



St Cuthbert's Catholic High School Newcastle

URN: 137900

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

24–25 April 2024

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

1

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

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

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

Fully

What the school does well

- Staff fully embrace and live out the mission statement of the school, faith underpins all that they do. They are exceptional witnesses to the gospel within a vibrant Catholic community.
- Pastoral care and inclusion are exemplary. Staff go the extra mile for the most vulnerable and those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Every decision is made in service to and in the best interests of the boys.
- Pupils can speak with confidence about what they have learned in religious education and demonstrate a good level of understanding of key concepts and subject specific

vocabulary. Pupils enjoy religious education and recognise its value in their spiritual development.

- Pupils are able to reflect on their experience of prayer and liturgy with confidence and in detail. They can clearly articulate the positive impact the prayer life of the school has had on them.
- Leaders and governors place the highest priority on providing inspirational professional development for liturgical formation. This leads to a teaching staff who are confident and knowledgeable about delivering powerful experiences of prayer and liturgy.

What the school needs to improve

- To improve religious education outcomes at Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5
- To ensure effective feedback and self-assessment are consistently used to enable Pupils to articulate how well they are doing, and 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

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

1

Pupils including students in the sixth form are proud to belong to this school. A sixth form student described the school as a 'brotherhood' that is underpinned by faith. Through living out the values of competence, conscience, compassion, and commitment, pupils understand that they are developing into 'great men'. They want to give back to this community which is evident by the number of volunteers willing to support open evenings, guided tours, and charity projects. Pupils are enthusiastic about creating new ways to support local, national, and global causes. This is evident through initiatives like the 'St Cuthbert's Mile' where pupils ran in fancy dress for causes like Cafod, to collecting toiletries for CRISIS, supporting Movember and collecting food for the 'People's Kitchen'. They understand the importance of supporting these causes and can explain the theology behind it. Respect for personal dignity and for those of other faiths is outstanding. This is evident in the behaviour, manners and kindness shown to staff and pupils around the school. Pupils are keen to embrace chaplaincy opportunities such as the CYMFED Flame retreat and the Youth Village retreat. One parent commented that the greatest gift their son left St Cuthbert's with was 'genuine faith'.

St Cuthbert's is a joyful community, rooted in faith where staff live out the mission to form great men. Staff go the extra mile to provide co-curricular opportunities to grow in faith such as retreats to Ampleforth and Holy Island. The pastoral team provide outstanding care for pupils, building excellent relationships with all those they serve. Pupils felt that the door was always open to their pastoral leaders. There is a culture of inclusion ensuring all are supported, such as through the Savio Centre, Damascus Centre and Imago Dei Club which celebrate diversity and inclusion. The Catholic identity of the school is given utmost priority. The beautiful chapel allows pupils to explore the rich history and traditions of the Catholic Church first hand. Provision for

the faith needs of pupils and staff from other religious traditions is inspirational. During Ramadan, the school ensured that pupils could observe Jumu'ah prayer every Friday. One pupil stated, 'This school has planted the seed for diversity.' The provision of relationship and sex education (RSE) is exceptional, bespoke and relevant. Resources reflect the local context and in Sixth Form, staff have supported pupils in planning topics that are important to them leading to maximum engagement. Staff describe the headteacher to be the epitome of what a Catholic leader should be, who ensures that Christ is at the heart of this school.

Leaders and governors are exceptional in their witness to the Gospel. Staff commented, 'Leaders care about staff, are approachable and always ready to support.' Partnerships with parents are outstanding. Leaders strive to communicate and empower parents to be the first educators of their children. This is done through weekly family updates that encourages parents to discuss the weekly gospel reading, key events in the parish and topics studied in personal, social and health education/RSE. This has led to a significant increase in parental engagement. The Catholic life and mission of the school is rigorously evaluated by leaders and governors. This has ensured that the Catholic faith enriches the entire taught curriculum ranging from the Catholic ethics of business studies, Gospel values in physical education to social justice and the work of charities in geography. Professional development in the Catholic faith is immersive, informative, and relevant. Leaders ensure that all staff, irrespective of their background, have the most inspiring induction into the faith. One staff member described this as empowering.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

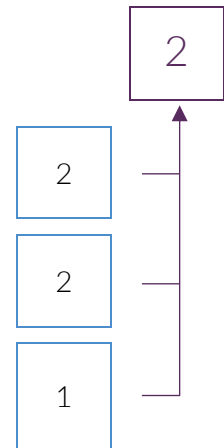
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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 and value their religious education (RE) lessons and have a good level of religious literacy. Pupils speak confidently about what they have learned and are able to clearly articulate their journey through the curriculum. They show a good understanding of key concepts and subject specific vocabulary, which are taught throughout all lessons. Retrieval practice is embedded into the start of all lessons and pupils work well to remember previously taught content. They speak highly of the opportunities they are given to think ethically and theologically and this supports engagement in lessons in all key stages. Strong working relationships exist between pupils and their teachers which ensures they feel safe to share their thoughts and opinions. Pupils value the opportunities that RE lessons provide for them to share their own views and explore the views of others. They talk very positively about the support they receive from all their teachers, describing St Cuthbert's as being a school where the community is at the heart. Recent examination data shows Key Stage 4 and Key Stage 5 attainment is comparable to other core curriculum subjects, however attainment in RE has declined in recent years.

Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge and are highly committed to their subject. The department has a collaborative approach to planning, ensuring all expertise is shared and there is a consistent approach to content delivery. Lessons are planned to provide time for reflection and pupils report that they think a great deal in RE about how their learning impacts on their moral decisions. A variety of approaches are deployed by teachers to make lessons engaging and staff produce good quality resources to support their pupils. Key Stage 4 pupils speak highly of the revision packs provided and claim, 'RE is one of the best subjects in the school to provide support for GCSE revision'. Effort is celebrated through the school's reward system and pupils respond well to regular encouragement in lessons. There is evidence of targeted feedback on assessments. A-Level pupils value the bespoke one to one feedback provided by their teachers, which helps them clearly understand what they need to do to make progress. In the lower school

pupils do not consistently respond to feedback and there are some missed opportunities to ensure pupils understand their next steps.

The curriculum leader is driven and passionate about high quality RE. She has an ambitious vision for the department and the expertise to deliver this. Leaders at all levels are committed to ensuring high quality professional development in religious education and ensuring all staff in the department work collaboratively to share expertise and reduce workload. A carefully planned sequential curriculum has been crafted and implemented which ensures subject content is delivered in an increasingly challenging way as pupils progress through school from Year 7 to Year 13. Religious education is placed at the heart of the curriculum and leaders have ensured it has full parity with other core subjects. Leaders have provided a range of enrichment activities to deepen pupils learning and engagement with RE, such as the Laudato Si group which allows them to put their learning into action when caring for the environment. Pupils have also benefited from the excellent links which have been forged with the wider community, one such link enabled sixth form students to partake in a Durham University theology taster session. Leaders' and governors' self-evaluation demonstrates forensic monitoring, searching analysis, and self-challenge. They are determined that this should be a flagship department.

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 can confidently articulate ways in which prayer and liturgy influence them and have shaped them to be better men. Pupils are proud of their faith and feel equipped to evaluate prayer and liturgy with skill. They are inspired to put their faith into action in events such as the St Cuthbert's Mile as a pupil led initiative. Pupils have an excellent understanding of liturgical ministries and can undertake these with confidence. All pupils participate in both class liturgy and class Masses after being carefully guided through this by a senior leader. Great care and preparation are taken so that every pupil is included and all understand the significance of holy Mass. Pupils understand the liturgical year and can identify it via outward signs, for example statues are covered in purple cloth during Lent. The impact prayer and liturgy have on pupils is profound. One pupil has been moved from a position of atheism to now considering the Sacrament of Baptism; another has felt able to resume altar serving after feeling supported to demonstrate his faith again. Sixth Form students in particular articulate how prayer has given them inner peace and the desire to reflect more deeply on their character.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the mission of the school and are visibly lived out in every aspect of school life. Staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to confidently plan and lead well-constructed prayer and liturgy. They are inspiring role models, and authentic witnesses to the Catholic faith. Staff catechesis development is important and of a high quality. The school welcomes a wide variety of clergy and religious orders to celebrate with them in a stunning and well cared for chapel which is at the heart of the school. It is regularly used for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Prayer is naturally embedded into the school's daily life, which reflects the prayer life of the Church. Form tutors use high-quality resources to relate prayer to pupils' current experiences and the world in which they live. The school had ensured that prayer is delivered in a variety of forms including well produced pupil led videos and social media accounts. In this way, faith is made vibrant and

accessible to everyone. The school has already forged strong links with a few parishes and continues to be a beacon of hope and excellence to them.

Leaders are highly effective in facilitating thoughtful, liturgically correct, and powerful experiences of prayer and liturgy. They are meaningful and of a consistently high quality. Leaders and governors prioritise resourcing for the prayer life of the school, as evidenced in the sacristy refurbishment. The school's prayer and liturgy policy is detailed, useful and aspirational. It clearly defines the expectations of the leadership team in a pursuit of allowing the pupils to know the gift of God. Evaluation is built into the annual schedule and refinements planned to facilitate continual improvement. St Cuthbert's feast day was particularly enjoyed by the whole community. Leaders have gradually reintroduced communal singing which has become well established with Year 7 pupils. Sacramental preparation is an integral part of the school, all pupils are afforded the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Visitors to the school are left in no doubt as to the Catholic character of the school, and the value leadership places on the spiritual and moral development of the boys entrusted to their care.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Cuthbert's Catholic High School
School unique reference number (URN)	137900
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3914715
Full postal address of the school	St Cuthbert's Catholic High School, Gretna Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE15 7PX
School phone number	01912744510
Headteacher	Daniel P. Murray
Chair of Local Governing Body	Christopher Jones
School Website	www.st-cuthbertshigh.newcastle.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Secondary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	11-18
Gender of pupils	Boys
Date of last denominational inspection	June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

The inspection team

Francesca Craik	Lead
Andrew Young	Team
Lisa Ord	Team
Michael Hughes	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