

ST LEONARD'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Secondary School Lay Chaplain

Grade: G SCP 19-23 £32,061-£34,434 (pro-rata)
Hours: 37 hours per week, permanent, term time only plus 3 weeks
Reports to: Assistant Headteacher

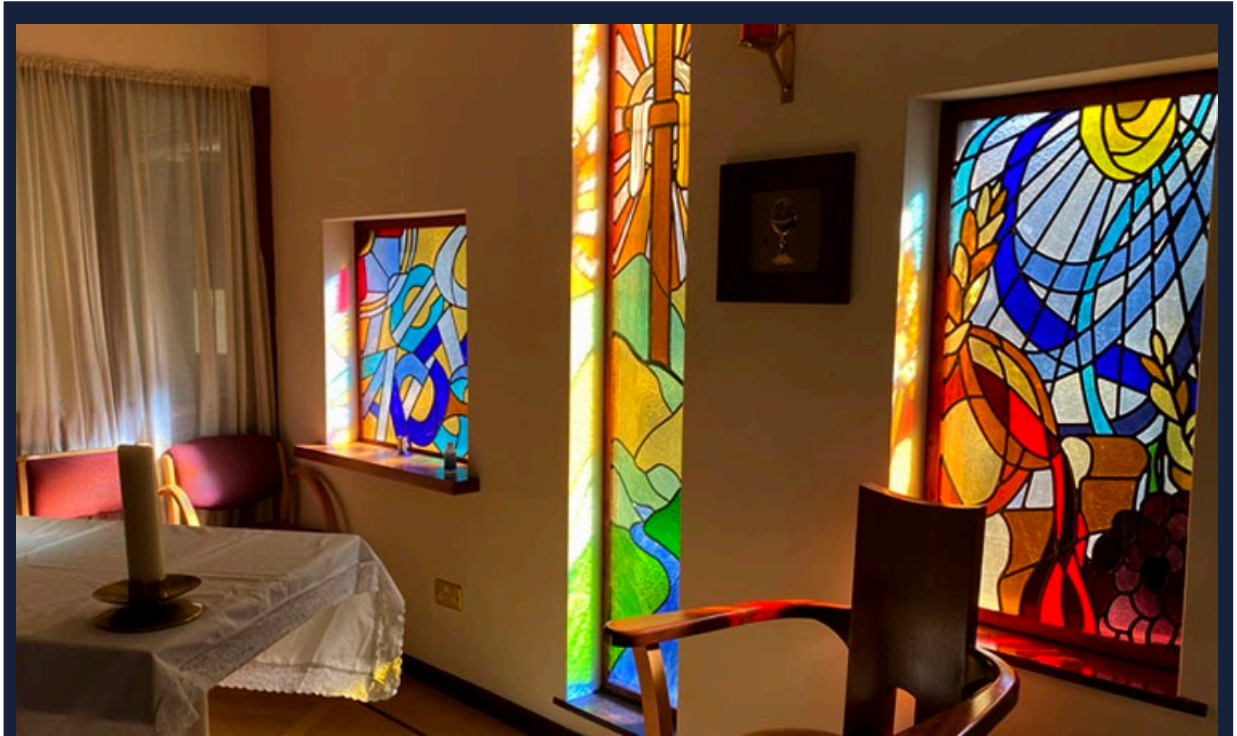


Diocese of
Hexham & Newcastle



Bishop Wilkinson
Catholic Education Trust
Through Christ, in partnership,
enabling all to flourish.

Head of School Welcome



Thank you for your interest in St Leonard's Catholic School. We are a warm, caring and high-achieving school, located in the centre of the historic cathedral city of Durham. We are part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, a family of 47 schools working together for the common good. Our Catholic ethos, high standards of behaviour and love for every member of our school community makes St Leonard's a special place.

Over the last few years, our academic performance has gone from strength to strength. At GCSE, we are the third highest performing school in the North East, out of 171 schools. In October 2024, the school was recognised as 'Outstanding' in all 5 areas of our inspection and in October 2025, our Catholic Schools Inspection also rated the school as 'Outstanding' in all areas.

