



## Catholic Schools Inspectorate inspection report for St Wilfrid's RC College, South Shields

URN: 142601

Carried out on behalf of the Rt Rev Stephen Wright, Bishop of the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle on:

Date: 4-5 October 2023

Overall effectiveness The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school.....	2
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.....	2
Collective worship (p.7) The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school.....	2
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

- The pastoral care that students receive is exceptional; there is an unwavering commitment to serve the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- Catholic social teaching is effectively embedded throughout the school. As a result, students are highly driven to respond to the emerging needs of those locally, nationally, and globally.
- The school's mission is evident in its beautifully designed physical environment and is a truly lived experience.
- The sense of community is overwhelming for all stakeholders who see St Wilfrid's as a family. Students in particular feel part of this.
- There is a strong sense of welcome which students articulate with passion.

What the school needs to improve:

- Leaders to ensure the religious education curriculum is designed and well sequenced to allow students across all key stages to make expected progress.
- Ensure that tasks in religious education lessons clearly match the curriculum's aims so that students have regular opportunities to demonstrate knowledge and a deeper understanding of their work.
- Provide prayer and liturgy experiences that are consistently relevant, accessible, and engaging for 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:.....

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

Students are passionate about embracing the school's Catholic identity and the commitment shown by all staff in their mission provides an authentic Catholic life experience at St Wilfrid's. The mission statement, 'Excellence through faith, learning and support' is fully lived out by students through their daily interactions with one another, and through their drive and desire to help the vulnerable. Catholic social teaching is deeply embedded throughout the school and students take a leading role in responding to local, national, and global issues. Students have recently been awarded the Green Flag status. Several students have been heavily involved with the charity 'Key Project', where they have worked to provide food banks and they were integral in raising funds for a community bus for their local area. The Laudato Si' Group take pride in working to help the environment and to raise awareness of how students at St Wilfrid's can contribute to this. There is a strong sense of welcome, a welcome that truly extends to every individual at St Wilfrid's. One student said, 'It doesn't matter who you are or the faith you have, everyone has a place here'. The work of chaplaincy is highly valued by both students and staff.

The community which has been created at the school is regularly described as a 'family' of which all members feel known, loved, and supported. The school community recognises that Christ is at its centre and that all individuals, including themselves, are unique creations of God. Students are particularly well cared for through extensive pastoral care systems that are driven through the determination that no child should be left behind. This system is often likened to the Parable of the Lost Sheep; they will not stop until all are cared for. Staff are exemplary role models for students and they have created a community that is deeply rooted in the desire to live out the school's mission. The physical environment authentically expresses

this mission and demonstrates the motivation to reflect the dignity and value of each individual. This is also lived out through opportunities such as the 'School Colour' programme, where students can develop virtuous characteristics through their work in school and by helping the local community. The provision for relationships, sex, and health education is meticulously planned, meeting statutory and diocesan requirements.

Leaders and governors are outstanding in their commitment to Catholic life and mission. Governors know their school well and bring support. They challenge to senior colleagues through a shared vision of wanting the best for all students at St Wilfrid's through professional and honest dialogue. Links with parishes are good and leaders continue to strengthen these. Much work has been done to re-establish links with the local community and parishes over recent years. The local parish priest is active in school and attends regularly. There is an effective, focused induction programme for staff who are new to the school, which is very well received. Consequently, staff are supported in their understanding of working in a Catholic school as well as supported on their own faith journeys. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and places Catholic life and mission of primary importance. Students have a voice, which is heard and acted upon, although students do not take a lead role specifically focusing on the mission of the school.

## 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



The religious education department works hard to ensure that students learn well. There is a clear focus on retaining prior knowledge that has been embedded as a key routine across all lessons. Consequently, some students are able to articulate what they have learnt previously, but not all are confident in expressing their learning through key concepts and subject-specific terminology. Recent examination results for Key Stage 4 show that not all students have made expected progress. However, there are a number of cohorts that have performed very well comparatively against other core subjects within the school. Students who require additional support to aid them in making the required progress access the 'STEP' programme which provides a targeted response to meet their emerging needs leading to academic progress within religious education.

