

# St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School

URN: 401642

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Archbishop of Cardiff-Menevia

21–22 May 2025

## 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

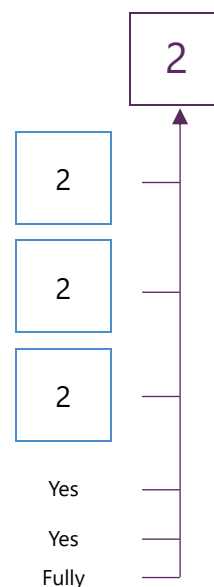
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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



## Compliance statement

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- This school fully complies with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- This school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocese.
- This school has fully addressed all previous areas for improvement.

## What the school does well

- The welcoming and inclusive culture evident at St Cuthbert's is excellent. The way that pupils from richly diverse backgrounds are supported, within a strong Catholic ethos, is remarkable. This results in a very happy community in which all children benefit from being highly valued.
- The behaviour of pupils is excellent. They respect the dignity of themselves, their peers, staff, and visitors.
- The manner in which pupils conduct themselves during times of prayer and worship is highly impressive. They are very respectful. This results in the creation of a prayerful atmosphere in which pupils are able to pray, reflect, and sing joyfully.
- The range of pedagogical strategies used in religious education (RE) lessons is broad. Consequently, pupils benefit from learning in an impressive variety of ways.
- The determination and diligent work of leaders, over an extended period of time, has resulted in a significant raising of standards across the school.

## What the school needs to improve

- Increase the analytical rigour of monitoring, evaluating, and reviewing procedures, to ensure that it has a direct impact on the raising of standards.
- Raise the level of teachers' questioning skills to ensure that they contribute to the extension of learners' understanding.
- Increase the engagement level of the full governing body in the life of the school.

## 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

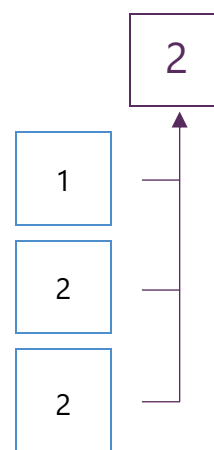
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

#### 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



The manner in which pupils conduct themselves within the unique Catholic environment that has been created at St Cuthbert's school is outstanding. They fully embrace the challenges that this involves in everyday life. Their demeanour and active participation greatly enhance the Catholic life and mission of the school. Pupils are happy to be members of the school, and they are able to articulate clearly how they are cared for as precious creations of God. They understand that they are expected to follow the example of Jesus, and they reference the virtues when discussing this; during the inspection, for example, they spoke about the ways that they were being 'compassionate and loving', linking this to previous lessons. Learners are making good progress in developing an understanding of Catholic social teaching and the demands that this makes to support those in need. Consequently, they play an active role in a range of charitable work in relation to Cafod, local foodbanks, Christian Aid, the British Red Cross, and guide dogs training, for example. Pupils show deep levels of respect for their own personal dignity and for that of others. The community is very diverse, and pupils value one another, regardless of ethnicity or religious background. Their behaviour is exemplary.

Staff are committed to the delivery of the school's mission statement and their efforts help to ensure that Christ is at the heart of its work and that a warm culture of welcome is in place. The work done to welcome and support children from a range of cultures and religious backgrounds is excellent. The work of the school's Nurture Officer, when supporting the most vulnerable, is particularly fruitful. Staff provide positive role models for pupils. Through their relationships and their care for children, they bear a strong witness to the life and mission of the school. The environment that has been created is very clearly Catholic in nature, and the building is filled with appropriate and engaging displays; many offering opportunities for prayer and reflection. Every classroom has simple, effective areas in place that provide focal points for group and individual worship. The work of staff ensures that pupils' moral and spiritual development is strong. This was clearly evident through the conversations that

inspectors had with a range of pupils during the inspection. The school has secure arrangements in place to provide relationships and sex education (RSE) and these are fully compliant with diocesan expectations.

Leaders and governors see the development of the school's Catholic life and mission as a core purpose of their roles, and their work, as guardians of it, is admirable. Leaders respond well to diocesan initiatives and implement them effectively; being a part of the Pilgrims of Hope programme, for example, during this Jubilee Year. Leaders communicate well with parents, who are invited into school for occasions such as class assemblies and May Processions. Questionnaires returned as a part of the inspection indicate that parents are grateful for the school's work and that they are supportive of leaders. The long-serving head teacher is very committed to her role, and she ensures that the school supports those who are most in need, in line with the principles of Catholic social teaching. Leaders and governors show respect for the dignity of workers at the school. This is appreciated by staff, who feel well supported to carry out their roles. The experienced chair of governors is very committed to his role and he skilfully supports the work of leaders. He carries a significant amount of governorship workload. Self-evaluation in this area reflects an accurate understanding of the school's work.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

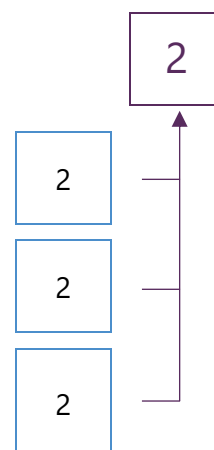
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



