do not set limits, expecting all pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities, to achieve in religious education. All pupils feel that they can access learning in religious education, with one child in Year 2 stating, 'I love RE as everyone has the opportunity to be good at it. Jesus wants us to be good in RE.' Teachers use questioning

skilfully to assess pupils understanding and, in some lessons, teachers used high level inquiry to challenge thinking. Verbal feedback ensures that pupils know that they do well. However, pupils do not always know what they need to do next in order to make progress in their learning. Staff ensure that pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to communicate their learning, for example through artwork, music, role play and creative writing.

Leaders ensure the religious education curriculum adheres to *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*, providing one that is both creative and motivating. The religious education lead is rigorous in her leadership of the subject and her passion for the subject shines through. Alongside the headteacher, she provides an inspiring vision for high quality teaching and learning and commitment to religious education. The exceptional leadership of religious education is recognised and valued within the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust and by governors and this has an impact upon the whole school community. Parents are kept informed of progress through meetings and shared information. The quality of the work in books is very good and matches that of other core subjects. Leaders ensure there are opportunities for high quality professional development, and staff welcome the support that is frequently offered. This includes the opportunity to observe high quality teaching and learning by the religious education subject leader. Leaders ensure that religious education is imaginatively and thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, carefully considering pupils with additional needs and how best to adapt the curriculum. Good links are made to provide a wide range of enrichment activities to further engage pupils in their learning, including outreach work in the community.

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

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

1

Pupils engage deeply and reverently in prayer and liturgy. All pupils are aware that worship gives them the opportunity to, as one child in Year 4 stated, 'feel at peace with God and with my friends'. Whole school worship begins with communal meditation, ensuring all pupils are fully ready to participate, whilst pupils in Reception already engage in prayerful silence during class-based worship. Older pupils are offered opportunities to plan and lead prayer and liturgy within their year group, confidently choosing themes based around Catholic social teaching, whilst using scripture that reflects this chosen theme. They are confident undertaking and discussing liturgical ministries and, with support from adults, can evaluate their liturgy as well as considering ways to improve their practice. Prayer is central to pupils' life. They engage in a wide variety that are part of the Catholic tradition, whilst also enjoying communal singing. Pupils clearly understand how prayer influences both the curriculum and the wider life of the school. One parent commented that they welcomed the opportunity to regularly pray with their child and that, 'anything where I can be involved in my child's school life really pleases me.'

The quality of prayer and liturgy provided by the school is of a high quality, is carefully planned for and is integral to the daily life of the school. Worship is varied and creative and pupils have the opportunity to experience a range of prayer forms both inside and outside of the school. For example, the mission team create the prayer spaces alongside the religious education subject leader and ensure that time and attention is given to these spaces. Recently they created an outside prayer space for Mary that allows children the opportunity to pray and reflect in their own time. Staff provide clear guidance and model prayerful behaviour, while pupils are increasingly encouraged to plan and lead acts of worship, fostering spiritual confidence, leadership and a sense of responsibility. Prayer and liturgy is inclusive, meeting the needs of pupils of all abilities and helps them to develop empathy, respect and moral awareness. The

school's close partnership with the parish and the commitment and the dedication of the parish priest enhances the liturgical life of the school and provides pupils with authentic experiences of Catholic tradition. Through well-structured and reflective worship, pupils are able to explore and articulate their beliefs, values and personal responses to faith. Consequently, prayer and liturgy make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and personal development.

Leaders have carefully considered the policy on prayer and liturgy to make sure it is useful for staff and has an impact on the community. Pupils from the very youngest in Reception are adept at being involved in or leading prayer and liturgy. Leaders have ensured that a clear progression document highlights the expectations of pupil participation within each year group, ensuring that staff fully understand the requirements of pupils in each phase. Leaders ensure Mass is offered at significant times during the year such as feast days and holy days of obligation. Leaders offer high quality professional development in prayer and liturgy, especially to staff with relatively little experience of leading Catholic worship. Leaders ensure that prayer spaces around the school are of a high quality and purpose, with resources purchased to enhance the prayer and liturgy in classrooms. Parents fully appreciate leaders' work in the formation of pupils' faith. A parent confirmed that school leaders ensured that their, 'child has lots of opportunities within the parish community, such as giving readings in church on a Sunday.' Leaders and governors ensure that the quality of prayer and liturgy throughout school is of a high standard and evaluate this as part of a systematic cycle of improvements.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Patrick's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148609
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8403382
Full postal address of the school	North Road, Dipton, Flint Hill, Stanley, County Durham, DH9 9BB
School phone number	01207570316
Executive headteacher	Not applicable
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Burgess
Chair of local governing committee	Mrs Bev Ewart
School Website	stpatricksdipton.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	5 – 6 February 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Mr Paul Craig
Mrs Julie Carr

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