The success of the school was recognised in December 2025, when St Leonard's won three Sunday Times Parent Power Awards for the North East: State Secondary School of the Year for Academic Excellence; Comprehensive School of the Year; and State Secondary School of the Year.

These achievements are based on our distinct Catholic education of the whole person. Through our traditional academic curriculum, extensive personal development programme and complemented by a huge variety of extra-curricular clubs, sports teams - including our own Rowing Club. We aim to provide many opportunities for our pupils and students to grow into the person, God is calling them to be.


Our newly opened school, delivered through the national School Rebuilding Programme, offers cutting-edge facilities while looking ahead to the restoration and opening of our Victorian house in 2027, which will sit at the heart of our site and add lasting character.

We invite you to explore our website to find out more about ourselves.

With every best wish.

David Simmons
Head of School

About St Leonard's



St Leonard's Catholic School is a thriving, oversubscribed secondary school with a vibrant sixth form, located in the historic cathedral city of Durham. We are proud to have been graded 'Outstanding' in all areas by Ofsted (October 2024), with inspectors praising our culture of care and achievement where every pupil is known and loved. They highlighted our expertly designed curriculum, exceptional teaching, and strong personal development programme that builds character and resilience. Pupils achieve exceptionally well and value the high-quality education they receive.

Our Catholic Schools Inspection (2025) commended St Leonard's as a community where faith and learning flourish together, describing our mission as "lived and visible in every aspect of school life." Inspectors noted the strength of our pastoral care, the commitment of staff to pupils' spiritual and moral development, and the inclusive, supportive environment that makes our school a joy to be part of.

We are entering an exciting new chapter as part of the national School Re-Building Programme, with a stunning new building which opened in Spring 2026. This will combine cutting-edge facilities with the charm of a restored Victorian house at the heart of our site.

As one of the highest-achieving schools in the North East—with almost 50% of GCSE grades at 9–7 and excellent A Level outcomes (Overall Grade B)—we have a strong track record for Oxbridge and Russell Group university applications.

We are proud to be part of the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust, the largest Catholic education trust in the North East, offering exceptional opportunities for collaboration, professional development, and career progression across 47 schools.

Catholic Distinctiveness



We are part of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, and the Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust. As such, we belong to the strong family of Catholic primary and secondary schools throughout the North East. This is a very supportive network of schools with whom we share the same ethos.

We are proud of our Catholic tradition and take very seriously our responsibility to nurture our faith in our young people, to support them on their spiritual journey through life. We have the huge responsibility of helping to prepare our pupils for this life and the next step in their life to come.

We are enriched by children and staff of other faiths, and we are proud of our inclusive approach to spiritual development. We actively seek opportunities in RE, form time, assemblies and the wider school life, to explore how the varying faith traditions complement each other and strengthen us all in our everyday lives.

Curriculum

The taught curriculum is the way in which we deliver the mission of the school, our aim is for a broad and balanced curriculum.

