



Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for **St John The Evangelist, Billingham**

URN: 142734

Carried out on behalf of the Most Rev. Malcom McMahon, Archbishop of Liverpool and Apostolic Administrator of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 19-20 April 2023

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The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection	Fully

Summary of key findings

What the school does well

- Relationships throughout the school are based on the highest levels of care where everyone is loved and respected. It is a very inclusive and welcoming community with a strong family ethos.
- The mission and ethos of Catholic education is at the heart of this faith community.
- Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and all pupils from a young age are reverent and respectful.

What the school needs to improve:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by providing greater challenge in religious education lessons so that increased progress is made for all groups of pupils, ensuring that effective questioning enables all pupils to extend their learning.
- Ensure that marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work and that all teachers use assessment information to plan challenging and differentiated activities which build upon prior learning.
- Develop the leadership of prayer and liturgy through formal monitoring and by offering further opportunities for pupil leadership and evaluation of planning, preparing and leading worship independently throughout the school.

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:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

2



Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to belong to a Catholic school community and they take advantage of the opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. They fully embrace the opportunities to take on leadership roles such as Mini-Vinnies and say they feel valued. They can clearly articulate the importance of the Gospel values and how their school is helping them to become better people. Pupils are proud of their school and their religious backgrounds and beliefs. They can discuss their own faith and spirituality with confidence and demonstrate religious tolerance and a deep respect for faiths different to their own. Pupils are actively engaged in responding to the demands of Catholic Social Teaching, supporting those in need locally, nationally and globally, and talk confidently about their charity work throughout the year. Examples of this are the Big Lent Walk, hosting coffee mornings to raise money for Ukraine, singing at local nursing homes, and collecting food for foodbanks. The behaviour of all pupils throughout the school is exemplary with pupils displaying great care and respect for one another.

A true sense of community, with Christ at the heart of the school, is evident in the quality of relationships and in the culture of welcome. St. John the Evangelist School is a supportive community, valuing all and ensuring that everyone is welcomed in a spirit of hospitality, and especially those who are most vulnerable. Pastoral care for pupils and their families is a priority of the school. School provides a high level of pastoral support and there is an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable and needy. One parent commented, 'This school is like one big family where we all look after each other', and another said, 'We appreciate what all staff do for our children, they know all children by name'. The learning environment across

school reflects its Catholic mission and identity, and is evidenced through displays, artefacts and the creation of sacred spaces. The provision for relationships and sex education (RSE) is well met and in line with the statutory and diocesan requirements.

All leaders have a clear vision for the Catholic life of the school and a clear understanding of the role of the school in the mission of the church. They have high expectations for the continuing development of Catholic life and a very clear picture of the school's role in the promotion of Catholic values throughout the community. The school has successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers. As a result, parents and carers have a good understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. One parent commented, 'The school supports everyone and has given my child the strength and confidence to play a part in leading prayer and sharing love with everyone'. Leaders at all levels provide good role models for parents and staff and promote a caring ethos in school reflecting Gospel values. The governors make a highly significant contribution to St. John the Evangelist school. They are highly ambitious for its continuous development, are very supportive of the schools' mission, and are actively involved in its evaluation whilst offering challenge and support.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade:.....

2

Pupil outcomes

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

2

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.....

2

Pupils are developing secure knowledge and understanding and the skills that reflect the learning required by the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012*. They are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons because they ‘learn about Jesus and think about how to be like Jesus’. They have positive attitudes, work well in lessons applying themselves to the tasks set, work at a good pace, and are becoming increasingly more religiously literate. As a consequence, pupils across all age groups demonstrate excellent behaviour for learning. From variable starting points, most pupils across the school make good progress with no significant variation between groups of learners. A clear focus on knowing more, remembering more, and doing more runs through lessons for all year groups leading to good outcomes. Pupils are generally thoughtful and articulate in their responses, with some being able to express what they need to do to improve their work. Attainment in religious education is generally strong, with most pupils meeting or exceeding age-related expectations by the end of each key stage.

Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and there is a culture of working together to ensure teaching is of good quality. Within lessons, most teachers offer a range of teaching styles to motivate and encourage pupils’ enjoyment of and enthusiasm for religious education. Links are increasingly being made between religious education and other areas of the curriculum. The development of Catholic Social Teaching through the wider curriculum is very effective. Lessons are usually planned around pupils’ prior knowledge. However, some pupils, especially the more able, do not make sufficient progress in lessons because work is not sufficiently challenging. Teachers ask questions which help them determine where pupils are

in their learning journey, though they do not always ask questions that require responses at a greater level of depth. Teachers mark work regularly and adhere to the schools' marking policy. However, not all pupils fully understand how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. The school has a tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and achievement, but this is not consistently used across the school to further improve and support teaching and learning.

Leaders and governors ensure that religious education programmes and resources deliver the curriculum aims set out in the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory 2012* and that the required amount of time is given to religious education. The recently appointed religious education leader is extremely enthusiastic about her role and is well-informed of current developments in religious education. She has initiated a range of monitoring activities throughout the academic year which now need to be developed and evaluated for impact. All staff, particularly the most recently appointed, benefit from excellent support, both for their own spirituality and also to secure their subject knowledge. This results in good outcomes for pupils which have parity with other core subjects. Leaders' self-evaluation of religious education demonstrates the required monitoring, analysis, and self-challenge and there is a clear vision for teaching and learning. They have a good understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for further development and are taking effective action to secure further improvements. All findings of this monitoring are reported to the local governing committee on a termly basis. The governors are very involved and are thorough in their challenge and evaluation of the school. They are highly ambitious and relentlessly strive for the very best outcomes possible.

Collective worship

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

Collective worship key judgement grade:.....

2

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

2



A calm and peaceful ethos pervades the school and this is reflected in the pupils' excellent behaviour and consideration shown during prayer and liturgy. Pupils demonstrate interest and engagement in prayer and liturgy in response to age-appropriate stimuli; their singing and participation in liturgy is both thoughtful and reflective. Pupils demonstrate confidence in praying in creative ways, including quiet reflection and joyful singing. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the liturgical cycle. Themes for prayer are often reinforced in lessons, ensuring all pupils understand them and can apply them to their lives and to the lives of others. Pupils can articulate what being part of a prayerful community means to them. They understand that prayer is their opportunity to talk to God and can happen anywhere, at any time. One pupil commented, 'When I feel sad or worried about something, I say a prayer to God and then I begin to feel much better'. Pupils enthusiastically and respectfully talk about other world faiths that they have learned about in their religious education lessons. As pupils progress through the school they develop their capacity to plan and lead prayer in their class. Their developing knowledge, understanding and confidence in leading worship demonstrates that they can make links between Gospel messages and daily life.

Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and make a good contribution to the moral and spiritual needs of the pupils. Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff which has a positive impact on the school's sense of community. There is a clear policy for prayer and liturgy which is planned and resourced to reflect the liturgical year. Staff work collaboratively to ensure that pupils are developing their skills, appropriate to their developmental age, in understanding, participating and preparing liturgies and celebrations in school and church. The use of carefully chosen music, and visual images around the school,

help to provide engaging acts of worship across the whole school. Scripture passages are central to prayer and liturgy and are chosen to reflect the liturgical season. Sacred focal points are evident in all classrooms providing further encouragement for independent reflection and prayer. The school welcomes families to participate in liturgy which is well-received. Families are becoming increasingly more involved in the planned programme of liturgies, Mass and other celebrations. One parent commented on the great sense of community spirit at St John the Evangelist school, whilst another parent said, 'St. John's is a great school with a very caring staff who go beyond their duty to care for everyone'. Parents are very supportive towards the school and they value highly the contribution it makes to the spiritual formation of their children.

Leaders display a secure understanding of different ways to pray, which is relevant to the school community and is reflected in the good quality planning of worship. They are models of good practice for staff and pupils in planning and providing quality acts of worship. All staff are provided with regular opportunities for professional development that includes liturgical formation. New staff are well-supported in the planning and leadership of prayer and liturgy and feel a deep sense of commitment to the Trust virtues. As a result, all staff understand the importance of prayer and liturgy. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for further development of prayer and liturgy within the school. However, this monitoring is not formalised to include feedback from all stakeholders.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	142734
Full postal address of the school	Cowpen Lane, Billingham, Stockton on Tees, TS23 1LJ
School phone number	01642 643400
Name of head teacher or principal	Mrs Julia Rea
Chair of governing board	Mrs. Josie Wilson
School Website	www.stjohnte.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
Trustees	Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	19 & 20 January 2016
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Elaine White	Lead inspector
Louise Nealings	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