

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Alban's Catholic Primary School

Address: Rothbury Avenue
Pelaw
Gateshead
NE10 0QY

Telephone Number: 0191 4693251

Email address: stalbanscatholicprimaryschool@gateshead.gov.uk

School URN: 108398

Headteacher: Mrs Emma Bridon

Chair of Governors: Mr Vincent Cavanagh

Lead Inspector: Mrs Maureen Galbraith

Date of Inspection 27 and 28 November 2012

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Alban's is a larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is also average. Those supported at school action plus or those with a statement of special educational needs is below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils from other cultural groups is average.

The school has experienced some significant changes in staffing over the last two years and the headteacher took up post in April 2012.

Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	234
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	210
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	77%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	16%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	1%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	6%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	6%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	11%

Staffing

Full time teachers:	10
Part time teachers:	3
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	92%

RE Department Staffing

Number of full time RE teachers:	10
Number of part time RE teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	92%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	33%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education

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

Parishes served by the school

St Alban's, Pelaw
St Patrick's, Felling

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

CATHOLIC LIFE

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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KEY FINDINGS

- The overall quality of Religious Education is outstanding. The school is a very inclusive and welcoming community. Priorities since the last inspection have been met and there is a continuous drive for improvement for the good of the whole school community. Collective Worship is outstanding as is the Catholic Life of the school and overall provision for Religious Education. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is exceptional.
- Religious Education is outstanding overall, though teaching and assessment are good. Pupils learn and achieve very well. The Religious Education curriculum is vibrant and stimulating and self-evaluation by leaders and managers is accurate and timely resulting in year on year improvement.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. It has the highest possible priority and excellent relationships and communication are key strengths of the school. Pupils are very keen to participate in the varied opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from them. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and result in continuing improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- The promotion, monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship is outstanding as a result of which pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

To improve further the school needs to:

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning so that more lessons are outstanding and pupil progress and achievement improves even further by:
 - ensuring assessment information is used to provide differentiated activities to challenge all groups of learners;
 - further develop marking so that in all classes specific pointers for improvement are given to pupils on the next steps in their learning;
 - giving pupils time to respond to questions and act on advice given by their teachers

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take full advantage of the many and varied opportunities offered to them and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people. They respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community and are active participants in parish celebration and activities. Pupils are proud of their religious backgrounds and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. They treat others with a high level of respect and build relationships with people from all walks of life. They take their responsibilities seriously, seeing their roles as buddies, school councillors and fundraisers, for example, as important because it is about looking after people as Jesus asked us to do. Pupils express their own views and feelings with confidence and demonstrate a deep understanding of how important it is to forgive and be forgiven. They are also quick to congratulate others, take responsibility for their actions and show a keen interest in spiritual, moral and ethical issues. Exemplary behaviour is underpinned by outstanding moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. Governors, managers and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos. All staff are involved in nurturing and living out the school's mission statement and are fully committed to providing every opportunity to ensure all children "Live life to the full". There is a strong sense of community at all levels as evidenced by the quality of relationships and sense of unity that exists both among and between staff and pupils. The school is a happy and prayerful community and its Catholic character is effectively reflected through displays and artefacts in the learning environment and the creation of sacred spaces around the school, especially the prayer room. Clear policies and procedures are in place which provide the highest levels of pastoral support to pupils and there is an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable and needy. Catholic principles and values also underpin behaviour and relationship policies resulting in a strong shared vision for the Catholic Life of the school. Effective training supports staff commitment and the physical resources of the school are used very well to help achieve priorities set.

Leaders and managers are outstanding in promoting provision for the Catholic Life and mission of the school. Leaders have a strong sense of the mission of the church and the role of the school in expressing it. It is a very inclusive and welcoming community where the Gospel message of sharing and caring is seen in action. Leaders provide a clear direction for the Catholic Life of the school which is a priority, along with the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Focused staff training has developed awareness, understanding and a commitment to the school's strong Catholic ethos. Consequently, pupils are able to articulate the distinctive mission of the school well. Highly effective and well established school self-evaluation leads to well-targeted planning and actions that improve aspects of the Catholic Life of the school and subsequently outcomes for pupils. The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers. They have a clear understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. Committed to the school's mission, they are involved in self-evaluation and are prepared to challenge where necessary as well as support.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

HOW EFFECTIVE LEADERS AND MANAGERS ARE IN DEVELOPING THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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St Alban's is a prayerful community where pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding. They have an excellent grasp of what worship is about and are at ease when praying with their school community in large and small gatherings. Communal prayer is highly inclusive of all abilities and faiths and pupils are respectful and reverent. They have a thorough understanding of the purpose of worship and the wide variety of forms it can take, both formal and informal. The variety of prayer forms on offer is exceptional. Pupils participate extremely well in all forms of prayers, reflect silently and understand that song is a form a prayer. They lead prayer and worship with confidence and appreciate both planned and unplanned opportunities. They speak of feeling peaceful and "closer to God" afterwards and enjoy taking part. Collective Worship makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral and personal development of pupils.

