



St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School

Byker

URN: 148272

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Bishop Stephen Wright, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
12–13 March 2025

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

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

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

Compliance statement

- St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School is compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School is compliant with the requirements of the Diocesan Bishop.
- St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School has responded and met the areas for further development which were identified during the last inspection.

What the school does well

- Leaders, teachers and support staff are dedicated to the pupils and families of this school. They view their work here as a vocation and recognise the significant role they all play in not only academic success, but also in the nurture they show each pupil and being positive role models for them.
- Pupils at St Lawrence's feel safe. They feel loved and respected by adults here, and so in turn they have learned to show respect to others. They very much feel that they are part of a school family.
- St Lawrence's is a very inclusive school with a warm welcome for all. Pupils recognise that we are all children of God, are all unique and that we all have special gifts to share with the world. They fully embrace members of their school family who belong to other faiths and to none and strive to find ways to include them in the prayer life of the school.
- From their starting points pupils make good progress, not only in their academic achievement but in their emotional development too.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase opportunities for pupils to put their faith into action enabling them to deepen their understanding of Catholic social teaching.
- To develop a consistent approach to ensuring pupils remember more of what they have learned.
- To provide regular and consistent opportunities for pupils to take a leading role in planning and delivering celebration of the word for their peers.

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

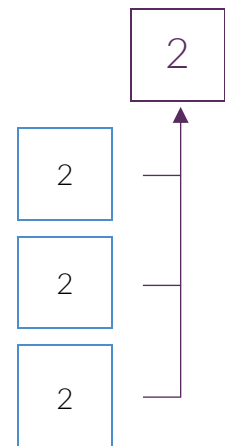
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

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 proud to be part of St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School. They acknowledge the Catholic identity and speak of the inclusivity and the welcome it provides to everyone. 'Everyone is heard, our teachers look after us and we are all welcome here'. Pupils from other belief traditions say that although they are not Catholic, they feel very much an equal part of this community. Because of the inclusive nature of this school, pupils are empathetic to others and are aware of one another's challenges. One pupil said, 'At this school people understand the pain you're going through and are always there for you.' They know that their school is based on the teachings of Jesus and whether they are Catholic, from a different faith or from no faith, they all embrace and live out the virtues of kindness, tolerance and respect embedded within the school's mission statement. Pupils are beginning on their journey to learn about Catholic social teaching principles through their work to achieve the Cafod Live Simply award and are committed to the nine actions in their plan towards this.

Staff at all levels create a place of sanctuary within this school; an 'oasis' for pupils. The culture of welcome includes valuing and supporting those from various cultures and belief traditions, enabling them to live and pray in fidelity to their own commitments. They are excellent role models in the way they portray care, friendship, and positivity for all, and they foster a genuine sense of community based on gospel values. They are committed to the themes within the school mission statement of kindness, tolerance and respect and these are reinforced by staff regularly and within the school environment. Each week one pupil is celebrated for showing kindness to others through the Good Samaritan award and becomes a name on the wall of kindness for all to see in the school hall. Pastoral care for pupils is exceptional with staff nurturing all pupils and recognising each as an individual. Parents speak positively about the

care staff provide. Prayer focal points in every classroom and displays throughout school, celebrate the appropriate point in the liturgical year and are thoughtfully assembled. Provision for relationship and sex education is carefully planned and parents are communicated with prior to their child embarking on the programme. This provision meets both statutory and Diocesan requirements.

Leaders are successful in engaging parents who appreciate the work the school does. One parent said, 'Staff know each child as a person in their own right, they take time to speak to each of them and celebrate what makes them unique.' Leaders and governors promote the Bishop's vision for the Diocese and the school participates in services offered by the Diocese. Leaders exemplify their respect for the Catholic social teaching principle of dignity of workers through their care for staff wellbeing and the support to foster each staff member's continuing development. Professional development, focusing on the Catholic life and mission of the school, is well planned and effective and staff feel empowered to ask leaders for any development needs they feel they may have. Leaders are particularly committed to supporting staff new to the school. They have an effective induction programme which both supports the new staff and enables experienced staff to share their expertise. Governors are ambitious for the Catholic life and mission of this school. They are fully committed to the school and willingly share their considerable range of skills. Leaders are accurate in their self-evaluation of the school. However, pupils have limited opportunities to be involved in this evaluation.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

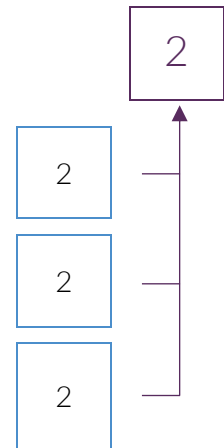
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 at St Lawrence's are very enthusiastic about their learning in religious education and speak positively about how they enjoy their lessons. One pupil stated, 'I love religious education because I enjoy learning about Jesus' life.' Overall, pupils demonstrate a good level of religious literacy when sharing and discussing their current learning. For example, in the Early Years, children provided thoughtful responses to their teacher's questioning about Lenten signs and symbols. In Year 4, pupils could clearly articulate the different roles played by the laity and those who are ordained. Despite this, systems for checking pupils' learning over time are not yet fully established. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and engage with careful questioning from their teachers. When given the opportunity to do so, they collaborate well with one another engaging in meaningful discussion. Outcomes in pupils' books are good, and progress is evident across all pupil groups, including those with special educational needs and disabilities. Behaviour in lessons is good because of the strong relationships forged between adults and pupils. As a result of this, pupils can work with increasing independence as they go through the school.