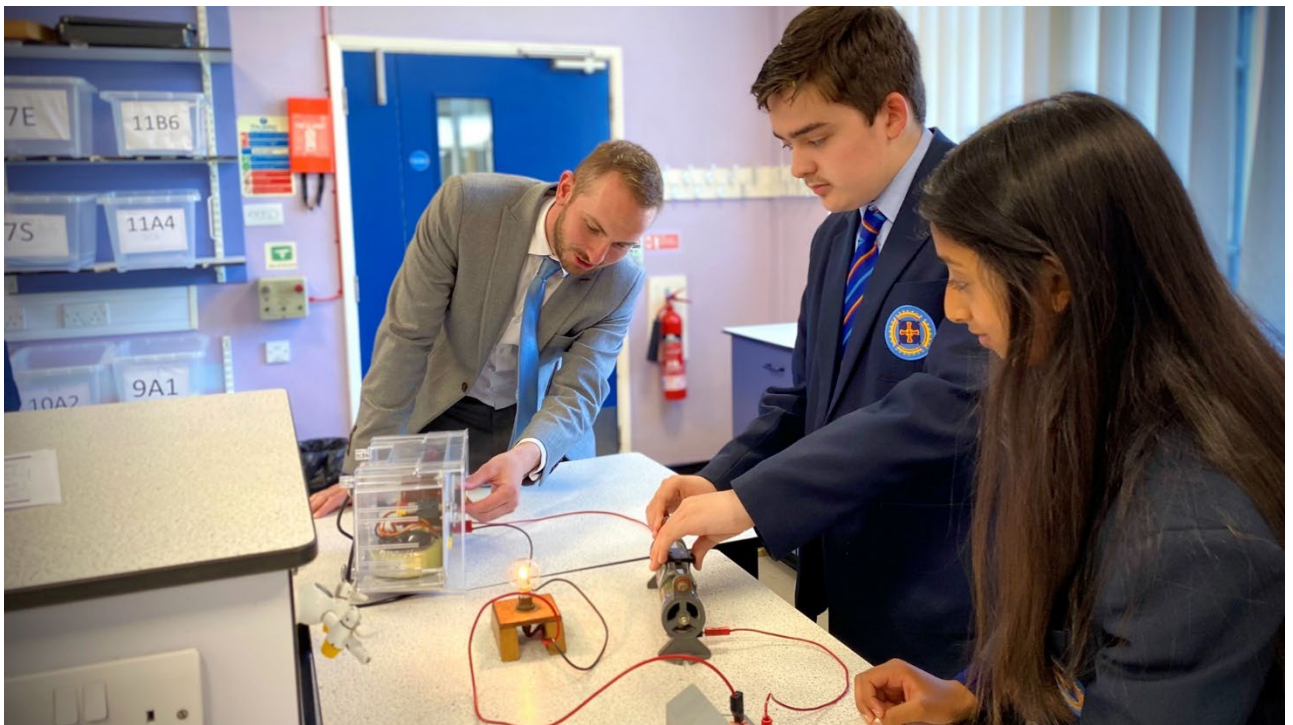
Key Stage 3

Our Key Stage 3 curriculum provides a broad and balanced foundation across a wide range of subjects, designed to inspire curiosity, build core skills, and prepare pupils for the challenges of Key Stage 4.

We place a strong emphasis on academic rigour, creativity, and personal development, ensuring every pupil has the opportunity to discover their strengths and grow in confidence. Through high-quality teaching and a supportive learning environment, we aim to develop well-rounded individuals who are equipped for future success at GCSE.

Key Stage 4

In Year 10 and Year 11, pupils begin to study a more refined curriculum, tailored to meet their needs. All pupils study for a GCSE in English Language, English Literature, Mathematics and Religious Education. Pupils study one of the following Science courses: Separate Science (3 separate GCSEs in Biology, Chemistry, and Physics) or Combined Science (pupils still study Biology, Chemistry and Physics and are awarded 2 GCSEs). Pupils then select 3 options, their first currently being a guided EBacc option: a choice of either Geography, History, French, or Computer Science and their second and third being from a selection of high-quality GCSE courses including: Music, PE, Fine Art, Graphics, Textiles, Photography, Technology, and Food Nutrition. We also offer Vocational courses in Sport, Health & Social Care, Creative Media and Engineering.



Sixth Form



Our outstanding Sixth Form offers a huge range of 27 academic and vocational subjects with great success, but our driving force is encouraging the intellectual curiosity for which universities are looking, and the problem-solving skills which employers prioritise.

Results continue to put our Sixth Form at the top of the league tables, with a 99.3% pass rate at A Level, and 35% of all grades awarded being A*/A. An impressive 1 in 6 students achieved entirely A*/A grades. Our vocational students came out top of their class too, with a pass rate of 100%, and an average grade of Distinction*.

Our 34 societies, many led by students, include Engineering, Marketing, Journalism, rowing and cricket, as well as book clubs and Taylor Swift Soc. Experienced staff lead students through the UCAS process and support with regular sessions for aspiring medics, with 67% moving on to Russell Group universities in 2025, as we maintain our reputation as the best school for entries to Oxford and Cambridge in the region.

Our young people reap the benefits of specialist subject teachers and seminar-style teaching, as well as the freedom to be in a separate young-adult environment, with practical classes in life-skills like student cooking and budgeting. Our holistic curriculum, with over 50 guest speakers a year from distinguished universities and exciting organisations, creates the character development which will make them socially aware, considerate and interesting human beings.

