



St Leonard's Catholic School

North End, Durham, DH1 4NG

School Unique Reference Number: **143583**

Inspection dates:	22-23 November 2017
Lead inspector:	Pat Witte
Team inspector:	Joe Linden

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Leonard's is an outstanding Catholic school

- The school's mission statement 'Take Christ as the model for life' underpins all aspects of the Catholic Life of the school. The governors and headteacher lead by example putting faith at the heart of everything they do. The 'pursuit of excellence in all and for all' drives the actions and decisions taken in striving to create community. The strength of relationship that exists between all members of the community is testament to the underlying beliefs that all work is for the greater glory of God and the service of others. Students are involved in a range of ministries and are eager to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school. The strong Catholic ethos is further enhanced through strong links with the parishes and local clergy.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. Students and staff are involved in the preparation, planning and leading of prayer and liturgies. The liturgical calendar plays a central role in the daily life of the school. Feasts and memorial days are marked throughout the year with an emphasis on Holy days of Obligation. Students value the prayer life of the school and enjoy the range of opportunities to pray each day.
- Religious Education is outstanding. Results at GCSE and A Level are high and above the national average. Pupils enjoy their learning and achievement is strong. Staff strive for excellence and aim to provide a rich experience for students at all levels. Teaching is never less than good. Governors and senior leaders are involved in monitoring the work in Religious Education.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Leonard's is a larger than average Catholic secondary school located in the City of Durham.
- The school converted to academy status in November 2016. (Durham Martyrs Multi Academy Trust).
- Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds and travel from a variety of areas, which include the City of Durham, Chester-le-Street and many small villages some of which are ex-mining communities.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium is below the national average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average.
- St Leonard's is at the centre of the Durham Martyrs parish community playing an active role in liturgical celebrations.
- The school is also involved with the Catholic chaplaincy at Durham University and sixth form students participate in some of the chaplaincy's activities.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Evaluate Collective Worship by:
 - Continuing to develop monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Raise the achievement of vulnerable students in Religious Education by:
 - Further developing effective support strategies.
- Maintaining high standards of achievement in Religious Education by:
 - Embracing fully the challenges presented by the new examination specifications and assessment procedures.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school. | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school. | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school. | 1 |

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The students of St Leonard's school live out the mission statement and truly strive to create a community with Christ as their model for life. Students display great enthusiasm for the school as a 'family' where support is readily available in any situation. They speak warmly of the school as a community where everyone is included and has a role to play. Students are respectful of each individual, demonstrating their living faith.
- The quality of relationships is a major strength of St Leonard's. The community is permeated by an atmosphere of care and concern for each of its members. There is a sense of order and respect for all. Students have a deep experience of belonging and as a result demonstrate their full commitment to the school.
- The behaviour of students is exemplary at all times. They listen readily to the views of others and recognize that forgiveness is a value that is implicit throughout the community. To give a fresh start to individuals is acknowledged as a key gospel value.
- There is a confidence among all students, which allows them to be actively involved in all aspects of the Catholic Life of the school regardless of their own faith. There is no reservation in participating in any aspect of Catholic Life. Students are keen to offer their gifts in the service of others.
- Students are proud of their Catholic community and the links to the parishes and the diocese. Present and past students embrace participation in parish and school liturgical celebrations. A high value is placed by students on the centrality of the Catholic Life and the faith of the school.
- There are real opportunities given to students to assist those in need through charitable events. This is evident in their work with CAFOD, UNICEF and the reverse advent calendar appeal. Opportunities to engage with the wider faith community are well developed. Students have enjoyed their visits to Rome, Lourdes and Peru. They have been deeply moved by the experiences and the insight into the catholic tradition of the school.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The governing body, headteacher and senior staff are fully committed to providing Catholic experience of the highest level to all members of the community. The mission statement permeates the whole community and is understood by all. This is reinforced by a weekly theme taken from the Church's liturgical year; this also encompasses the feast days.
- The school provides opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of all within the community. Prayer life is at the heart of the school and staff and pupils are committed to celebrating the liturgical life of the Church fully. This is evident in the careful planning of the liturgical cycle of the year. Staff readily participate in continuing professional development (CPD) activities, prayer and retreats that reflect the Catholic Life.
- Year seven students are warmly welcomed into the school with a welcome Mass where parents are also made to feel part of the community. There are opportunities for students to visit the chapel and learn about the Catholic Life of the school.
- Induction of new staff into the Catholic Life of the school is of high priority. The recently appointed head of Religious Education and second in department speak of the process as welcoming and giving a sense of belonging. Newly appointed learning support staff reflected the same message and acknowledged the ease of transition into their new role.
- Pastoral care of everyone within St Leonard's is a major focus. The effective pastoral system encompasses this core ideal. The dignity of every human person within the community is reflected through the entire curriculum, all policies and structures.
- The high standards of behaviour are rooted in gospel values clearly linked to personal responsibility, reconciliation and healing.
- There is a commitment to the most vulnerable members of the school community, with many strategies in place to ensure the highest level of care. The mental health project with year nine students is an excellent example of the school striving to meet the needs of all in an ever-changing world.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The school's mission statement shines through and informs all aspects of leadership. It inspires the ongoing drive for the development of the Catholic Life of the school.
- The highly professional governing body gives full support to the headteacher; they are dedicated to the continuing growth of St Leonard's. The senior leadership team gives full support to the headteacher and together they are fully committed to providing the best possible Catholic education for all.
- The provision for Catholic Life is intrinsic to all aspects of the school's self-evaluation and analysis. Governors are actively involved in the evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school. They are ready to challenge as well as support in order to ensure continuing development. They receive regular feedback from middle leaders including the head of Religious Education and senior leaders responsible for aspects of chaplaincy development. Governors play a vital role in the development of policies ensuring that the Catholic Life is paramount.
- Staff have a full understanding of the school's Catholic mission. All pastoral staff share in and support the provision for the prayer life of the school. There is an ongoing dialogue evaluating and enhancing future developments.

