



# St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School

URN: 148282

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

19–20 November 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

3

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

3

2

2

#### 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

Yes

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully



## Compliance statement

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

## What the school does well

- St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School is a warm and welcoming Catholic community.
- This highly inclusive school ensures that all members of the community are valued as unique individuals.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are mutually nurturing and is rooted in Gospel values.
- Pupil led worship is a key strength. They fully participate in all aspects of prayer and liturgy.
- Leaders are realistic about the challenges that the school faces and are determined to provide an authentic Catholic religious education for all.

## What the school needs to improve

- Develop a more coherent and consistent approach to the Catholic life of the school, enabling all in the community to comprehensively show their care for the common good.
- Ensure all staff have the skills and knowledge to consistently deliver a varied and creative high-quality religious education curriculum.
- A clear framework for progression in expectations for pupil leadership of prayer and liturgy is required to ensure consistency.

## 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

3

#### Provision

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

3

2

3

#### Leadership

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

3

Pupils are very happy at St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School and feel safe and secure. There is consistently good behaviour from pupils of all ages, both in classrooms and at more informal moments of the school day, such as in the playground. Pupils recognise their own self-worth as members of God's family. One pupil stated, 'We can make the right choice and show each other that everyone is valued, and everyone is the same.' Pupils are able to quote the school mission statement; however, pupils are unable to express how the school's distinct Catholic identity impacts upon their lives, and subsequently, their sense of personal responsibility is not clear. Pupils possess very limited understanding of Catholic social teaching and have been offered limited opportunities to support those in need, both at a local and global level. Some opportunities, such as collecting money for the Royal British Legion, have been welcomed by pupils, and some can communicate how they would like greater involvement in leading these events. Pupils respect the varied cultures and faiths in the school, with one pupil stating, 'We are all a big family, even if you don't believe the same things as me.'

The school is at the heart of this community and is highly valued by parents. One parent stated that they chose this school specifically due to the warm welcome afforded by staff on their initial visit with their children. St Wilfrid's has a deep culture of welcome, starting with the enthusiastic approach from office staff, who go above and beyond in their roles. School provides a warm home to a diverse and sometimes vulnerable community, and its approach is fully inclusive. Staff are a committed team, who know and value the school's mission statement. However, there are limited opportunities provided for them to fully enhance the

Catholic life and mission of the school. Staff always act as positive role models for others and provide a high standard of pastoral care, especially to those children and families most in need. They show consistent support and love for each and every child in the school. Recent changes to the school's physical environment have ensured that pupils access a safe and welcoming space to learn. Pupils access a good relationships, sex and health education curriculum, which adheres to the requirements set out by the Church, and also gives pupils a safe medium to share their concerns or worries.

Leaders, including governors, are enthusiastic and determined to promote the Catholic life of the school. Diocesan and Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust (BBCET) links are strong, with clear valued communication and support evident, whilst engagement with the parish is improving, with increasing opportunities for pupils to attend the local church. School works harmoniously with parents to support and educate their children and to bring them to know themselves as children of God. One parent stated, 'I look forward to watching my child's religious journey through this school and making the sacraments as she goes through her school life.' Staff feel that they are appreciated, cared for and valued. Leaders recognise that an updated approach to their delivery of Catholic social teaching principles is required and they are currently working on this. It is further recognised that a more systematic monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of Catholic life and mission is needed. Professional development is not consistently planned for due to insufficient self-evaluation taking place. School leaders and governors are being supported by BBCET to address these areas.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

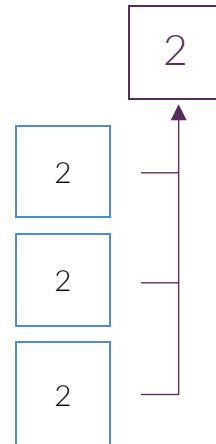
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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 enjoy their learning in religious education and see it as a special subject, with one pupil commenting, 'I like to learn about Jesus and what he has done, and the impact this has on my decisions.' In most classes, pupils engage well and are responsive, with them having opportunities to answer and discuss the questions posed by the teacher, therefore developing their religious literacy. However, in a number of classes, pupil engagement declines when the pace of learning is slow and there is too much teacher talk. Pupils can confidently discuss their learning and were able to talk about the aspects of religious education that they could remember from previous lessons. Pupils' presentation of work is of a good standard in most classes and show some signs of emerging individuality, for example, in Year 2 where pupils presented work based on listening to and reflecting upon music. Whilst pupils know how well they are doing; not all can talk about what they need to do to improve. Staff do not always ensure that pupils fully understand how to effectively assess their own work and how to identify accurately ways in which it can be improved. Behaviour of pupils in all classes is of a consistently high standard.