At St Lawrence's, teachers demonstrate a good level of subject knowledge relevant to the phase in which they are teaching. Their personal faith resonates in the work that they do, making learning more accessible and enjoyable for pupils. Lessons are carefully sequenced and planned. In some classes the responsibility for teaching religious education is shared between two teachers. This team-teaching approach helps staff to deliver a carefully scaffolded curriculum which supports the needs of all learners. The school has been doing a great deal of work recently to develop pupils' oracy and the impact of this work was evident in lessons. Many pupils, including some of the youngest in the school, offered articulate responses to questions using the sentence stems and religious vocabulary shared by their teachers. The learning classroom supports pupils' learning in religious education. Key vocabulary is clearly displayed and referred to during lessons. Digital technology is also used purposefully to support learning; this was particularly evident in Year 6. Most staff are aware of how the content of the religious education curriculum impacts on pupils' spiritual and moral development. For example, in Year

2, following a lesson on Jesus the Servant King, teachers encouraged pupils to think about how they could serve one another over the lunch break. Staff are committed to planning and delivering an engaging religious education curriculum with regular opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their creativity.

Leaders at all levels demonstrate a commitment to continually raising standards in religious education. The subject leader is proactive in his support of colleagues and has worked hard to shape a creative curriculum which meets the needs of all learners. The school's wider leadership ensures that the correct time and resources are dedicated towards sustaining and improving standards. Furthermore, leaders have also worked carefully to identify opportunities in the local and wider community for learners to gain experiences linked to their learning for example, visiting the Cathedral Church of St Mary's. Leaders are committed to ensuring that staff at all levels access purposeful professional development opportunities and they take time to reflect and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's religious education provision. Governors are aware of standards in religious education, visit regularly to discuss developments and are diligent in their work to challenge leaders and uphold standards.

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 experience prayer and liturgy daily at St Lawrence's and are respectful during these times. They clearly enjoy prayer through song, and they sing enthusiastically. Pupils are invited to participate in prayer according to their own beliefs, and although there are pupils of many faiths and none here, the school has a strong sense of a community underpinned by the gospel values of kindness, tolerance and respect. Some older pupils can articulate the ways in which prayer and liturgy influence their life. One pupil said, 'Praying makes us feel warm inside.' Older pupils can recite their school prayer and write prayers of the faithful each week for their whole school celebration of the word and for Mass when it is their class celebrating. Appropriate to their age and capacity, pupils understand a variety of ways of praying and some knew of different types of prayer used throughout different times of the liturgical year. In Key Stage 1, celebrations of the word are skillfully planned by the class teacher with pupils taking on ministries such as reading and dressing the prayer space. Although pupils have some opportunities to plan prayer and liturgy with their class teachers throughout school, this does not yet happen with the regularity required to support pupils in developing the independence and confidence they require to lead acts of worship.

Staff place importance on the prayer life of the school commenting that, 'Prayer is central to our daily practice and school life; it allows both children and staff time to focus and reflect.' They work well with families and the parish, and the religious education subject leader further demonstrates his faith commitment in catechising pupils preparing to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. The school has created a comprehensive guide for the active teaching of specific prayers of the Catholic tradition so that all may participate, and the learning of these is not left to chance. Daily prayers punctuate the school day in every class and staff are committed to maintaining this. The pattern of whole school prayer and liturgy reflects the

liturgical year and appropriate scripture is chosen. Opportunities for pupils to lead prayer times are not yet fully developed. Even though space is at a premium, the school makes good use of all space available to provide prayer spaces within classrooms and the school hall, as well as engaging displays around school. Pupils of other faiths have a dedicated prayer room in which they can pray according to their belief tradition. Families and parishioners are regularly invited in to join in celebrations of Mass.

Leaders demonstrate strong personal faith and the ability to share the gospel with pupils of all ages. They provide staff with regular and purposeful professional development designed to deepen staff confidence and expertise. Staff report that, 'Our leaders are confident and comfortable within their own faith and lead worship in a powerful and meaningful way.' Staff pray together and see this communal time of prayer as one of the many ways they support each other as a school family. Leaders and governors also ensure that part of the school's budget is allocated to resources which will enhance the prayer life of the school. Holy days of obligation and other significant days are recognised in the school's calendar and timetable. Leaders ensure that there are regular opportunities to celebrate Mass and have prioritised this as something they want to hold on to following the recent closure of the parish church.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148272
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3913792
Full postal address of the school	St Lawrence's Catholic Primary School, Headlam Street, Byker, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE6 2JX
School phone number	01912659881
Headteacher	Paul Brown
Chair of local governing body	Tony Cunningham
School Website	www.stlawrencesprimary.org.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Bewick 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	March 2018
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Jane Weatherall
Martin Gray

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