- The school is highly regarded within the local community and is not complacent in its drive for excellence. The school ensures that parents/carers have a thorough understanding of the school's mission and purpose. Parents interviewed as part of the inspection spoke very warmly about the school as a vibrant, caring community. They felt privileged to be part of a strong Catholic community where their children are able to thrive and grow in faith.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship. | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of provision for Collective Worship. | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship. | 2 |

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship is outstanding

- At St Leonard’s there is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship. Daily prayer is integral to the experience of each student. Students respond positively to the opportunities provided by a worshipping community.
- Students actively participate in preparing acts of Collective Worship, either in the tutor group setting or whole group celebrations. A variety of prayer approaches was observed where individual students led their peers. Students are imaginative in their approach to Collective Worship and are keen to reflect not only the liturgical season but also the prayer needs of the community. There is a genuine enthusiasm in the response to prayer, which acknowledges the importance of this major aspect of school life.
- Students of all ages display the confidence to use a variety of prayer styles. They listen to and reflect upon the prayers led by their peers. In interview students discussed their participation in prayer and liturgical celebrations and the difference this has made to their own spiritual development.
- A deep sense of respect and reverence during acts of prayer and worship is evident among all students, irrespective of their faith tradition. Students of other faith traditions are given opportunities to share their faith journey.
- Sixth form students are fully involved in the prayer tradition of the school. They prepare and lead acts of worship and display an excellent understanding of the Church’s liturgical year. Their insight into the value of prayer as a central feature of each day reflects this understanding.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding

- The whole community of St Leonard's recognizes the centrality of worship to the life of the school. It is clearly part of the day-to-day experience of students. Staff and students recognize that the opportunities for worship provided by the school are now part of their living faith. It underpins their sense of community and belonging.
- The liturgical seasons of the Church year are given prominence in the planning of worship. All feast days are marked in the life of the school and where possible Mass is celebrated on Holy Days of Obligation. This gives pupils a real sense of Church within the school.
- Members of the leadership team with responsibility for chaplaincy carefully plan and provide weekly resources to support staff in their delivery of Collective Worship. The high quality resources provide a platform for staff and students to develop liturgies personal to their tutor group or year group. Members of the community fully appreciate the planning of the year undertaken by members of the leadership team. Staff and students are also keen to contribute to the planning and delivery of prayerful experiences.
- There is a passion among staff to ensure that all students are given high quality experiences of worship. The planning of year group and tutor group Masses where students are able to take the lead is of high importance. Local clergy ably support them in their efforts to accomplish this. Staff are highly skilled in enabling students to be fully involved in acts of worship.
- The school opens its doors to the local community and becomes the focal point for the major liturgical events at Easter and Christmas for the parish of Durham Martyrs. The response to the celebrations is outstanding and attracts attendance from parishioners, parents, students and former students. St Leonard's is a focal point of the worshipping community.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Leaders and managers at St Leonard's are skilled in the planning and delivery of good quality experiences of Collective Worship. CPD for staff in this area is given a high priority. Opportunities are provided for staff and governors to deepen their own spiritual formation, an example of this is in the recent retreat at Ampleforth College.
- Leaders understand the seasons and feasts of the Church's liturgical year. The planned events reflect this. Students are able to access these and their response is good.
- The headteacher and senior team regularly lead and attend Collective Worship; their example models good practice for the whole community. They are able to evaluate at first hand the quality of provision, which informs future planning. They also promote the involvement of students in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship. This area would benefit further from the involvement of the lay chaplain.
- Collective Worship is reviewed as part of the school's self evaluation processes. The schools and the diocesan self-evaluation documents are used to evaluate Collective Worship in order to enhance its development.
- There is an ongoing informal dialogue between the senior team, middle leaders and students in order to review and improve acts of Collective Worship. Students contribute to the evaluation process following visits in the wider community. The support of the lay chaplain in the evaluation of Collective Worship would enhance this process further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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| • How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. | 1 |
| • The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education. | 2 |
| • How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education. | 1 |

