



# SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School South Shields

URN: 148606

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

26–27 September 2024

## 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

1

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

1

#### Collective worship (p.7)

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

2

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

2

## Compliance statement

- SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School is fully compliant in relation to curriculum time dedicated to the teaching of religious education laid down by the Bishops' conference.
- The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the Diocesan Bishop.
- SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School has responded and met the areas for further development which were identified within the last inspection in 2017.

## What the school does well

- SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary is a true 'oasis' for the community which it serves. It is a faithful witness to the mission of the Church, fostering outstanding levels of pastoral care and inclusivity.
- Leaders embrace and actively promote gospel values. They are inspirational in their pursuit to ensure that Christ is at the heart and centre of this school community.
- SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School offers a high-quality learning environment both in relation to the physical space and in relation to teaching and learning. This is evident not only through lesson observations but also within the high standards of pupil work seen throughout the school.
- Pupil attitudes, behaviour for learning and general behaviour in and around school is exceptional. They are secure in the fact that they are known and cared for by the staff and as a result they flourish.
- Leaders have a clear vision and plan to widen and enhance prayer through greater opportunities for personal prayer, voluntary prayer and the ongoing development of the prayer garden.

## What the school needs to improve

- Provide explicit opportunities for pupils to think more deeply, enabling them to make detailed written responses to articulate their understanding which closely reflects their comprehensive knowledge.
- Leaders to embed systems and procedures to ensure that pupils grow in confidence, knowledge and skills to enable them to independently plan and lead prayerful opportunities and liturgical ministries.

## 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**

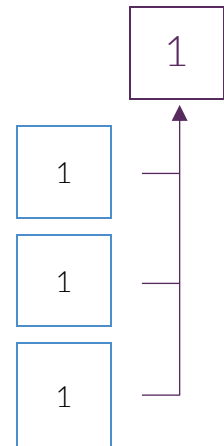
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

**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 clearly understand and embrace the distinctive Catholic identity of SS Peter and Paul Catholic Primary School, they talk about school being, 'A safe place where everyone has your back.' High quality relationships between pupils, exemplary behaviour within lessons and interactions around the school, demonstrate a deep sense of belonging and respect for one another. Pupils value and care for each other and their school community and see their school as a family. There is a clear sense of community with gospel values and the teachings of Jesus underpinning all interactions. Provision for pupil leadership, such as the school council, the house team pastoral system and roles of head boy and head girl, are fully embraced by the pupils and they actively contribute to the opportunities provided. The school offers a wide variety of ways in which to support Catholic social teaching and the pupils engage wholeheartedly, taking an active role in finding ways of responding locally, nationally and globally to the needs of others. When discussing the school's work to support the local foodbank, one pupil said, 'People aren't as fortunate as us, so we have to look after them, as God loves us.'

SS Peter and Paul truly lives out its mission, 'Together with the Spirit, we will create an oasis where every child matters,' is clearly displayed and visibly lived out and witnessed throughout the school. Christ is truly at the centre and heart of this vibrant school community. Inclusivity is a real strength at SS Peter and Paul, the education of the whole person is paramount and a key driver for all staff. Pastoral care is exemplary throughout the school with all staff, including an effective pupil wellbeing lead, enhancing a concrete commitment to the most vulnerable. All pupils are valued and cared for as unique people. Through numerous initiatives, such as the KidSafe programme, SEND coffee morning drop-ins, uniform exchanges and foodbank links, the school goes the extra mile to provide a joyful community without exception. 'Everyone is

deserving of kindness and that really shines through in this school.' SS Peter and Paul School have a close personal link with the Together Forever Trust. The charity does great work to support young people, turning tragedy into positivity. The headteacher stated that, 'Being involved has helped us heal as a community.' The relationship, sex and health education subject leader has meticulously planned the well-developed curriculum which is fully compliant with both statutory and Diocesan requirements.

The headteacher is passionate about her vision for the school and the young people that pass through it, 'It is paramount that the children feel safe and loved because only then can they achieve their full potential, and we open up the world to them.' Governors and staff recognise the inspirational example of the headteacher, her dedication to foster high quality relationships and determination to embed the mission of the Church. The genuine care, concern and appreciation, of all those within the school family, is palpable and stems from the headteacher and deputy headteacher. This permeates through all the staff through all their interactions. One staff member commented, 'I know I am shaping children academically, spiritually and morally - and having a real impact. I know, I was called to serve at this school.' Parents are seen as the first educators of their children and are well supported in their role. They value and support the school mission with one parent stating, 'It's so difficult to be Catholic in this present world but the school teaching really supports us in bringing our child up in God's light.'

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

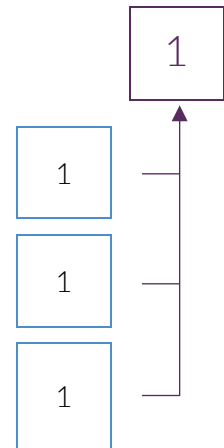
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**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 show interest and enthusiasm, speaking fluently and confidently about their learning in religious education. They clearly enjoy lessons and because of this, behaviour for learning is of a consistently high standard across all classes. Pupils of all ages are religiously literate when verbalising their subject knowledge and understanding, demonstrating confident use of vocabulary. A Reception pupil said, 'God knows your name and loves you.' The whole school's use of retrieval questions to start each lesson has developed pupils' ability to build on their knowledge and enhance their religious literacy. Pupils can effectively articulate their learning recalling prior knowledge. The marking policy is known and understood by the pupils and live marking is used to help them progress within lessons. They make very good progress from their starting points. School data analysis, including analysis of trends over time, demonstrates that pupil attainment is above average, with no significant difference between outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). One parent commented, "My child often speaks of the Catholic religion she is taught and I'm really happy about the positive influence it is having on her. SS Peter and Paul allows my child to be herself and ask questions, while teaching her everything she needs to grow into a lovely, sensible young girl.'