Why Work With Us?

- Outstanding behaviour and a calm, respectful learning environment.
- A supportive, faith-driven community where staff are valued and developed.
- High-quality professional development opportunities through the school and Trust.
- A school culture that prioritises wellbeing, collaboration, and excellence.
- Exciting future with state-of-the-art facilities opening in 2026.

An exciting opportunity has arisen for a reflective and compassionate School Lay Chaplain to join our community in September 2026. The role is permanent and full time (37 hours per week), term time only plus three weeks.

The successful candidate will be a compassionate and engaging practitioner who can support and nurture the spiritual and pastoral development of young people of all backgrounds and abilities. They will work effectively as part of a dynamic and dedicated team, placing the wellbeing and personal development of pupils at the heart of the school's mission. You will play a key role in leading and developing the school's chaplaincy provision, including liturgy, prayer, and opportunities for faith development across the school community.

You will be passionate about supporting all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged or have additional needs, ensuring that every young person feels valued, supported, and able to flourish. If you are committed to faith in action and wish to join a school where care, inclusion, and excellence go hand in hand, we would be delighted to hear from you.

For further details about the school, please visit www.stleonardsdurham.bwcet.com or to arrange a visit, please contact Rachael Thornton on 0191 3848575 or email rthornton@stl.bwcet.com

For an application form and further details about this vacancy please visit our website <http://bwcet.com/vacancies/> where applications can be completed online.

Closing date: 31 May 2026
Shortlisting date: 3 June 2026
Interview date: 9 June 2026

The Bishop Wilkinson Catholic Education Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act and is subject to an enhanced DBS check. An online search will be completed for all shortlisted candidates.

Job Description

Secondary School Lay Chaplain

St Leonard's Catholic School



Introduction

The school has been designated by the Secretary of State as a school with a religious character. Its Instrument of Government states that it is part of the Catholic Church and is to be conducted as a Catholic school in accordance with Canon Law, the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church and the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle. At all times the school is to serve as a witness to the Catholic Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ. The post therefore requires a practising Catholic who can show by example and from experience that he or she will ensure that the school is distinctively Catholic in all its aspects.

This appointment is with the governors of the school/board of academy directors under the terms of the Catholic Education Service contract signed with the governors/directors as employers and should be endorsed by the Bishop or his representative. It is subject to the current conditions of service for support staff and other current education and employment legislation.

The governing body and the Diocese acknowledge the importance of the role of the chaplain and will actively offer long term support, encouragement, affirmation and realistic challenge to the successful candidate.

This job description should be read alongside the National Standards document for School Chaplains. In this document, "Chaplain" refers to both ordained and lay Chaplains. The Chaplain, through his/her work and witness, will contribute to the spiritual and pastoral care of all members of the school community. He/she will have a central role in implementing the school vision statement and work with the Head Teacher in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school. He/she will nurture the faith formation and liturgical life of the school community. The Chaplain may also work to enhance the Religious Education curriculum where appropriate.

Core responsibilities

The Chaplain as witness

- Help people to recognise God's love for them and their need of God
- Inspire through example
- To encourage staff and pupils to live the faith by being involved in projects relating to social justice and global citizenship

The Chaplain as pastor

- Be visible and approachable around the school
- Accompany people at particular stages of their journey through life
- Get to know people individually and use every opportunity for contact to the best advantage
- Support the Head Teacher in his/her role as faith leader in school
- To play a central role in the pastoral system

The Chaplain as leader

- Support and further develop the spiritual, religious and liturgical life of the school.
- Use a collaborative style of ministry that encourages a team approach to chaplaincy to develop and lead a chaplaincy team.
- To offer opportunities of prayer for staff and students.
- If a priest, celebrate Mass and the sacraments regularly in school; if not, plan for the same to occur with local clergy
- Develop suitable activities to mark and celebrate the major feasts and seasons of the Church
- To support staff and pupils in their planning, preparation and leading of prayer and liturgy
- Help with the provision of suitable resources for the prayer life and worship of the school
- Ensure the school environment and displays reflect the school's Catholic Christian identity.
- Promote and care for the Prayer Room/Chapel as a sacred space
- Develop a school retreat programme for pupils
- Support students to participate in the sacramental life of the Church, where appropriate.
- To celebrate and share the faith life of the school with the wider community
- To include the local parishes in school celebrations, where appropriate
- Help with sensitive issues, advising on the Church's teaching

