



St Aidan's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148504

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

10 June 2026 – 11 June 2026

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 RE

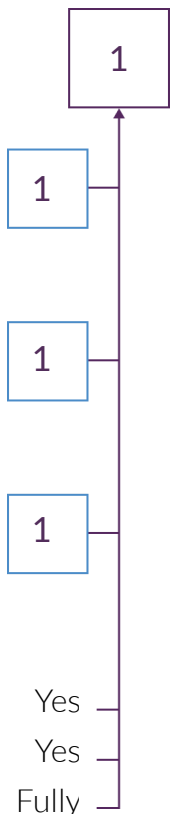
Collective worship (p.7)

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



What the school does well

- The headteacher is exceptional in the support and dedication she gives to the pupils, families and staff in her care. She inspires others to have the highest expectations and aspirations for pupils.
- The pastoral care shown to all pupils and their families by all staff is exemplary. Pupils know that they are 'surrounded by people who show love,' because staff ensure that the mission statement is a lived expression of the culture of the school.
- Pupils respond generously to the demands of Catholic social teaching. This is underpinned by a rich and broad curriculum which provides opportunities for pupils to respond to scripture to put their faith into action.
- Staff provide meaningful and well-sequenced religious education lessons that promote the religious literacy and deep knowledge of all learners.
- Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of school life and pupils engage enthusiastically because they understand its importance and value. This is further strengthened by the contribution of parents and the wider parish community.

What the school needs to improve

- Provide opportunities for pupils to use the Bible as a foundational source to deepen their theological understanding.
- Ensure that consistently clear explanations in lessons and appropriate task design enable all pupils to make sustained progress.
- Appropriate to their age, ensure pupils experience rich and varied ways of praying to support the spiritual development of all.

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 Catholic life and mission of St Aidan's Catholic Primary School is deeply embedded in all aspects of school life. A strong, welcoming and inclusive Catholic culture is at the heart. The school mission statement, 'In the love and truth of Jesus we grow,' is very well known and understood by all. Consequently, pupils can clearly articulate how the mission is informed by gospel teachings and lived out by the whole school community. Pupils confidently make links between their actions and those of Christ, and the school's values of respect, tolerance, honesty, courage and resilience further serve to form them to be kind, considerate and aspirational. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary because they are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, and to take care of one another. They have a generous regard for others, particularly those most in need. They are rightly proud of their charitable acts and can explain clearly the principles of Catholic social teaching. Pupils highly respect those of other faiths and cultures. Pupils know that they are truly valued and that their opinions are listened and responded to. As a result, they are proud to take up leadership responsibilities, including as Mini Vinnies, Cafod Club members, house captains, play leaders and school councillors.

Staff are exemplary role models and provide the highest quality pastoral care. They model exceptional relationships rooted in Christian love. As a result, pupils know that they are made uniquely in the image of God and this is something to be celebrated. All staff embrace the responsibility of chaplaincy, recognising the responsibility to 'enable pupils to be fulfilled, well-rounded and enthusiastic' in their faith. Consequently, pupils feel confident and comfortable in their prayer life. Staff create a rich environment which exemplifies the Catholic

character of the school, providing opportunities for pupils to reflect and discern. Thought provoking displays celebrate Catholic social teaching and offer interactive prayer opportunities which inspire pupils. Care and attention are given to ensure that all are welcomed, and staff enthusiastically and generously attend to the needs of all members of the community. This is highly valued by parents who recognise that school is 'a truly wonderful environment for our children to grow; a wonderful Catholic ethos'. Staff willingly give their time to help pupils to grow in virtue and therefore every member of the school family is supported to thrive. Staff ensure that they facilitate opportunities for pupils to actively serve others and 'make Gospel values part of the daily lives of our children.'

