



St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148461

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

12–13 February 2026

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

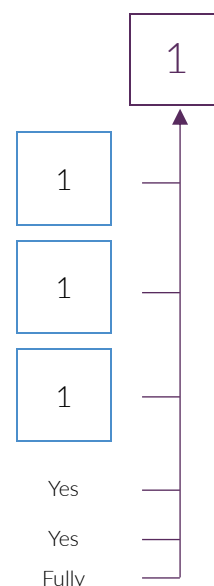
Collective worship (p.7)

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



What the school does well

- Christ is at the heart of St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School. This is the result of strong and aspirational leadership fostered within a climate of universal love.
- St Cuthbert's is a thriving Catholic community in which all stakeholders collaborate to create a deep sense of identity and belonging.
- Pupils at St Cuthbert's have a thorough understanding of Catholic social teaching and how to live out its principles on a daily basis.
- Pupils take great pride in their work. Their religious education books are beautifully presented and provide a rich celebration of their learning.
- Pupils flourish spiritually because of the careful balance between Catholic tradition and contemporary, creative expressions of prayer.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide teaching staff with the necessary subject knowledge to prevent misconceptions from developing in pupils' learning in religious education.
- Ensure that opportunities for pupils to retrieve prior knowledge are systematically planned and embedded across all phases.

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

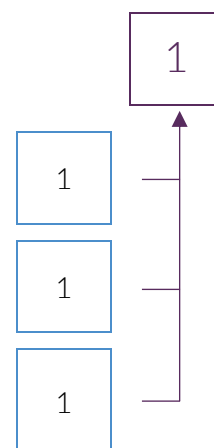
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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



At St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, the mission is clearly known, understood and lived by the whole community. Pupils, staff, governors and families genuinely 'Delight in the Lord, and in... all that is good,' and this is reflected in the warm, respectful relationships seen throughout classrooms and corridors. A strong sense of belonging is evident among pupils, supported by a carefully nurtured Catholic identity shared by all. As a result, St Cuthbert's serves not only as a safe and welcoming haven for the local community but also as a beacon of aspiration and hope for the people of Stockton. Pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of Catholic social teaching, participating confidently in charitable initiatives such as the Nitelight project, where recycled crisp packets were transformed into sleeping bags for the homeless. They also value smaller acts of service, including their 'kindness stones,' which have brought comfort to individuals. One pupil reflected deeply on the school's mission, saying, 'At St Cuthbert's, Jesus comes into our hearts, and we are united with Him,' capturing what is evident across daily school life. Parents echo this impact, sharing sentiments such as, 'I'm so grateful to God that we have joined this school,' and 'The school gives us exactly what we want.' These reflections highlight how strongly the school's mission shapes the daily experiences of its children.

St Cuthbert's is unmistakably Catholic, with Christ firmly at the centre of school life. The school's work to embed Catholic virtues extends beyond the building itself, shaping positive outcomes across the wider community through charitable and social-action projects. The learning and play environment reflect a vibrant and visible expression of the school's mission, with pupils speaking proudly about their school and its distinctive culture. Their confidence and enthusiasm reflect the dedication of staff, who ensure that St Cuthbert's stands as a clear outward sign of Christ's presence. Staff, governors and volunteers serve the community with diligence and generosity,

continually strengthening the school's mission and identity. As a result, pupils experience a deep sense of belonging and grow in joy, confidence and self-worth as valued members of the school family. This impact is summarised by an older pupil who shared, 'St Cuthbert's helps me make sense of my life... and being part of this family brings me closer to Jesus.' Parents express similar gratitude for the school's nurturing approach, with comments such as, 'St Cuthbert's are another parent to my child,' and 'The ethos is inclusive and kind,' highlighting the trust families place in the school. These expressions of appreciation show how deeply the school's values resonate with its community.

Leadership at every level within St Cuthbert's reflects a clear sense of purpose and a shared commitment to placing Christ at the centre and delighting in all that is good. Leaders work with clarity and intention to sustain a culture of high aspiration, ensuring that pupils and families feel welcomed, valued and supported. The highly visible parent support advisor exemplifies the mission through compassionate, day-to-day engagement with families, offering practical and pastoral support where needed. The headteacher's quiet determination and steadfast leadership have been instrumental in shaping a community in which all are encouraged to flourish. Governors bring passion, expertise and a strong sense of service, contributing meaningfully to a joyful, faith-filled learning and worshipping community. The parish priest also plays a key and valued role in school life. His pastoral presence, guidance and partnership with staff and pupils help ensure that the mission of St Cuthbert's remains rooted in the teachings and traditions of the Church, providing spiritual richness and direction that support the school's work each day. Together, these leaders create an environment in which every member of the community feels supported, inspired and deeply connected to the school's mission.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

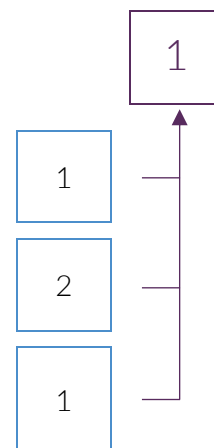
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Despite many pupils entering the school with little or no prior experience of the Catholic faith or any religious tradition, by the end of Key Stage 2 they are religiously literate, articulate and well-prepared to thrive in the next stage of their religious education. One parent commented, 'It's fulfilling as a parent to know that your children have such vast knowledge... and that they can apply this to current affairs.' Behaviour in lessons is consistently outstanding. Teachers ensure that pupils remain fully engaged, creating a purposeful and calm learning atmosphere that promotes enjoyment and results in high-quality written work. Pupils' beautifully presented workbooks provide a rich record of their faith journey, demonstrating the development of a secure religious vocabulary and an ability to articulate the impact their learning has on their own lives and on the lives of others. Pupils speak confidently and thoughtfully about their learning, showing strength in the way they make connections between their studies, the Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust (BHCET) virtues and the principles of Catholic social teaching. They can recall and retell key pieces of scripture with accuracy and enthusiasm, explaining how and why these teachings guide and shape their daily choices. One pupil remarked, 'In RE, we learn how Jesus wants us all to be. He sets the example.'