Teachers demonstrate a deep commitment to religious education teaching and have developed an authentic subject knowledge. They skilfully and confidently make links with prior learning and relevant scripture passages, demonstrating the depth of their knowledge. Lessons are well-planned and sequential. The school use adaptive teaching, including well-planned adult support, to allow all pupils to access the teaching. Activities are varied and creative to optimise the learning opportunities for all pupils, including those with SEND. Standards and expectations in religious education are consistently high and this is modelled effectively to the pupils, resulting in books which are very well presented. Staff recognise and value the impact that the religious

education curriculum has not just academically but also spiritually and morally. Teachers use the marking and feedback policy well and recognise that this process enables pupils to, 'think more deeply' continues to be developed across school to achieve a consistent approach in line with their live marking policy.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education is a core aspect of the Catholic identity of this school. The curriculum presents a comprehensive understanding of Catholic faith, moral development and social teaching, as required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. Religious education is given full parity with other curriculum areas in relation to all aspects, including high quality professional development at Trust and Diocesan level. The school benefits from 78% of teachers having completed the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies, with 11% currently in the process of undertaking the study. Members of staff speak with enthusiasm about the profound spiritual impact this has had on them and the pupils they teach. The religious education subject leader, leads with confidence and skill. She has utilised her expertise to effectively develop Big Question sheets to start each topic including key words, scripture references and opportunities to reflect at the start and end of each topic so learning is consolidated. Staff value and respect her, acknowledging her expertise and approachability when requiring any guidance or support. Leaders and governors have developed a rigorous monitoring and evaluation schedule, focusing on planning scrutiny, lesson observations and learning walks, book scrutinies and pupil voice. Evidence from monitoring activities is shared with the governors and used to identify further areas of development or consolidation.

## 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

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

1

2

Pupils engage positively with the prayer and liturgy offered at SS Peter and Paul. They participate in prayerful experiences through silent prayer, sharing the word, traditional prayers and the use of music. The use of actions and sign language during prayer times, for example signing the Our Father, raise the levels of engagement and demonstrate the inclusive nature of the school. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and live piano music enhances this engagement. Personal prayer journals have been introduced to support the pupils with voluntary prayer, the pupils are beginning to use these to support their personal prayer journey. Pupils pray together, from the youngest pupils, carefully led by their staff, to the older pupils who work enthusiastically to prepare for prayerful opportunities with the guidance and support of their teachers. Staff are skilful in supporting the pupils, using relevant resources such as *Let Us Pray 2gether*, enabling them in developing the skills and confidence needed to build more independence as the process is embedded. Pupils are becoming more involved in evaluating the quality of their prayer and liturgy with the guidance of staff and are beginning to think about how prayer experiences might impact on their lives and the messages they live out through their actions.

Prayer is an important part of this school community and is an integral part of gatherings of pupils, staff and leaders. A daily pattern of school prayer punctuates the day, and prayer is shared in moments of challenge and joy. Sacred spaces are carefully located within each classroom and are used as a focus for prayer. The leaders have also developed 'prayer baskets', incorporating Diocesan resources such as those linked to the Year of Prayer or focusing on specific themes. These baskets are designed to create portable prayer stations and facilitate more opportunities for creative and voluntary prayer. The religious education subject leader uses her musical skills to enhance prayer opportunities and support the pupils in their stillness and reflection time. An outdoor prayer garden is currently being developed to create an

additional creative space to share prayer times. The development of the space, in the church grounds bordering the school playground, is a community project and the senior leaders have comprehensive plans as to how the space will be used to enhance prayer opportunities for the pupils.

The school policy and vision for prayer and liturgy are prioritised and leaders have a clear plan for further development to ensure that the provision which is offered and the outcomes for pupils move to outstanding. They are passionate about enhancing and widening prayerful opportunities and have a comprehensive and carefully planned school overview, mapping out key times in the liturgical year and significant moments within the school community. Opportunities for class prayer are linked directly to the weekly whole school gathering to ensure depth of understanding and revisiting key messages. Leaders work in partnership with the local priest to ensure that there are strong parish links, with classes regularly attending parish weekday Mass. Parents commented on how they are always welcomed to attend Mass. Leaders shared the strength of the community gathering at church annually for the feast of SS Peter and Paul followed by a well-attended fair for parishioners and families. The parish priest stated that the school had developed 'Mass' booklets to support the pupils in their engagement with responses during the Mass and these had proved very successful. Leaders have placed importance on professional development linked to enhancing prayer and liturgy, allowing staff to explore various forms of prayer to enrich gatherings and opportunities.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148606
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3933304
Full postal address of the school	SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School, Olive Street, South Shields, NE33 4RH
School phone number	001914552862
Headteacher	Maria Butt
Chair of local governing body	Anthony Whalen
School Website	<a href="http://www.sspeterpaul.co.uk">www.sspeterpaul.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	Selective
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Leigh-anne Young  
Daniel Fenwick

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