Leaders are inspirational in the way they ensure that Christ is at the heart of school life, and they have a deep commitment to care for all pupils, most notably the vulnerable. They therefore successfully support the Church's mission. The headteacher is an authentic witness of the gospel, epitomising servant leadership, and is highly dedicated to ensuring that pupils experience an enriching Catholic education that provides excellent formation. Leaders ensure that staff are treated with respect and dignity, and this results in a highly motivated and committed team who recognise that they are 'heard and valued.' Leaders diligently ensure that all staff receive high quality induction and training. They share their vision with clarity and enthusiasm and, as a result, all staff are highly committed to contributing to and benefitting from the Catholic ethos. Governors are highly involved in monitoring and evaluating the Catholic character of the school and they ensure that there are strong partnerships with the local parish, diocese and Bishop Bewick Catholic Education. They maintain the school mission at the root of all strategic decisions and consequently, there is a lived sense of justice and respect which is reflected in school policies and procedures.

Religious education

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 key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

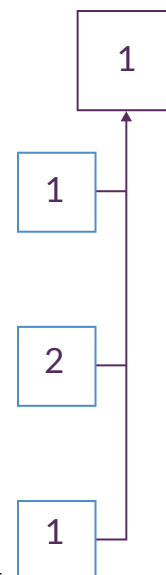
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

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



Expectations in religious education lessons are clear, and no learning time is lost as behaviour is excellent in classes. Lessons are interesting and therefore pupils engage well and enjoy learning. Pupils make insightful comments and reflect thoughtfully on challenging questions. They have a deep knowledge of religious beliefs and traditions because lessons are well-planned and progressive. Pupils are able to build on prior learning, typically making sustained progress within the taught curriculum. Their learning is well-embedded so they can retrieve knowledge over time. Pupils are eager to learn and deepen their understanding, making links and reflecting on the actions of believers, as is appropriate to their age. They use religious vocabulary confidently because this is taught explicitly and because there are frequent opportunities to use and apply subject-specific words in context. They produce work of a high standard and respond well to feedback. They demonstrate pride in their work and present it well. Pupils are able to reflect on what they have been taught and can apply their learning to their own lives. Consequently, they are particularly aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils explain that 'We learn about what Jesus did and carry out His actions in a modern way.'

Teachers have a secure subject knowledge as a consequence of high-quality induction and training. They plan progressive learning opportunities, adapting tasks and teaching to support inclusion. Lessons are consistently well structured as a consequence of a whole-school approach to lesson expectations. Tasks are varied and provide opportunities to reflect spiritually and theologically. However, there are some inconsistencies in explanations and in

task design which lead to missed learning opportunities. Whilst scripture references are included in lessons, pupils are not consistently provided with opportunities to explore authentic translations of the bible and therefore there are limited opportunities to deepen their understanding of scripture. Pupils are given encouragement that motivates them to work well and staff provide effective feedback. Pupils are therefore helped to know and remember more, and to deepen their knowledge over time. Staff include opportunities for deep thinking and discussion, frequently challenging pupils with insightful questions which develop an understanding of complex concepts. Pupils are therefore able to discern and express personal opinion. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths and cultures, so that pupils are prepared for life in a diverse world. Lessons are enriched by members of the community who share their faith story authentically.

Leaders inspire staff through a shared vision and strategic direction which is aspirational. They involve all members of the school community in evaluating the impact of religious education lessons and they undertake rigorous and systematic monitoring to identify strengths and areas of development. They are therefore able to respond swiftly and strategically to sustain school improvement. This is further underpinned by their precise understanding of curriculum expectations and effective pedagogy. Leaders conduct rigorous pupil progress meetings to ensure that standards are ambitious. They have embedded clear policies and procedures, including a consistent lesson structure, to ensure that teaching is effective and supports the development of all pupils. Leaders are passionate and eagerly support staff to develop the relevant knowledge and skills needed to embed secure learning. Governors are regular visitors and they are therefore well informed when making decisions. They invest in meaningful professional development and resources so that staff have the knowledge and skills to grow in confidence and competence. This is highly valued by staff, who feel 'nothing but supported' by relevant, bespoke training. Leaders further support staff by implementing opportunities for peer coaching, team teaching and modelled lessons; teachers feel that, 'this has been transformative.'