The quality of provision for Collective worship is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school and well resourced. A variety of very high quality liturgical opportunities provided by the school enable parents, governors and the parish community to join the pupils in worship and prayer. They appreciate the opportunity to attend and comment with enthusiasm. The school has benefited from exceptional chaplaincy; pupils' liturgical formation is well planned, reflective, appropriate to their faith backgrounds and shows progression across the school. Pupils with different religious beliefs are assisted and supported in their prayer rituals. Staff are skilled in planning vibrant acts of worship and pupils are becoming increasingly skilled at planning and preparing worship within their own classes and with the whole school community as they move through key stage two (KS2). They would like even wider opportunities for this. Acts of Worship are appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils with themes based upon the scheme of work topic, the liturgical calendar and social justice. Sacramental Preparation is embedded and staff work with the parish to deliver the programme.

Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding. Leaders have a very clear vision for its development, which is shared with and understood by the whole school community. They have a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year (its seasons, rites and symbols) and use a range of artefacts, symbols and Information and Communications Technology very effectively to deepen pupils' appreciation, knowledge and understanding. Leaders model high quality worship in school, provide opportunities for staff and governors to worship together and ensure staff training is a priority in liturgical formation and spiritual development. Staff response to these opportunities is excellent and as a result pupils response to the provision offered is outstanding. The monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship is a priority in the regular review of school performance and is informed by feedback from pupils, staff, parents and governors with findings responded to in a thorough way. Leaders and managers view the school's prayer and liturgical life as at the very heart of its character.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education
- How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

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Pupils enjoy Religious Education and say why they value it. Most concentrate well in lessons, work at a good pace and show resilience when tackling challenging tasks. From below average starting points, pupils make rapid progress in the early years foundation stage. Good progress continues in key stage one (KS1), where there is a three year improving trend, and at the end of year two, standards are just above the Diocesan average with most pupils achieving a level two (the standard expected of them) and a few achieving level three. Good progress continues across KS2 with standards at the end of year six above the Diocesan average. Most pupils attain level four which is the age-expected level and a small minority achieve level five. During inspection pupils sometimes showed a deeper understanding orally than their written work reflected. Inspection findings show little variation in progress between boys and girls, Catholic pupils and those other than Catholic. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well according to their age and capacity. Across the school, pupils are developing well in their knowledge and understanding as well as in their ability to reflect on meaning and consider the impact of religious ideas on their daily lives.

Teaching and assessment is good overall. As a result of teaching which is mainly good, with some examples of outstanding practice, pupils achieve well over time. Varied teaching styles and an appropriate range of resources, including the use of ICT and adult support are all highly effective in moving learning forward and raising standards. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan lessons to build on prior learning and pupils' capabilities. Assessment information is being used effectively by teachers in setting targets for improvement but activities are not always sufficiently differentiated to challenge all groups of learners. As a result of sharing targets and success criteria, pupils are beginning to understand how well they are doing and what is expected of them but assessment procedures do not always ensure that higher levels of attainment are achieved. Marking and written feedback to improve learning are not consistent across the school and pupils are not given time to respond to questions asked and advice given. Pupils are becoming involved in self-assessment and can speak about using the 'I Can' statements as targets to improve their work.

The Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs extremely well and fulfils all requirements of the Bishop's Conference. Relevant and carefully planned, it considers the learning styles and interests of pupils. Enriched by a range of activities and partnership working, it provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and impacts very positively on it. Monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place and accurately inform areas of strength and areas for future development with tracking detailed and focused on ensuring different groups of pupils achieve equally well. There have been some leadership changes but the skills of the past team complemented each other extremely well and that of the current team continue to do so. Leaders ensure a strong and shared vision for Religious Education. It remains at the heart of the school, with all staff kept informed about priorities identified from a range of monitoring activities undertaken to evaluate the provision and outcomes for pupils. Leaders have well targeted plans in place which are kept under constant review to ensure maximum impact for pupils. The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents and works effectively with a range of partners to increase the range and quality of opportunities for pupils. Governors make regular visits to the school. They are involved in monitoring and evaluation activities, are extremely supportive of leaders and staff but are also confident and questioning in their approach.

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.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

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

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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.

1

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

	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Religious Education	1	2	1	1
Catholic Life	1	1	1	1
Collective Worship	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1