Teachers are committed to and value religious education and aim to develop their knowledge and skills. Significant support and professional development has been allocated to staff recently, and this has started to impact upon the quality of religious education teaching and learning. Where teachers' subject and pedagogical knowledge is secure, they provide purposeful and age-appropriate activities to provide all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the opportunity to be successful. For example, in a Reception lesson, where pupils were engaged and keen to learn throughout the lesson. In some classes, however, teachers' choice of techniques or activities leads to some pupils losing interest and concentration. Teachers often use questioning effectively to engage pupils and check

understanding but this is not fully developed, to enable all pupils to be challenged to think more deeply. Opportunities to make links with previous learning were observed in most lessons, with teachers providing retrieval tasks at the start of a lesson to ensure that previous learning is secure. However, precious learning time was sometimes wasted with too much focus on this aspect, meaning that many pupils were unable to complete the main task.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is given equal prominence to the other core subjects and that the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* has been implemented faithfully across the school using the diocesan approved scheme of work. The subject leader is developing her role and is well supported by the leadership team. Leaders have recently implemented a clear monitoring schedule, including data review and analysis, lesson visits, and monitoring pupils' work. Consequently, staff receive feedback from leaders to support their teaching techniques and subject knowledge. Leaders ensure that religious education meets the needs of different groups of pupils, for example, providing additional adults to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the learning although not all lessons are adapted to reflect expectations and outcomes of learning in lessons. Governors are kept informed about developments in religious education through the headteacher's report. They are involved in self-evaluation through learning walks and pupil interviews. However, some areas for development are not part of the self-evaluation cycle.

## 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

2

2

2

2

Pupils respond very well to the varied experiences of prayer provided. Their participation in prayer and liturgy is strongest when it is engaging and uplifting, promoting attentive and heartfelt responses. For example, a highly effective Year 6 celebration of the word, encouraged pupils to give positive messages to one another. Pupils are actively engaged in the Mass through ministries such as reading and singing and are encouraged in this by the parish priest and staff, who are good role models of prayer. Pupils are developing their skills in planning and preparing prayer and liturgy relevant to their age using the *Let Us Pray 2gether* programme. However, older pupils do not have the opportunities to lead prayer and liturgy independently without the reliance on the programme resources. Pupils have a knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year and make connections to the cycle of prayer and liturgy and various seasonal school traditions, and they plan prayer and liturgy around these. They are familiar with some ways of praying, such as silent prayer, and very much appreciate the time they are given for this: one pupil commented that, 'It makes me feel closer to God.' Prayer books are used very effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to pray more creatively.

Prayer is an essential element of school life at St Wilfrid's. There is an established daily routine, known and understood by all pupils and staff and a range of traditional prayers and responses that are taught throughout the school. Although prayer and liturgy happen consistently, there is variability in the quality of provision: in the highest quality experiences, careful thought is given to mood and setting and the age of the pupils. Some pupils do not benefit from deeply engaging prayer experiences because staff do not have a shared understanding of what constitutes excellent practice. Singing is an important and valued feature of prayer and liturgy in this school, and this greatly enhances all aspects of liturgy. Staff and leaders have thought carefully about how to involve families in the prayer life of the school: parents are encouraged

to attend school Masses and events, including the sacramental preparation programme. One parent stated, 'I love getting invitations to attend church with my child on Fridays.' Focal areas and prayer spaces are well resourced, giving pupils the opportunity to develop their faith, whilst a prayer garden gives the pupils the opportunity for spontaneous prayers during their own free time.

Leaders ensure that the school's prayer and liturgy are strategically planned through a termly and yearly calendar linked to the liturgical year and prioritising key celebrations. Leaders ensure that all pupils attend Mass within church at least on a termly basis, making sure that the older pupils participate in ministry. The school's policy on prayer and liturgy is well formulated in line with the *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. However, there is no clear guidance on what is appropriate to include at different ages in terms of pupil-led prayer, meaning staff are unaware of what progression is expected in terms of pupil leadership of worship. Consequently, older pupils are still reliant on resources and guidance. The parish priest is a regular visitor in school and ensures that he is visible and available to all pupils and staff. Leaders and governors have started to review the prayer life of the school, however, the self-evaluation of this is not accurate, regular or inclusive of the views of pupils and parents. Leaders have ensured that resourcing for collective worship is a high priority, with appropriate spending identified for this area.

## Information about the school

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|--|--|
| Full name of school                            | St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School   |
| School unique reference number (URN)           | 148282   |
| School DfE Number (LAESTAB)                    | 9293711  |
| Full postal address of the school              | Claremont Terrace, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 2LE   |
| School phone number                            | 01670352919  |
| Executive headteacher                          | Not applicable   |
| Headteacher                                    | Pauline Johnstone  |
| Chair of governors                             | Kevin Dawson   |
| School Website                                 | <a href="http://www.blythstwilfridsprimary.northumberland.sch.uk">www.blythstwilfridsprimary.northumberland.sch.uk</a> |
| 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         | 27 -28 February 2018   |
| Previous denominational inspection grade       | Good   |

## The inspection team

|                      |      |
|----------------------|------|
| Mr Paul Craig        | Lead |
| Miss Stephanie Brown | Team |

## Key to grade judgements

| Grade    | England              | Wales  |
|----------|----------------------|--|
| <b>1</b> | Outstanding          | Excellent  |
| <b>2</b> | Good                 | Good   |
| <b>3</b> | Requires improvement | Adequate and requires improvement                |
| <b>4</b> | Inadequate           | Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement |

