



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Teresa's Catholic Primary School, Darlington

URN: 146256

Carried out on behalf of Canon Peter Leighton V.G., Diocesan Administrator of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 19-20 January 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	1
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.....	1
The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	✓
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	✓
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Leaders place the school mission at the heart of all policies, procedures and actions, and consequently, staff and pupils follow the example of St Teresa of Lisieux, to do 'the little things well'.
- School staff have developed trusted relationships with their community. Therefore, parents feel well supported as their child's first educator.
- Staff have high expectations of all pupils and successfully overcome barriers to learning.
- All pupils access an equitable curriculum and, as a result, outcomes in religious education are high by the time pupils leave the school.
- A focus on vocabulary acquisition ensures that pupils develop religious literacy from the earliest opportunity.

This Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection was carried out under canons 804 & 806 of the code of canon law. For maintained schools and academies in England it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.48 of the Education Act 2005. For maintained schools and academies in Wales it fulfils the statutory requirements of s.50 of the Education Act 2005.

What the school needs to improve:

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and staff knowledge is consistent across the school so that pupils in all classes make sustained progress.
- Ensure that pupils consistently can reflect on prior learning so that they know more and remember more.
- Develop further opportunities for spontaneous and creative prayer and make sure that the requirements of the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory* are met.

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:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

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

1

Provision

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

1

Leadership

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

1



Pupil outcomes in Catholic life and mission are outstanding because pupils understand, embrace and can articulate the distinctive Catholic identity and mission of their school. Pupils clearly express an understanding that they are valued and cared for. They are happy, confident and feel secure. Pupils understand that the school community is committed to following the teaching and example of Jesus. They can describe how they serve those in need. Pupils confidently talk about their charitable links and, fundraising efforts and take a leading role in responding to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching. When asked why they participate in and contribute to these opportunities they answer, 'because our school is St Teresa's and here we do the little things well'. Pupils are exemplary role models and show a clear sense of respect for others. They state that, 'we all get along well and if we fall out, we accept and forgive'. They gladly embrace their personal responsibility to care for our common home; this is evident through cross-curricular links. Their active participation significantly enhances the Catholic life and mission of the school.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school is outstanding because the mission statement at St Teresa's is clear, inspiring, known, lived and witnessed throughout the school. The St Teresa's Little Things Award is an excellent example of this. Staff live out the mission statement and implement it throughout the whole life of the school. This is evident in their care, compassion, pastoral support and the quality of their relationships with pupils, parents and each other. This embedded culture means that the school celebrates and values everyone in its community without exception. Staff go the extra mile to ensure they understand individual needs and are committed to supporting the most vulnerable. Through carefully considered actions, with Christ at the heart of the school, staff fully embrace inclusivity and provide exceptional support for all. Staff consistently bear witness to the school's Catholic life and mission and are exemplary role models for the pupils. The school environment witnesses the Catholic identity through explicit and

effective signs. This is clear in the displays present in classrooms and communal areas. The provision for relationships, sex and health education is carefully planned to ensure that it meets statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders are outstanding in how they promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission at St Teresa's. They ensure that Christ is at the heart of the school. The headteacher is inspirational. Consequently, senior leaders are energised and determined in their efforts to serve their community. The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents to the benefit of pupils. Parents speak highly of the provision at St Teresa's knowing that it is a school where their children are safe and, 'parents and children grow together'. Parents value the 'family feel' where 'everyone is equal.' Leaders and governors work hard to ensure an effective partnership between the school and its local parish. They are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and Catholic Social Teaching. They show clear respect for the dignity of workers and are committed to their care for the physical and mental well-being of staff; every decision they make reflects this. Staff feel well supported and value the 'consistent approach that is demonstrated by the leadership team'. All policies and procedures reflect the Catholic identity of the school.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

1

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.....

1

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education.....

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for religious education.....

1



Pupil outcomes in religious education are outstanding because, from their starting points, pupils make notable progress. By the end of Key Stage 2 they know, understand and remember well. They produce high-quality work aligned with age-related expectations. Pupils with additional needs achieve the best possible outcomes because they are enabled to access the curriculum alongside their peers. As there is a systematic approach to teaching and learning through Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils have a deep knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, traditions and scripture which they apply well in upper Key Stage 2. In relation to their age, pupils are religiously literate and can use religious vocabulary appropriately and confidently. They are curious and deepen their understanding by asking insightful questions.

Expectations in religious education lessons are high. Pupils enjoy lessons and engage in their learning. Presentation in books reflects a great sense of pride and they know what they have done well and can make improvements. They make links between sources and can reflect on how religious beliefs influence the actions of believers. In Year 4 a pupil commented, 'we are learning why people want to help others. I think it is because they listened to Jesus when He helped people. I want to help people because that is what God told us to do.'

The school's religious education curriculum complies with the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools 2012*.

The provision of religious education is good. Religious education is the core of the whole curriculum. Most teachers have sound subject knowledge and all work hard to plan lessons, adapt tasks and teach to support inclusion. Consequently, pupils, including those with additional and complex needs, can access the curriculum and are given many opportunities to keep up with their peers. Planned tasks are varied and additional classroom staff are deployed to support learning.

Most teachers are skilful in using questions to provoke deep thinking and use resources effectively to elicit well-reasoned responses. When teachers provide clear, relevant and specific feedback, pupils know what they need to do to make progress. However, this is not evident in all lessons and therefore progress is not consistent in all classes. In upper Key Stage 2 pupils make accelerated progress to attain highly in relation to age-related expectations. Provision is not yet outstanding as not all teachers have a clear understanding of the starting points of pupils and because of insecure subject knowledge, teaching is unclear in some lessons. Progress for some pupils is therefore slowed.

The leadership of religious education is outstanding. The subject lead is tenacious and diligent in her monitoring of religious education and in supporting teaching and learning. She has a clear understanding of curriculum expectations and standards, which are comparable to other subjects. Senior leaders recognise the strengths of the school and prioritise professional development to maintain the skills and knowledge of the staff. There are clear structures in place to induct new members of staff so teachers feel well-supported. There is a clear response when teaching is less than good so learning is not compromised for extended periods. Supported by the Trust, the local governing committee has access to valuable information which enables them to monitor the school with increased rigour. Governors are regular visitors to the school and, as a result, are well-informed when making decisions. They have ensured that religious education lessons are well-resourced and that additional enriching activities are invested in.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

1

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

Pupil outcomes in collective worship are outstanding. Prayer is central to the life of the school and pupils participate with enthusiasm, maintaining a sense of reverence. Scripture is at the heart of liturgical prayer and pupils understand the links between Bible passages and the mission of the celebration. Pupils sing enthusiastically and join in well with communal prayers. They are familiar with the traditions of the Catholic Church, which are well-embedded. Pupils plan liturgical prayer and lead with confidence appropriate to their age. They can respond to a range of prayer experiences as these are meaningful, and they incorporate a variety of prayer styles into their planned liturgical prayer. They can evaluate prayer and liturgy which informs their future planning. Pupils reflect on their prayer opportunities. Consequently, collective worship shapes their actions, in line with their school mission, values and virtues. Pupils are proud to undertake ministries and particularly enjoy celebrating class saints' feast days and significant times in the liturgical year. They say, 'When we pray, we remember that God is with us and He tells us to do the right thing. We do not need to be afraid.'

The provision for collective worship is outstanding because well-constructed prayer and liturgy is central to school life. As well as regular class and key stage prayer experiences, pupils join the parish community to celebrate Mass on holy days and feast days. Staff undertake professional development and are therefore well-equipped to lead prayer and liturgy, acting as excellent role models for pupils. Staff are also skilful in helping pupils plan liturgical prayer, so that they develop independence in line with their age and capacity. Prayerful spaces are planned and created to enable pupils to develop a sense of reverence and to contribute enthusiastically. Music, scripture, reflection and silence are typical features of liturgical prayer. Consequently, pupils can make personal responses according to their preferred ways of praying. The spiritual development of pupils is well-supported. Staff ensure that families feel welcome to join the school community in celebrating Mass and this is highly valued by parents who say, 'We can't ask any more of the school. We know we are welcome, and our children are shown how to love our Lord.'

In partnership with the parish of St Teresa's, pupils in Year 4 are prepared for receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. The majority of families welcome the opportunity for their children to grow in faith.

The leadership of collective worship is outstanding. School leaders ensure that the school's prayer and liturgy policy is relevant and applied well. They listen to pupils to ascertain the personal impact that the prayer life of the school has and they plan a varied programme of prayer and liturgy across the year. Senior leaders invest in professional development so that staff have the knowledge and skills to lead meaningful collective worship and facilitate the leadership of pupils. They work alongside less experienced staff, building their confidence and understanding, so that staff feel competent. Governors ensure that investment is made in resources that enhance collective worship and they recognise their responsibility to monitor the prayer life of the school, listening to pupils and staff as part of the self-evaluation cycle of the school.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Teresa's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	146256
Full postal address of the school	Harris Street, Darlington, DL1 4NL
School phone number	01325 254525
Name of head teacher or principal	Paula Strachan
Chair of governing board	Margaret Price
School Website	stteresasdarlington.bhcet.org.uk
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Hogarth Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	3-11 years
Trustees	Diocese
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	13-14 October 2015
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Barbara Reilly-O'Donnell	Lead inspector
Claire Garbutt	Team inspector

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