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- Almost all students spoke very highly of their learning experiences in Religious Education. All students said that they enjoyed their lessons and found them challenging and thought provoking. They said the lessons have enabled them to be fully aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Behaviour in lessons is outstanding. Expectations are high.
- A number of lessons, across the three key stages, were observed. Almost all students are actively engaged in their learning and keen to improve their knowledge. Students concentrate well and display interest and enthusiasm for their learning. Most students know what to do in order to make progress.
- The Religious Education department’s GCSE results in 2017 were high – 80.4% attained A*-C, much higher than the national average of 71.3%. Progress at this level is in line with national averages. The school is aware that pupils from disadvantaged groups, including pupil premium, make less progress and are working to close the gap. A level results in Religious Studies are very strong being well above national averages in most years. Results rose in 2017 for grades A* - B to 66.7% against a national figure of 54.7%. Student progress at this level is above average in recent years.
- Pupils produce high quality work, both in class and in homework. They are developing a range of skills to support their learning. They approach their lessons with enthusiasm and great interest. Lesson observations and work scrutiny verified that most pupils make significant progress within lessons and over time.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- The planning of lessons in the department is linked to students’ current assessment and is consistently good. As a result of this, teaching is mainly good.
- The head of department ensures that schemes of work are in place and in line with Bishops’ Conference requirements. Schemes of work are also in place reflecting the new examination specifications in order to support staff in the transition to GCSE and A Level courses.

- Teachers are confident in their subject expertise and set high expectations for learning in Religious Education. Students respond positively and apply themselves well. Most students make good progress over time.
- Homework is regularly set, helping to consolidate students' learning and providing stretch and challenge.
- Most students are aware of their targets. Self, peer and teacher assessment are used to assist students to make progress. Students are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. Feed back to students is of good quality and leads to engagement, interest, and progress.
- In the lessons observed teachers employed a range of strategies in their teaching, including individual and collaborative work. As a result most students are motivated and involved in their learning.
- During observed lessons students were praised for their efforts and achievement. They responded well and this increased levels of motivation.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is outstanding.

- Leaders and governors have an inspiring vision for Religious Education at St Leonard's. They ensure that the curriculum at each key stage meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and also that the subject has the full allocation of curriculum time. The allocation of time to general Religious Education lessons in the sixth form is in line with diocesan recommendation.
- Religious Education has parity with other core curriculum subjects in relation to resourcing, staffing and professional development. The vision of the headteacher and governors has ensured the high status of the subject. They are ambitious for their students and seek high standards of achievement and behaviour.
- The self-evaluation of Religious Education is a high priority for the leaders and governors of St Leonard's. They are well informed of current best practice in the department through an effective feedback system from the head of department. The rigorous evaluation has highlighted the gap in the achievement of the most vulnerable students in Religious Education, which is now an area for improvement.
- The newly appointed head of department has embarked upon a regime of rigorous monitoring. Regular lesson observations and learning walks have led to well-informed self-evaluation, which is being used effectively to improve teaching and learning. This is likely to result in teaching that is outstanding and never less than good.
- The work of the Religious Education department has impact on the moral and spiritual development of students. Students speak of the opportunities for depth of thought and enquiry, which is encouraging their wider development. This fully supports the vision of leaders and governors who seek to promote the education of the whole person.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:	1
CATHOLIC LIFE:	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	1
COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship.	1
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	2
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.	2
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Leonard's Catholic School
Unique reference number	143583
Local authority	Durham
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Dennis Bradley
Headteacher	Simon Campbell
Date of previous school inspection	28 and 29 May 2012
Telephone number	0191 384 8575
Email address	admin@st-leonards.durham.sch.uk