

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION**

School: St Joseph's RC Primary School

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School URN: 108395

Headteacher: Mr James A Hannah

Chair of Governors: Dr Des Jenkinson

Inspector: Dr Peter Mackie

Date of Inspection: 27/28 April 2010

This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham, the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, (c.f. Code Canon Law, 804, 806), and for the Governing Body of the school (Education Act 2005, Section 48). The inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school, situated in the western part of Gateshead and serving two parishes. The school is located next door to St Thomas More High School, to which almost all the year 6 leavers transfer. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is just over half the national average. The vast majority of pupils are white British and all speak English as a first language.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 207

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 78.7%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 18.9%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0.5%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 1.9%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 1%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 26.1%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 8

Number of part time teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 78%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 30%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

FS	10%	Yr 4	10%
Yr 1	10%	Yr 5	10%
Yr 2	10%	Yr 6	10%
Yr 3	10%		

Parishes served by the school:

St. Joseph's, Blaydon

St. Anne's, Winlaton

Overall Effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. Caring relationships and the principles of Catholic Education underpin all that the school does. High standards in curriculum Religious Education and collective worship are key strengths of the school and foster the development of a community in which inclusion is given a high priority. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is outstanding. Leaders' knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and their accurate and on-going monitoring and self-evaluation assists in identifying priorities and setting clear, challenging improvement plans. The area for improvement from the last inspection has been addressed and the school is constantly striving to improve the achievement of pupils in Religious Education and in the Catholic life of the school. Pupils are well cared for and respected. The school is held in high regard by pupils and parents and has an important place in the life of the parish.

Pupils are happy to come to school and demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. Although pupils enter the school with achievements lower than expected for their age, the progress they make is outstanding so the standards attained in Religious Education are high by the time they leave the school. Pupils benefit greatly from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils' levels of participation in the prayer and liturgical life of the school are outstanding and they develop independent skills in preparing and leading prayer and collective worship. Their spiritual and moral development is good.

The school provides a good Catholic education. Good, imaginative teaching promotes positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils make outstanding progress in Religious Education at Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The Religious Education curriculum provided is varied and is focused on maintaining and raising standards for all pupils. While adapting curriculum activities to meet the needs of children with special educational needs, the school is also able to assist the more able pupils to achieve their full potential by choosing imaginative activities that enable them to reach the higher levels of attainment. The quality of collective worship is outstanding and pupils respond with respect and reverence. Staff are good role models for pupils and offer pupils a variety of opportunities for prayer and worship.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher has shown determination and excellent judgement in leading the development of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. A clear vision shared by all ensures a common sense of purpose and newer staff are particularly well mentored and supported by more knowledgeable and experienced colleagues. Leaders are committed to raising standards and to the continuing development of the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator work very closely together to develop Religious Education within and outside the school. Strong links exist with parents, parish and the wider

community and opportunities taken to work together in partnerships in a variety of ways have a positive impact on the Catholic life of the school. The professional development of all staff is given high priority. This has resulted in all staff having a good understanding of how to raise attainment and achievement for all pupils, improve progress and develop the Catholic life of the school. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. Governors have a clear understanding of what is required in leading the school and are well informed of strengths and weaknesses.

What the school needs to do to improve further

In order to raise standards the school must:

- supplement the existing resources for curriculum Religious Education and classroom prayer focuses;
- develop further teachers' skills and confidence in moderating pupils' work in Religious Education;
- develop opportunities for pupils' families to share in the liturgical life of the school and parish.

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

2

Pupils throughout the school enjoy Religious Education. They speak with enthusiasm about what they have learned and are becoming religiously literate. Their knowledge, skills and understanding are developed well. They are able to discuss their own beliefs with confidence and can talk about how religion, belief and spirituality impacts on their lives. Pupils in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 steadily make outstanding progress, much more than the progress expected given their starting points. There is no significant variation in the amount of progress made by Catholics and those other than Catholic. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and activities are differentiated or support is provided to meet their needs. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards of attainment for most pupils are above average. At the end of Key Stage 2 a very large majority of pupils achieve level 4, which is the expected level of attainment, while a significant and increasing proportion of pupils achieve the higher level 5. The school makes good use of pupil tracking and moderation of work to maintain and enhance the children's progress and standards achieved.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and gain much benefit from it. They take on responsibilities enthusiastically and participate in activities within and beyond the classroom, which they recognise help them to become better people. They are reflective and enquiring and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important to many people. They are interested in the religious life of others and are comfortable and articulate when expressing their own beliefs. They show respect for Catholic and other religious objects in the school. They understand the importance of key celebrations in school and in the parish community throughout the liturgical year. They are considerate to others and respond to the needs of people beyond the school. Pupils understand the need for forgiveness and have a good understanding of right and wrong.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is outstanding. They listen intently, act reverently and are keen to take part in, plan and lead prayer and liturgies. They know what constitutes good worship. They sing joyfully, reflect silently and know a variety of ways of praying. They have a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and are becoming skilled in the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. Collective worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. They show respect for everyone in their school community and understand that some people have different beliefs and attitudes to spirituality.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. Teachers use a range of teaching styles, clear explanations, well paced lessons and good use of ICT to ensure that all pupils enjoy their learning and make outstanding progress. Good questioning techniques are used to extend pupils' learning and develop their concentration and application very well. Planning is linked to pupils' prior learning and is carefully differentiated to include challenging activities to enable all pupils, especially the more able, to achieve above average levels of attainment. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and support children well. Pupils are provided with feedback, both orally and through quality marking, which tells them what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.

The school has a clear and accurate picture of pupils' achievement in Religious Education. Assessment procedures in place are in line with diocesan requirements. The information this provides is used effectively to set pupils challenging targets and secure their continuous improvement and attainment of higher levels. Although moderation of pupils' work is well embedded staff are still developing skills and confidence in using the levels of attainment appropriately in order to maintain standards. The school's tracking systems to monitor pupils' achievement in Religious Education indicate that standards of attainment and pupils' progress are very high and improving.

The Religious Education curriculum is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well planned strategies and relevant resources which engage and motivate the pupils. The curriculum would, however, benefit from additional resources to reflect the most modern thinking and meet pupils' needs better. Long and short term planning ensures full coverage of the Religious Education curriculum and identifies pupils' prior learning, ensuring that provision meets pupils' needs very well indeed. The many opportunities the curriculum offers impact positively on pupils' spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding and ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are well met. It is fully inclusive, reflective and well planned enabling pupils to take an active part. Prayer is central to the life of the school. Staff regularly review and plan improvements and ensure that pupils are continuously becoming more skilled in preparing acts of worship. This has resulted in pupils eagerly and confidently leading worship in class, in school liturgies and in Eucharistic celebrations in Church. However, some of the prayer focuses in classrooms are not vibrant and stimulating enough. Acts of collective worship are well attended by parents, governors and the parish community and the school has good plans to assist pupils' families to join in the prayer life of the parish to a greater extent.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School

1

Leaders and managers promote and develop the Catholic life of the school very well. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development, are at the centre of the school's vision. The headteacher, deputy head and the governors have a clear understanding of the school's role in the mission of the Church. The strong promotion of Catholic values is clearly expressed to the whole community and this, coupled with high quality staff training, support and mentoring enables a high level of pupil involvement and participation. A complete range of informal and formal monitoring activities ensures continuous improvement in the Catholic life of the school.

Effective systems are in place for the monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education and leaders and managers use the data very well to bring about improvement in provision and in pupils' outcomes. The Religious Education co-ordinator is extremely knowledgeable, efficient and conscientious and is highly committed to raising standards of attainment. Supported and working closely with the headteacher, he takes a very positive lead, keeping staff well informed, supporting them confidently and has high expectations. Clear steps for on-going improvement are identified in both the co-ordinator's action plans and the school improvement plan through the school's own self-evaluation process.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties very effectively. They are very proactive, highly involved in the Catholic life of the school and also make a significant contribution to the work of the school. They are well informed and put the well-being and development of the whole child at the centre of their work. They play an active part in planning for continuous improvement, challenging and supporting the school very well especially through link visits in order to address areas for development. They are actively involved in the school community and have positive relationships with staff, pupils and their families. Governors understand the school's performance in Religious Education and know what needs to be done to maintain standards.

Leaders effectively develop partnerships with other providers and organisations. A wide range of partnership activities make a good contribution to pupils' well-being and to the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher ensures that links are well established with other Catholic primary schools, the Diocese, the parish, school clusters and international partners to provide opportunities which enable pupils and staff to enjoy, achieve and develop well.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The school is an inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. Pupils from all backgrounds are given the opportunity to work together enabling them to respect and celebrate difference. They are developing an understanding of the common good and a commitment to their global responsibilities. Pupils work well in communication with the school's international partners. Acts of collective worship are inclusive and each one's spiritual identity is respected. The Religious Education curriculum promotes attitudes of respect and tolerance for all faiths and those with none.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding** Grade 2 **Good** Grade 3 **Satisfactory** Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

Overall effectiveness	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
• how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education	2
• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	2
• how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	2
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	2
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
How effective leaders and managers are in developing 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 and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
• the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met	1
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being	2
• how effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	1