



## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Chad's Catholic Primary School, Witton Park

URN: 148281

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev Malcolm McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 28 April 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	2
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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

### Summary of key findings

#### What the school does well

- The high level of pastoral care provided for pupils ensures that there is a strong sense of family at this school where all pupils are fully included and well-supported
- The behaviour and engagement of pupils and the quality of their relationships is a strength of the school
- The vision and determination of school leaders to develop well-rounded young people who can live out the church's mission is an inspiration to all staff and are strong drivers of the school's success
- The impact of school leaders in securing rapid improvements in the quality of religious education

- The marking and feedback system which ensures that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure effective questioning is consistently planned into religious education lessons and can be adapted to enable all pupils to extend their learning
- Develop greater creativity in religious education to enable pupils to respond to their learning in a variety of forms
- Develop pupils' awareness and knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching in order to deepen their understanding of the Church's mission

## 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:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

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

2

### Provision

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

2

### Leadership

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

2



Pupils show great pride in belonging to this school. They understand well the school's mission to 'come as you are and walk with us'. Pupils understand that they are each valued and cared for as unique persons. They value this as something which makes their school special. Pupils actively participate in the Catholic life and mission of the school. They speak articulately about their understanding of how to live out the mission through their actions in helping others. One pupil said that this is so that they 'can be more like Jesus'. They describe how they have raised funds for Cafod and other local charities and can explain why their school shows active support for Fairtrade. Pupils feel happy, safe and secure. Pupils behave well and show care and respect for each other, leading to strong relationships. They understand that the school is committed to following the teaching and example of Jesus as they have learnt through the Gospels. One pupil described St Chad's as being "like one big family". Whilst pupils are actively involved in supporting those in need, their knowledge and understanding of the theology underpinning Catholic Social Teaching is not yet fully developed. Pupils have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths.

The school's mission statement is the rock upon which the success of St Chad's is built. It is visible in classrooms and around the school and is known and valued by all pupils and staff. The links between the mission and the Word of God are a central part of school life. Staff are committed to the implementation of the mission. They are positive role models and bear witness to the school's mission through the love and care they show for pupils. This is exemplified in the quality of supportive pastoral care offered to all pupils, including the most vulnerable. This can provide challenges at times and, whilst the majority of parents work in

close partnership with the school, relationships with a minority of parents have become fractured. This means that the school's capacity to work in partnership with all members of the community is hampered. The school acknowledges the need to rebuild these damaged relationships. The school's provision for relationships, sex and health education meets statutory and diocesan requirements and reinforces the school's commitment to the education of the whole person.

School leaders have a clear vision of the mission of their school. They are ambitious, passionate, and determined for pupils to become well-rounded young people who understand and live out the Church's mission. They ensure that Christ is at the centre of the school and fully understand that the Catholic life and mission is a core leadership responsibility. They acknowledge their key role in the pursuit of the school's mission. Although the leadership team have recently arrived in school, they have communicated their vision for the school, and this is strongly supported by staff and governors. The school works well in partnership with the parish, trust and diocese and is fully involved in participating in services offered by the diocese. All staff feel valued and appreciated. Leaders have effectively identified training needs and ensure that staff are supported with the skills and knowledge they require to implement improvements. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school; they know the school well and they hold leaders to account. Self-evaluation gives an accurate picture of the school although gathering of the views of pupils in evaluating the Catholic life and mission is underdeveloped.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

### Pupil outcomes

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

2

### Provision

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

2

### Leadership

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

2



Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and show interest, engagement, and enthusiasm. This results in good behaviour and strong attitudes to learning. Pupils are secure in their knowledge and understanding and make good progress because they know more and remember more of what they have covered. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well in all age-phases. This reflects the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012*. There is a good level of age-appropriate religious literacy from Nursery to Year 6. Pupils use their knowledge of scripture to support their learning well. However, access to Bible resources is limited so pupils do not have opportunities to increase their familiarity with scripture. Where pupils have opportunities for spiritual reflection during lessons they participate respectfully. Pupils respond to the challenge of learning and are able to speak with confidence and ask good questions of adults and peers. This leads to enhanced learning. Pupils' most recent work is presented well and increasingly shows that they are taking opportunities to show initiative and creativity in their learning although this is not yet consistent across all classes. Pupils know how well they are doing, aided by attainment grids in their books, and consistently take the steps they need to take to improve their work.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge and are committed to the value of religious education. They readily take advantage of opportunities to deepen their knowledge through high quality professional development. Teachers plan the curriculum effectively so that it is linked to pupils' prior knowledge. As a result, pupils learn well. Effective questioning in lessons leads to improved learning as tasks are adapted in response to pupils' understanding. Some opportunities to adapt questions to extend pupils' learning are missed. A consistent and effective approach to marking pupils' work means that pupils are effectively guided to where

they need to make improvements in their work. High quality work and responses during lessons are celebrated, leading to well-motivated pupils. In some workbooks there is an over-reliance on prescriptive approaches to recording learning. The school recognises the need to provide pupils with greater opportunities to respond with a variety of forms of expression. Teachers provide opportunities for space and time for reflection during lessons. There is a strong sense of teamwork and staff regularly seek out support from each other or from school leaders to enhance teaching and learning.