The Chaplain as educator

- To support and enhance the RE curriculum, where appropriate

The Chaplain as professional

- Have input into the school development plan, its operation and review
- Advise the Senior Leadership Team, where appropriate
- Challenge and support on standards, morals and the values of the Christian life
- To meet regularly with the line manager
- To engage in a regular process of appraisal

- To report to and work with Governors/Directors to promote the Catholic ethos and distinctive nature of the school.
- Attend where possible staff meetings and any other meetings as appropriate
- To engage with Continual Professional Development (CPD) relevant to the role of chaplain.
- To avail of opportunities for enhancing his/her own spiritual well-being
- To lead school based CPD for staff in relation to the Catholic life of the school.
- To be a member of ACCE and use the opportunities the organisation offers for professional and spiritual development.
- To be a member of the Diocesan Chaplaincy Group or its equivalent, attending meetings regularly
- To liaise with Diocesan agencies, groups and individuals, where appropriate
- To be fully committed to all safeguarding policies and practices



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 — DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION —

Person Specification – Secondary School Lay Chaplain

Secondary School Lay Chaplain

Essential Criteria	Criterion No.	Attribute	Stage Identified
FAITH COMMITMENT	E1	A practising Catholic (fulfilling the requirements of the Diocesan Briefing Note)	A/I/R
	E2	Secure understanding of the distinctive nature of the Catholic school and Catholic education	A/I/R
	E3	Understanding of the role of chaplain in the spiritual development of pupils and staff	A/I/R
	E4	Understanding of the school's role in the parish and Diocese	A/I/R
	E5	Leading school prayer and liturgy	A/I
QUALIFICATIONS	E6	Minimum 5 GCSEs including grade C or equivalent in English and mathematics	A/CC
EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE	E7	Experience of leading prayer and liturgy	A/I/R
	E8	Knowledge of church traditions, practices and rituals	A/I/R
	E9	Evidence of appropriate safeguarding knowledge and a commitment to ongoing safeguarding CPD	A/I/R
PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES	E10	Ability to communicate effectively to a range of audiences and in a range of media	A/I/R
	E11	Ability to build and maintain effective relationships	A/I/R
	E12	Ability to prioritise, plan and organise themselves and their work	A/I/R
	E16	Ability to develop effective teamwork	A/I/R
	E17	Ability to work on their own and as part of a team	A/I/R
	E18	Personal enthusiasm and commitment	A/I/R
	E19	An understanding of the role of the secondary school chaplain	A/I/R
PROFESSIONAL ATTRIBUTES	E20	Excellent written and oral communication skills (which will be assessed at all stages of the process)	A/I
CONFIDENTIAL REFERENCES AND REPORTS	E21	A positive and supportive written faith reference from a priest where the applicant regularly worships	A/I
	E22	A positive recommendation from current employer	A/I
	E23	A second professional reference	A/I

APPLICATION FORM AND SUPPORTING STATEMENT	E24	The form must be fully completed and legible	A
	E25	The supporting statement should be clear, concise (within the 1,300 word count) and related to the specific post	A

Desirable Criteria	Criterion No.	Attribute	Stage Identified
FAITH COMMITMENT	D1	Involvement in parish community	A/I
EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE	D2	Experience of chaplaincy work or equivalent	A/I/R
	D3	Experience of working in a secondary school	A/I/R
	D4	Experience of working as a Catechist or equivalent	A/I/R
QUALIFICATIONS	D5	Degree	A/CC
	D6	Professional development or training undertaken in preparation for chaplain in a Catholic School	A/CC
	D7	CCRS/CTC (or equivalent) or commitment to obtaining the certificate	A/CC/I

KEY – STAGE IDENTIFIED	
A	Application Form
I	Interview
R	References
CC	Checking Certificates



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