



# St Oswald's Catholic Primary School South Shields

URN: 148911

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Bishop Stephen Wright, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle

02–03 July 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

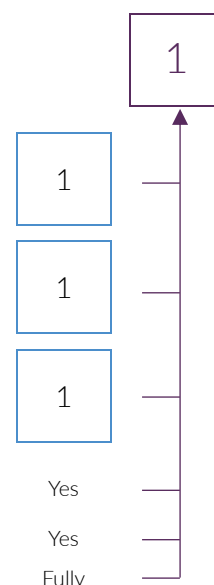
#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

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

## What the school does well

- St Oswald's Catholic Primary School has a strong Catholic, holistic approach to nurturing and developing their pupils.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for every pupil to succeed. Significantly, they place equal importance and value upon developing every pupil spiritually, morally, academically, socially and emotionally.
- All staff celebrate pupils' efforts and achievements and consequently, pupils are highly motivated in religious education lessons.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to the daily life of pupils and staff; older pupils lead formal prayer and liturgy confidently and with reverence. They are positive and passionate role models for younger pupils.

## What the school needs to improve

- Enhance opportunities for pupils to develop the skills needed to know how to critically analyse and deepen their religious understanding.
- Provide further opportunities for pupils to express themselves through more independent and pupil-led creative 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

#### 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 fully embrace the Catholic life and mission of St Oswald's Catholic Primary School. They are clearly valued and cared for and as a result pupils are happy, confident and feel secure. They are passionate defenders of their common home and speak enthusiastically about how they work together to support both local and international charities. Furthermore, pupils are openly generous and committed to making their world a better and more inclusive place. This is evident in the way that they actively welcome all newcomers to school. Pupils benefit from interfaith visits both within and beyond their local communities, increasing their respect for all people. They actively participate in all the wider opportunities presented to them. St Oswald's mission statement, 'We walk in the footsteps of Jesus, so that we may have life in all its fullness,' is central to the whole school community. The daily life and mission of the school is deeply rooted in the teachings of Christ, and this is evident in the way that pupils are encouraged at every opportunity to put their faith into action. Pupils benefit from the school's Catholic identity which is upheld by everyone in school. The dignity of the human person from the youngest to the oldest is lived out daily as all pupils are valued as individuals in the eyes of God.

Creative staff provide a wide variety of enrichment opportunities, enabling pupils to reflect on the mission of the school and its role in the wider community. Staff create warm relationships with pupils and are committed to creating a joyful living place to be, where everyone is valued. Staff encourage pupils to speak out and defend the disadvantaged in society. The school environment includes attractive and well considered displays which clearly and explicitly reflects this mission. Furthermore, the school emphasises the education of the whole person, it plans a detailed and extensive programme of faith opportunities for both staff and pupils to develop spiritually and morally. The relationship, sex and health education programme of study

promotes the school's holistic vision of the human person. Consequently, pupils can confidently voice what they have learned in lessons, putting it into practice in their lives.

Leaders are clear in their belief that they are guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school and ensure that all the policies and procedures reflect this. They are committed to the ideal that the school is there to serve their local community and most especially, they are extremely proud of how this helps them pay particular care to the most vulnerable. Additionally, leaders embrace the bishop's vision for Catholic schools within the diocese. Leaders and governors work in partnership to embed the links between parish and school. Governors and their families are a wonderful support and an essential part of St Oswald's. This working partnership ensures that pupils understand why they should look after their common home. For example, pupils go out at the weekend to participate in beach litter picks. The modelling of Catholic social teaching by all leaders, brings charitable enterprise and the need to campaign for what is fair and just into reality. Leaders publicly recognise and value pupils who have independently put their faith into action through the recent addition of the externally nominated weekly Catholic Social Teaching Award. They are fully committed to both the physical and mental wellbeing of their staff and ensure excellence through high quality staff training. Leaders guarantee that all stakeholders take an active role in the school improvement cycle. Consequently, everyone understands and is fully supportive of the shared purpose of the Catholic life and mission of St Oswald's.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

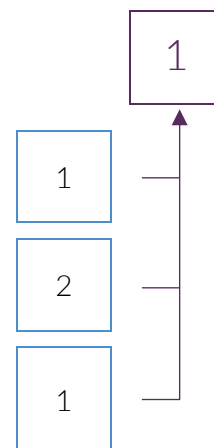
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 are knowledgeable, confident and religiously literate in their religious education lessons. As a result, they are learning more, and the vast majority are remembering more. They are committed to improving their knowledge and understanding. Therefore, they show resilience and a commitment to become very competent and independent learners. Pupils have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They are producing work which shows that they value their religious education, which is always presented to a high standard. Pupils are very aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life; they speak fluently and with passion about how they can live out their new learning. As they progress through school, pupils grow in confidence, and by the time they leave, they are articulate, confident learners who embrace challenge and concentrate well. Pupils are actively engaged in their learning and are enthusiastic when expressing their ideas using scripture. For example, a lower Key Stage 2 pupil explained that, 'Religious education lessons help me to understand the Bible, which makes me feel loved by God.'

Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and are generous in sharing their expertise. They are truly committed and passionate about religious education; and communicate this to the pupils. Planning and assessment are used accurately to create detailed sequences of learning. In the very best lessons, accurate and precise explanations of tasks enable teachers to maximise the learning opportunities. All staff celebrate the effort of pupils both in class and as a wider school and parish community. Teachers fully and clearly understand the impact that religious education has on both the moral and spiritual development of all their pupils. They are creative and imaginative in finding ways to optimise the learning for all pupils regardless of their starting points. Quality resources and carefully adapted tasks ensure that pupils can present their learning in a variety of forms. Scripture is consistently used and staff model great respect

and reverence when reading from the Bible. As a result, even the youngest nursery children understand that it contains the word of God. The provision of religious education is not outstanding yet as there are limited opportunities given to enable pupils to make deeper and more purposeful connections and reflections in lessons.

Leaders ensure that the school curriculum is well planned and imaginative and it follows the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. They are passionate in their ambition for high standards across the school. Leaders have taken time to consider and plan a comprehensive strategy for the implementation of prayer and liturgy ensuring that it is systematic and progressive as it moves up through the year groups. Pupils in Year 6 leave the school confident in their ability to lead prayer in a variety of different ways. Moreover, leaders ensure that all staff access high quality professional development on a regular basis ensuring that religious education is taught to the highest possible standard. All leaders embrace the same vision for excellence in teaching and learning, and they actively encourage the sharing of good practice across the school. This peer coaching serves to ensure that the teaching of religious education is at least consistently good. Leaders and governors take part in a detailed and systematic monitoring process ensuring that strategic actions and well-targeted development leads to strong outcomes for pupils. Senior leaders are called upon by Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust to share their knowledge and experience in leading a visionary Catholic school.

## 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 actively participate in prayer and liturgy and are confident when leading structured worship across the school. They are attentive, respectful and engage joyfully in communal singing to celebrate the word. All pupils are confident in expressing themselves through prayer. Additionally, they fully understand the shape and meaning of the liturgical year and how it is expressed in school. They work collaboratively with teachers to prepare well-planned opportunities for prayer and liturgy. Furthermore, pupils can confidently evaluate these reflective prayerful experiences. The older pupils are particularly confident in linking prayer to scripture and can explain how they can be developed further. Pupils are given the opportunity to lead prayer and liturgy in a variety of ways. They are well supported by staff and work in partnership with the parish enhancing their celebrations using music and creative prayer. The relationship between parish and school is enhanced as families are regularly invited to joint celebrations. Pupils can confidently make links between lessons and scriptural choices in celebrations of the word, and they understand that sharing prayers is meaningful and profound. Older pupils can say with confidence, how prayer and liturgy has influenced them, for example, a Key Stage 2 pupil explained that prayer and liturgy is, 'An opportunity for Jesus to lead us through the darkness and out into the light.'

The centrality of prayer and liturgy is clear across the school with parents, pupils, staff and leaders all agreeing that this joint experience of daily prayer is meaningful. One governor reported that, 'Prayer is so embedded in the school's daily life that it is the life blood of the school, it creates a meaningful rhythm to the school day.' Parents enjoy joining prayer and liturgy opportunities with their children and they all spoke very highly of this shared prayerful experience. School recognises its role in the community as being an important influence in the spiritual development of others and provides many opportunities for parents to actively

participate in these religious experiences. Celebrations of the word are integral to the spiritual life of St Oswald's with the appropriate scripture being used. In addition, all staff are involved in the daily pattern of prayer across the school and share this excellent understanding of the norms of the Church with their pupils. Staff use their talents and skills to enhance the provision ensuring pupils see the importance placed upon worshiping together. Furthermore, music, prayer and scripture are all used by adults to reflect the riches of the Church. Staff make imaginative and creative use of the spaces around the school enabling pupils and staff to pray at all opportunities. This is particularly evident where the prayer garden is used regularly to give pupils and staff an opportunity to explore and develop their faith; pupils are extremely proud of this space. However, pupils have limited opportunity to express themselves through creative and independent prayer.

All staff feel supported and enabled to flourish through the guidance of leaders. They are fully committed to the centrality of prayer and liturgy, and staff confidently take turns in leading relevant and age-appropriate prayer. Leaders consciously place great value upon the Church's liturgical resources ensuring that prayer and liturgy is given the highest importance across all year groups. The leadership of sacramental preparation for First Holy Communion and Reconciliation is undertaken by the parish and this is actively promoted and supported by school staff. There is a relentless drive for excellence in which all stakeholders participate. This is specifically evident in the school's highly effective self-evaluation model which it uses to inform and plan further whole school improvement.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Oswald's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148911
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3933305
Full postal address of the school	St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Nash Avenue, Whiteleas, South Shields, NE34 8NS
School phone number	01915367922
Headteacher	Dominic Woodhouse
Chair of local governing body	Patricia Alexander
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-oswaldsrcsch.co.uk">www.st-oswaldsrcsch.co.uk</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Chadwick 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	November 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Allyson Thorpe  
Kirsty Evans

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