The subject leader has a clear vision, high expectations and plans for the development of religious education. She ensures that the curriculum faithfully reflects the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012*. Recent work on ensuring that the curriculum matches age-related expectations has been effective in raising standards. The subject lead has identified this as a key part of the action plan for religious education in order to increase the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels. School leaders ensure that the subject has at least core parity with other curriculum subjects in terms of timetabling, resourcing and esteem. The effective development of policies on marking and presentation of work are impacting positively on whole school practice. Leaders ensure good provision for the bespoke professional development of staff. The impact of this can be seen in the recent and rapid improvements in the quality of pupils' work. Staff report greater confidence in using this training to enrich learning opportunities. School leaders are rigorous in their evaluation of the school's work in this area leading to well-planned actions. Governors visit the school regularly to hold school leaders to account and are well-informed about improvement plans.

## Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

### 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

Pupils of all ages actively and consciously participate in prayer and liturgy. They are attentive and respond respectfully and reverently. They enjoy opportunities to reflect in silence, with one pupil saying that she values opportunities for prayer because 'it is time to be peaceful'. Another pupil commented that prayer and liturgy is important because 'it brings our school together'. Pupils join in prayer with confidence. They understand the structure which the school uses for liturgical prayer sessions and are increasingly adept at planning and leading prayer and liturgy. Opportunities for pupils to lead prayer and liturgy are embedded as part of school life. Adults help pupils to reflect on prayer experiences and to evaluate the quality of the prayer and liturgy they plan. This leads to a shared understanding of what constitutes high quality prayer and liturgy. Older and more experienced pupils from the Mini-Vinnies group model good practice to younger pupils. Pupils understand how prayer and liturgy is structured around the Church's liturgical year. Pupils work well with adults to plan the prayer spaces which are evident in each classroom by selecting resources which are reflective of the liturgical season. The value placed on these is exemplified in one religious education lesson when a child in early years knelt beside the prayer space to pray spontaneously.

A clear plan for prayer and liturgy, including half-termly Masses to which families are invited, ensures that this is central to the life of the school. The rhythm of the prayer life of the Church is reflected in the daily pattern of prayer which is evident across the school. A range of ways of praying which reflect the Catholic tradition of the school are used to enrich prayer and liturgy. Every classroom has a prayer space and care is taken to ensure that these spaces are used appropriately and are central to the class. In one lesson a large number of early years pupils set up their own prayer spaces, reflecting their secure knowledge and enthusiasm for

prayer. Staff use their knowledge of scripture to ensure that passages reflecting the liturgical season form the heart of prayer and liturgy and enable full participation by pupils. Adults model good practice in leading liturgy and are supported themselves through professional development that impacts on provision in this area. The school uses classroom spaces well and occasionally uses outdoor spaces for prayer and liturgy. This is mainly with younger pupils and there is scope for the school to enrich prayer and liturgy further through using the school's outdoor spaces more imaginatively.

School leaders have established a clear policy and programme for prayer and liturgy which guides all staff involved in preparing and leading liturgies. They have a clear understanding of the different levels and skills reflective of the age and capacity of pupils to lead prayer and liturgy. Professional development for staff is well-targeted and well-received by the staff team. School leaders have recently invested in high quality resources. The school works closely with the parish priest and parish catechists to arrange half-termly Masses and sacramental preparations. Members of the school community are able to access Mass and other liturgies. Governors are regular visitors and participants and have an overview of the school's programme for prayer and liturgy. However, formal evaluation of the quality and impact of prayer and liturgy does not happen regularly. The views of pupils are regularly sought after prayer and liturgy services, and this informs future planning.

## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Chad's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148281
Full postal address of the school	Baltic Road, Witton Park, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham, DL14 0EP
School phone number	01388 603632
Name of head teacher or principal	Miss Jenna Ellison, Executive Head
Chair of governing board	Mr Simon Jackson
School Website	<a href="http://www.stchads.bhcet.org.uk">www.stchads.bhcet.org.uk</a>
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Trustees	Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	November 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

## The inspection team

Michael Ewing

Lead inspector

Sonia Fraser

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