



## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **Sacred Heart Primary School, Fenham**

URN: 145624

Carried out on behalf of the Rt Rev Stephen Wright, Bishop of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 21-22 September 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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 curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	x
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	x
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

### Summary of key findings

#### What the school does well

- The school mission statement is lived out joyously in all aspects of school life.
- Leaders give the highest regard to the well-being of all.
- All staff are exemplary role models in the care and respect they show to one another and to those in their care.
- Pupils are capable and confident in planning and leading liturgical prayer.
- Pupils articulate their learning in religious education enthusiastically and competently.

What the school needs to improve:

- Review the relationships and sex education policy to ensure all stakeholders have a deep understanding and knowledge of the curriculum, in order to maintain statutory requirements.
- Ensure tasks in religious education reflect the intent of the religious education curriculum as well as the age-related expectations.
- Ensure that Catholic rituals and traditions are familiar to all pupils and are a frequent feature of liturgy and prayer.

## 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:.....

1

### 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

Pupils are very proud to be part of the Sacred Heart family. They are greatly enthused by the opportunities to contribute to their community and to the wider world. They confidently use their talents for the benefit of others. The whole school community embrace the school mission statement, 'Be humble, be simple, bring joy to others.' Pupils are eager to join 'Use your voice' groups, including Mini Vinnies, Green Team, and Buddies. Year 6 pupils speak proudly about their ambassador roles and about fundraising activities, notably the money raised for a school in Malawi. Scripture inspires the culture of the school; Gospel values are at the centre. A poverty-proofing approach promotes the dignity of all. The school continues to develop opportunities for pupils to understand Catholic social teaching. Pupils are highly respectful of one another and delight in each other's uniqueness. Behaviour is managed sensitively, with forgiveness and reconciliation as key principles. The international Sacred Heart Network is a source of great strength. It provides a living witness of vocation to pupils. Parents reported that the Five Sacred Heart Goals, which are a feature of the network, provide 'a direction for many aspects of school life and that the goal of 'Personal Growth' is testimony to the school's desire to 'serve the whole child.'

Staff act as excellent role models in school. Pupils know they are created in God's image and there is an embedded culture which celebrates the worth of all. Staff ensure that everyone feels welcome and that pupils feel safe and nurtured. Behaviour is managed sensitively and the 'Thrive' approach reflects the dignity with which everyone is treated. Parents and carers are unanimously positive about the Catholic character of the school, which supports the spiritual development of all. The school's mission statement is understood and is manifested in actions across the school. A Year 6 pupil explained, 'We show our buddies to be proud but not to boast; try not to make things complicated, but always make sure we make others, actually everyone, happy by what we do.' Pupils flourish because staff ensure that the Five

Sacred Heart Goals are reflected across school life. A well-sequenced relationships and sex education curriculum meets all the statutory and diocesan requirements, although parents are not fully aware of the curriculum expectations and content of lessons.

Leaders invest time in developing positive relationships with staff, pupils, and families. Consequently, pupils know they are valued, and parents trust the decisions that leaders make. Leaders ensure that policies and the school environment reflect the Catholic charism. The school is a calm, joyful, and uplifting place to be, where personal dignity is upheld. Staff report that leaders create a culture of 'loving support' in which they feel highly valued. One teacher reported, 'I feel privileged to work at Sacred Heart.' Leaders meticulously ensure that staff receive high quality induction and training. The senior leadership team work to sustain strong links with St Robert's parish. Parishioners are regular visitors to school and staff and parish catechists work collaboratively to prepare pupils to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. Governors clearly articulate the mission of the school and are diligent in ensuring that the experience of pupils reflects this. They have robust policies in place which reflect the Catholic character of the school, and they prioritise the well-being of all. As regular visitors, they monitor the Catholic life and mission of the school closely and provide appropriate support and challenge to the leadership team so that the Catholic ethos of the school remains a focus.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

### Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

1

### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

1

Lessons are well planned, and resources are used effectively to promote learning. As a result, pupils progress well from their starting points. They ask inciteful questions and they know and remember more. Expectations are ambitious and therefore attainment is high in relation to the age-related expectations. Pupils with additional needs achieve well because lessons are appropriately adapted to enable them to access the curriculum alongside their peers. Skilful questioning by teachers provokes deep thinking and pupils are challenged to reflect on how their actions are informed by the teachings of Jesus. Lessons are imaginative and tasks are varied, although they do not always allow pupils to demonstrate the intended learning. Pupils are given praise which is motivational, and the feedback given during lessons promotes progress. Lessons are reflective and, consequently, consolidate and extend pupils' knowledge systematically. Presentation in books reflects a great sense of pride. Pupils enjoy lessons and therefore engage well in their learning. They articulate what they have learned well and are able to recall prior knowledge. One parent reported, 'The religious education at Sacred Heart Primary is engaging and inspiring for my child.'

Provision for religious education is rooted in the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012*. Staff have secure subject knowledge as a result of sound professional development. Teachers emphasise the importance of religious education and so pupils respond with enthusiasm and pride in lessons. Time is given to allow pupils to reflect on what they have learned and, consequently, they have a deep understanding of how their beliefs inform their actions. Teachers plan astutely so that the curriculum is accessible to all. Sensitive adaptations, including 'prep time' to equip pupils with skills and knowledge for the lesson ahead, provide pupils with equitable learning opportunities. As a consequence, pupils, including those with

additional needs, are given many opportunities to achieve the best outcomes. Immediate feedback addresses misconceptions quickly and therefore progress is sustained. Teachers moderate their assessments with colleagues to ensure that their judgements are accurate. A language-rich environment promotes religious literacy. Pupils are therefore able to reason and justify their thinking. Parents value the quality of education that staff provide. One parent remarked, 'I feel religion stands out as the most important lesson, more so now than ever. I see my child thriving in this holy environment.'

Leaders are inspiring and consider religious education to be the core of the curriculum, giving it the highest priority. They share their vision clearly so that staff have an understanding of the strategic direction. They ensure that staff have the knowledge and confidence to teach progressive and ambitious lessons and they invest in resources that optimise learning opportunities. Leaders monitor the impact of learning by consulting regularly with pupils. They are consequently well placed to make informed decisions about developments in the subject. The subject lead generously supports her colleagues, ensuring they are equipped to deliver high quality lessons that support progress. Members of the local governing committee are regular visitors to school and through thorough monitoring processes they have an accurate understanding of standards in religious education. This leads to strategic action to improve outcomes for pupils. One governor explained that a recent review of marking undertaken by the committee resulted in improved progress for pupils and a better workload for teachers. They are rightly proud of the achievements in religious education across the school. Excellent links with the wider community enhance learning opportunities. Through the Sacred Heart Network leaders are able to invest in enriching national and international learning experiences for pupils.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

### 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

The varied prayer life of Sacred Heart is at the core of school life and consequently pupils are supported to develop their personal spirituality. They participate enthusiastically and creative prayer activities enable pupils to engage fully as these are meaningful and inspiring. Pupils are reverent and respectful. They respond joyfully in liturgical prayer and Masses, although some Catholic traditions and rituals are not fully embedded. Pupils sing enthusiastically and join in well with communal prayers. They are familiar with the Church's year and enjoy being joined by their families for key celebrations. They highly value the rich opportunities for spiritual growth. One parent noted, 'Charismatic praise... was so joyful.' Appropriate to their age, pupils are able to plan and lead liturgical prayer competently. In response to the varied prayer opportunities they are offered, pupils incorporate a variety of prayer styles into their own planned liturgical prayer. They are highly enthused and can articulate the profound impact this has on them. They are beginning to evaluate the quality of their prayer experiences to inform their future planning.

Well-planned and thoughtful prayer and liturgy is central to school life. As well as regularly celebrating class liturgical prayer, pupils join the parish community to celebrate Mass weekly. Adults create prayerful spaces across the school which help pupils to reflect. They provide varied opportunities to pray and consequently pupils are able to develop their relationship with God in many ways. Liturgical music, art and scripture are typical features of the prayer life of the school and pupils engage enthusiastically in song, dance, art, silence and prayer. Creative indoor and outdoor spaces are accessible and allow for individual prayer responses. Carefully chosen scripture passages enhance liturgy and prayer. Staff undertake professional development which enhances the prayer life of the school. They are eager to share best practice. They are consequently well-placed to plan and lead liturgical prayer and act as

inspiring role models for pupils. Staff are skilful in helping pupils plan celebrations of the Word, so that they develop independence, in line with their age and capacity. Parents highly value the invitation to join the school community in prayer. They also are eager to support their children in preparing for the sacraments, in partnership with the school and parish.

Leaders respond to pupils and ensure that the prayer life of the school is meaningful and enriching. Weekly Masses and celebrations on Holy days and key days in the year sustain close bonds with the parish community, which is highly valued. Leaders ensure that prayer is central to school life. They are excellent role models and lead the school community in thought-provoking prayer experiences. They have ensured that the school's prayer and liturgy policy is relevant and applied well. Leaders prioritise investment in resources and professional development to ensure that prayer and liturgy is engaging. They allocate time and resources to the professional development of staff so that they are skilled in supporting pupils to plan and lead liturgical prayer. The collective worship lead teacher inspirationally leads staff prayer, so that all present feel enriched. Staff report that she is an excellent role model and her coaching of staff in leading liturgy and prayer is greatly valued. Her support ensures that all staff are confident in their role of faith leaders. Leaders, including governors, systematically monitor the quality of provision for prayer and worship to inform strategic actions. The voice of pupils is central to this process. Because they are well informed, leaders are well placed to make decisions that enhance spiritual development.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	Sacred Heart Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	145624
Full postal address of the school	Convent Road, Fenham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE4 9XZ
School phone number	0191 2746695
Name of head teacher or principal	Barbara Brown
Chair of governing board	Elizabeth McLellan
School Website	<a href="https://www.shprimary.org.uk/website">https://www.shprimary.org.uk/website</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3 to 11
Trustees	Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

### The inspection team

Barbara Reilly-O'Donnell

Lead inspector

Louise Maitland

Team inspector

### 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