Teachers at St. Cuthbert's are passionate about their roles as religious educators and always strive for the best for all their pupils. They have high expectations for all pupils and make thoughtful adaptations for those with different barriers to learning. Pupils are provided with a very strong start to their religious education, and this is built upon as they make their way through each year group. The questioning used in most lessons helps to move children's learning on; despite this, activities and questions set to activate pupils' prior learning are not planned in a systematic way, meaning that pupils do not get regular opportunities to retrieve prior knowledge, for example about other world faiths. A strong emphasis on evidence-

informed pedagogy creates a healthy climate for learning and teachers' strong subject knowledge helps to build pupils' levels of confidence. However, on occasion, pupils' misconceptions both in discussion and written work are not addressed robustly to ensure that pupils' learning can move on. There is a strong focus on pupils' spiritual and moral development; specifically, on how the religious education curriculum can help to inform pupils how to live their lives. Time and space are given in lessons to pupils to enable them to reflect on this.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils at St Cuthbert's and speak with conviction about how pupils in the school 'live and breathe religious education'. They recognise that many pupils join with limited religious literacy and see it as their responsibility to provide a curriculum that enriches every learner and lays secure foundations for future success. The religious education leader is determined, reflective and relentless in her pursuit of continuous improvement. She maintains a clear understanding of standards across the school and provides colleagues with a balanced combination of support, guidance and encouragement, enabling them to grow and flourish as practitioners. Governors are well informed about the school's development priorities and speak confidently about how they both support and hold leaders to account. A strong example of their effectiveness is the work of the link governor for religious education, who offers valuable challenge and insight in support of leaders' evaluation. BHCET structures play a pivotal role in providing a robust framework through which pupils can become religiously literate and deepen their understanding of the faith. Leaders also ensure that staff access high-quality professional development to strengthen their practice in religious education, with particularly strong provision for early career teachers.

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 and staff at St Cuthbert's engage in prayer and liturgy in ways that enable each person to experience deep personal meaning and genuine spiritual growth. The prayer life of the school has both rhythm and purpose, and pupils value the varied opportunities they are given to pray spontaneously, creatively and reflectively. One particularly popular expression of pupil-led prayer is the use of 'Bubbles of Hope,' which pupils speak about with enthusiasm. Pupils are regularly afforded opportunities to evaluate their worship, routinely identifying ways in which they can deepen its impact on themselves and their peers. Older pupils articulate with clarity how the prayer and liturgy provided at school help them to build a personal and developing relationship with Jesus. These same pupils also recognise their role as spiritual leaders for younger children, taking their example from Christ himself. As one pupil explained, 'We want to be like Jesus, a role model.' Pupils at St Cuthbert's understand the importance of prayerful silence and embrace it as a means of deepening their relationship with God. Their ability to engage reverently in worship, reflection and silence is notable from the Early Years onwards and reflects the school's strong formation in spirituality and Catholic life.

At St Cuthbert's, rich Catholic tradition is sensitively balanced with contemporary expressions of prayer and liturgy, enabling pupils of all faiths and none to benefit deeply from the school's spiritual life. Pupils are spiritually anchored by the prayerful environment that surrounds them and by the opportunities for prayer and worship that help them feel safe, nurtured and valued. For example, during a whole-school celebration of the word, in which one visibly upset pupil found notable peace and comfort within the joyful and inclusive atmosphere created. All staff are deeply committed to the spiritual formation of pupils and understand their unique role in making Christ known to all. Their dedication shapes an environment in which pupils grow in confidence, reverence and understanding. Pupils benefit from a strong and supportive

relationship with the parish priest, who is highly dedicated to tending to the spiritual needs of the school community. They enjoy regular opportunities to participate in Mass and to receive the Sacraments, which enrich their spiritual development. Over time, pupils at St Cuthbert's develop a deep and meaningful relationship with scripture. Older pupils navigate the Bible with confidence, treating it with reverence and respect. They speak thoughtfully about passages that hold personal significance; one explained that she particularly values the verse, 'Blessed are the peacemakers...from Matthew 5'.

Leaders are dedicated and provide pupils, staff and families with an environment—both physical and emotional—in which they can flourish, whilst also feeling safe, vulnerable and loved. High-quality professional development and well-crafted resources are used effectively to support pupils in the preparation and delivery of prayer and worship. Leaders in this school are exemplary role models. The headteacher consistently models the prayerful reverence that is so clearly felt in classrooms, corridors and whole-school worship. This example is reflected in the way pupils lead one another in prayer; they work collaboratively and creatively to ensure that prayer and worship are meaningful, inclusive and relevant for their peers. Leaders, including governors, are rigorous and honest in their self-evaluation, and it is evident that identified actions for improvement have been addressed with care and purpose. Pupil voice plays a central role in the continuous development of prayer and liturgy, enabling leaders to respond thoughtfully to the spiritual needs of the school community.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148461
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8083312
Full postal address of the school	Parkfield Road, Stockton-On-Tees, Cleveland, TS18 3SY
School phone number	01642 601567
Executive headteacher	Not applicable
Headteacher	Mrs Sian Parnell
Chair of local governing committee	Mrs Mary Dowson
School Website	www.stcuthbertsstockton.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	02 May 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The inspection team

Martin Gray
Paul Craig

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