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

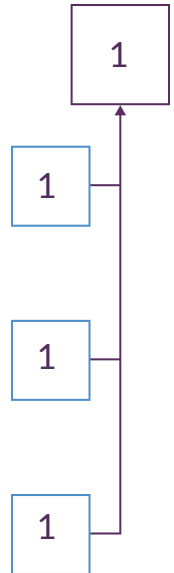
How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

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



Prayer is central to the life of the school and pupils participate with eagerness and reverence. They sing enthusiastically and join in well with communal prayers. They undertake ministries confidently and can plan and lead celebrations of the word competently because they are given effective support. They have an understanding of the liturgical year and are therefore able to prepare appropriate prayer experiences, using what they have learned in lessons to support this. Pupils are encouraged to reflect thoughtfully on the impact that prayer has on them. They also recognise that prayer is a time when they can reflect on the needs of others, 'When we can think of other people - they need us and we can make a good contribution to their lives... by our prayers.' Pupils evaluate celebrations with maturity and use their reflections to inform future planning. They are able to respond to the prayer opportunities offered to them, and prayer leaders eagerly support the spiritual development of others. This is highly valued by parents who recognise the profound impact the prayer life of the school has on their child, and also on their family. Parents feel that, 'We have the opportunity to dialogue with our children about faith.'

Staff create prayerful spaces across the school that signify the centrality of prayer. These enable pupils to respond and reflect and consequently feel confident to pray. Thoughtful and well-constructed prayer and liturgy, enhanced by well-chosen scripture passages, are at the heart of school life. Staff are inspiring role models because they have a depth of understanding of the liturgical norms of the Church as a result of meaningful professional development. They ensure that a sense of reverence pervades. Traditional prayers, including a May procession and stations of the cross have recently been introduced. However, further

creative and varied prayer opportunities are limited. Consequently, pupils have a limited range of prayer experiences to draw upon when deepening their personal spiritual development. Staff encourage pupils to be confident when leading celebrations of the word and, as a result, pupils are enthusiastic and uplifted by the experiences. Pupils are joined by parishioners for Mass regularly, and the priests of the parish are welcome visitors. As a result, there is a flourishing partnership with the parish, where 'school is an extension of the church'. Staff generously involve families in the prayer life of the school, including through Stay and Pray sessions, and parents greatly appreciate the profound impact this has.

The centrality of prayer experiences and liturgical celebrations across the year reflect the priority leaders give to the formation of every member of the school community. Because they rigorously monitor provision for prayer and liturgy, leaders ensure that staff and pupils have meaningful opportunities to pray and develop spiritually. They prioritise professional development to ensure that staff are able to provide prayer experiences that are engaging and uplifting. They also have a secure understanding of the capacity of pupils and have therefore developed opportunities which promote the participation and leadership of pupils as they mature. Leaders inspire the school community to celebrate feast days and global initiatives, including the Year of St Francis, with joy and enthusiasm. They are excellent role models, and they ensure that the school's prayer and liturgy policy is relevant and applied well. Their support for staff in school is highly valued, and as a result, all are building confidence in their role as faith leaders. Leaders, including governors, regularly consult with parents and pupils to discern the impact of the prayer life offered in school and consequently, they reflect the needs of the community when preparing their annual plan for prayer and liturgy.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Aidan's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148504
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9293726
Full postal address of the school	Moorhouse Lane, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9LR
School phone number	01670 813308
Headteacher or Head of School	Mrs Julie Teer
Chair of Governors	Ms Ann Howe
School Website	www.st-aidans.northumberland.sch.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Bewick 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	08 February 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	Outstanding

The Inspection Team

Barbara Reilly-O'Donnell Lead

Thomas Gillingham

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