Teachers are highly committed to religious education as a core subject in the school and as a result students appreciate the importance and value of the subject. Some lessons have highly effective questioning where students are challenged, which allows them to develop a deeper understanding of the taught content. At other times, questioning limits student responses and therefore is not an effective tool to measure the progress students are making in lessons. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge, particularly at Key Stage 5. Consequently, lesson planning is linked to students' starting points. Some lessons do not always include the most effective tasks and activities, meaning there are missed opportunities to extend student knowledge and understanding. Teachers have excellent relationships with their students and know them all individually. Students are regularly praised during lessons and the school's highly effective rewards system is welcomed and appreciated by students. The strengths of staff within teaching, learning, and assessment are celebrated and shared through regular

training in the department so all staff can benefit from the skills and expertise that members of the team bring to the department.

Leaders hold religious education in high esteem and meet the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in all key stages. The acting head of department has a clear vision for religious education that recognises the importance of nurturing the spiritual lives of students as well as empowering them to engage with, and to develop an understanding of, religious and non-religious world views. Teachers in the religious education department are equally passionate and are highly motivated to provide a high quality education for their students. Religious education has core parity with other core curriculum subjects; the department has recently moved into a new building, at the heart of the school. Some parts of the curriculum are not planned and sequenced in a cohesive and effective manner, resulting in students not always being given key opportunities to fully study key topics in depth. Leaders do not ensure that lessons are consistently planned to meet the needs of different cohorts across Key Stage 3 and 4. However, leaders have a clear understanding of the areas for development within the department which are identified by effective quality assurance systems. Leaders are acutely aware of the issues surrounding student progress and have worked collaboratively to address barriers to learning and to implement effective strategies based on the demands of the curriculum.

## 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

Students respond well to experiences of prayer and liturgy, but some students do not actively participate as they are not deeply engaged with their prayer experience. This means students can reflect on their experiences of prayer but are not enabled to understand how these experiences can shape them as individuals and influence their views on the world around them. Some students are keen to take a leading role in the readings, and where possible, the planning of worship. A school prayer has been produced by students at St Wilfrid's, a process spoken of proudly by sixth form students who supported their younger peers in writing a prayer that has been established as the heart of the school's prayer journey. Students speak well of opportunities for Mass within school, particularly welcome Masses for Year 7 and 12, where families are invited to attend as a part of the school's community. Year 7 students sing joyfully and view Mass as a time to come together in their community.

There is a clear pattern of daily prayer at St Wilfrid's. This is delivered in 'PREP' sessions in tutor groups each morning, with each day having a specific theme that the prayer is based on. Students speak well of these routines and appreciate the time to be ready for the school day ahead. All prayer and liturgy, including the daily pattern of prayer, is deeply faithful to the liturgical year; however, at times there is a lack of distinction between an essential school routine and a more spiritual experience. The chaplain is committed to providing a variety of prayer for students to experience, producing engaging and accessible resources for all staff to use. Consequently, most staff feel confident in delivering prayer and liturgy, and feel supported with the offer of informal training with the chaplain should they have any areas they wish to develop. A new, beautiful chapel has recently been built, providing students and staff with a space that is truly conducive to prayer. There is also a multi-faith prayer room for

those students of other faiths and religions that has made many students feel extremely welcome and comfortable with practising their traditions. Retreats are extremely popular at St Wilfrid's with high numbers of students wanting to further their own spiritual experiences on residential opportunities. The chaplaincy team, along with senior leaders, place a great emphasis on the importance of prayer and liturgy and this is recognised by most students.

Leaders and governors attach great importance to prayer and liturgy. They are skilled in articulating and promoting the school's vision for prayer and liturgy. Staff are well supported by leaders and the chaplaincy team and have received training on the delivery and importance of prayer. Leaders continue to provide a variety of ways of praying and acknowledge the need to broaden this offer, so students are given a deeper understanding of prayer and liturgy and how it is meaningful for their community. Whilst there are some holistic mechanisms in place to quality assure prayer and liturgy, these do not directly inform the training needs of staff and areas for development to ensure that students have a consistent experience of prayer and worship across the school. There are opportunities for students to be a part of the quality assurance process but they are not explicitly planned as part of the school's evaluation of prayer and liturgy.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St Wilfrid's RC College
School unique reference number (URN)	142601
Full postal address of the school	Temple Park Road, South Shields, Tyne and Wear, NE34 0QA
School phone number	0191 456 9121
Name of head teacher or principal	Francesca Craik
Chair of governing board	Geraldine Kilgour
School Website	www.st-wilfrids.org
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy
Age-range of pupils	11 to 19
Trustees	Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Rosa Flanagan	Lead inspector
Michael Hughes	Team inspector
Donna Burns	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