Overall, pupils make good progress in their learning, both within academic years and as they move through the school. Pupils show high levels of engagement in their learning. The way they relate the content of the curriculum to life outside school is a particular strength. Pupils spoke confidently, for example, about the need to be compassionate and loving towards those who are poor and hungry. Many learners are able to use subject-specific vocabulary well, speaking about the Annunciation and the concept of discipleship, for example. Older pupils can work independently, for extended periods of time, in a very mature way. This is an excellent feature of their learning experiences. Standards are good, and learning outcomes in books are presented well. The quality of extended writing is good and a minority of it is excellent. Impressive examples include younger learners' work on 'The Road to Emmaus' story and older pupils' writing that linked the beatitudes to a range of scripture texts. Pupils enjoy their learning and they take pride in it. They have a reasonably good understanding of how well they are doing. Standards in RE compare well with those in other core areas of the curriculum.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There is some variability in the quality of teachers' subject knowledge. This is reflected, at times, in teachers' explanations to learners. Staff show high levels of commitment to the value of RE and their relationships with pupils are positive. The quality of planning is good; it has benefitted from the work done with cluster school partners. This work is currently ongoing. The way teachers question learners does not take sufficient advantage of opportunities to clarify learning points and to deepen understanding by, for example, challenging pupils to explain or to justify responses. Teachers' marking consistently demands a written response from pupils, in line with school policy. This is good practice, however, this approach results, at times, in other strategies that are likely to be of greater benefit to learners not being utilised. At these times, there is a focus on process rather than on progress. The school's promotion of pupils' moral and spiritual development is strong. This is very clearly reflected in the way that children are able to speak on a

range of moral matters. Throughout the school, teaching assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and they have developed an impressive level of rapport with them.

Leaders and governors ensure that provision in RE is faithful to the expectations laid out in the *Religious Education Directory* and they have co-ordinated partner collaboration work with cluster schools well. Consequently, planning is good, but this partnership work has not yet arrived at a position of clarity in relation to best practice in assessment of the curriculum. Good use is made of training opportunities provided by the diocese, in relation to curricular development and to supporting staff who are new to Catholic schools, for example. The subject leader for RE works tirelessly in her role and she has made a significant contribution towards the raising of standards across the school. The self-evaluation document produced by leaders is lengthy and descriptive in nature. It accurately reflects what is happening, but it lacks the sort of analytical approach that allows the identification of clear targets for development. The monitoring work carried out by leaders is regular and diligently completed. However, it does not directly result sufficiently in the raising of standards. The chair of governors shows impressive levels of knowledge in relation to standards. However, the governing body, as a whole, is not sufficiently involved in this process in a direct way.

## Collective worship

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

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

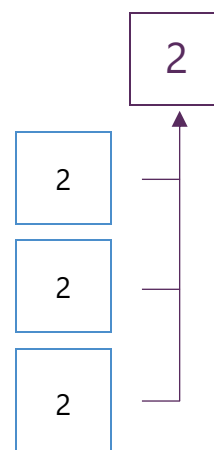
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship



Pupils display a very positive attitude towards prayer and liturgy. They take part actively, with enthusiasm, and they sing well. The level of respect and reverence they show at these times is an outstanding feature of collective worship at St Cuthbert's. This is particularly noteworthy as only 10% of pupils are baptised Catholics. Pupils benefit from experiencing an increasingly broad range of prayer in the Catholic tradition. They are able to meditate well for extended periods of time, and they use the Examen for reflection on a daily basis. Pupils respond well when given opportunities to plan acts of prayer and worship, in partnership with staff. The 'pupil chaplains' take an active role in this process, and they are rightly proud of their work. During the inspection, for example, pupils organised and led a very moving and prayerful May Procession, with the mission being to 'be grateful for our mothers and to let them know that we love them', and a very good class led reflection on how to be 'loving and compassionate'. Pupils benefit from having the opportunity to evaluate the quality of prayer and worship after these events, and many are able to link these experiences to actions taken to support the vulnerable.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and a daily rhythm of prayer is firmly established. Staff ensure that the Gospel is at the heart of worship. Variability in levels of subject knowledge mean that some staff do not take opportunities to discuss fully with pupils the key and rich messages that the scripture referenced have the potential to yield. Staff work well and earnestly to support pupils to plan their own acts of prayer and worship, according to their own levels of subject knowledge. Live music does not feature in the school's daily worship, but good use is made of a range of online resources, and pupils benefit from the expanding range of hymns that are used. In the excellent May Procession, for example, beautiful Marian hymns were sung, including the traditional 'Bring Flowers of the Rarest'. Very good use of the environment has been made to create appropriate prayer spaces throughout the school and in the grounds. During the inspection, for example, corridor space was

used to encourage reflection on the work of Pope Francis and to allow for prayer for the pontificate of Pope Leo XIV.

Leaders and governors have ensured that an appropriate policy is in place to allow pupils to develop their skills of participation in prayer and worship. They plan well for a range of opportunities to celebrate occasions linked to the Liturgical Year and they exhibit a commitment to the Eucharist. They endeavour to work in partnership with their parish (St David's Metropolitan Cathedral), and older pupils regularly walk there for the Mass. Their work has resulted in the quality of collective worship being good. The subject leader is skilled in leading prayer and worship; she is an able model for colleagues. However, further use of these skills should be made to professionally develop others. Leaders have done well to ensure that budgetary resources are used to develop an environment that is conducive to good quality prayer and worship. Monitoring work takes place in this area; however, it is not sufficiently rigorous and it doesn't show clear results, in terms of directly raising the quality of prayer and worship across the school. Governors do not play a full role in this work, and there is a degree of reliance on the work of the chair of governors. Self-evaluation is detailed and plentiful but insufficiently analytical.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	401642
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	6813323
Full postal address of the school	St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, Letton Way, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff, CF10 4AB
School phone number	02920463234
Headteacher	Bernadette Brooks
Chair of governors	Paul Newbury
School Website	<a href="http://www.stcuthberts.co.uk">www.stcuthberts.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	25 – 27 April 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	AU

## The inspection team

Lyndon Watkins  
Diana Pearce

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

