

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Cuthbert's RC Primary

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School URN: 108616

Headteacher: Mr Alan Egdell

Chair of Governors: Mrs Kath O'Neil

Inspector: Mrs Eileen Lawson

Date of Inspection: 30/31 March 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 Cuthbert's is an average sized Catholic primary school situated in North Shields. It serves a community with a mix of socio-economic circumstances. The school is mainly made up of white British pupils. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is lower than the national average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and /or disabilities is also lower than average. The school has a partnership agreement with St Bernadette's RC Primary School in Wallsend with whom they share an executive headteacher. The school is held in very high regard by the parents, the parish community and the governors.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 223

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 58%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 22%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 5%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 15%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 11%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 12.5%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 6

Number of part time teachers: 5

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 64%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 36%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

FS	10%	Yr 4	10%
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Yr 1	10%	Yr 5	10%
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Yr 2	10%	Yr 6	10%
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Yr 3	10%		
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Parishes served by the school:

St Cuthbert's, North Shields

St Joseph's, North Shields

St Edward's, Whitley Bay

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Cuthbert's is a good school with outstanding features. There is a shared ambitious vision which promotes the highest of expectations for all members of the school community. The inspirational head, senior leaders and managers have total commitment to the ethos and mission of Catholic education where continuous improvement in every aspect of school life is a priority. All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the school is continuously striving to improve standards. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is good because of rigorous and accurate self evaluation leading to clear challenging targets and appropriate priorities. Excellent relationships and communication are a key strength of the school.

Pupils are happy to come to school and are very proud of it which results in them having a very positive attitude to learning. All pupils make good progress from below average starting points but pupils in Key Stage 2 are not given enough challenging activities to enable them to achieve higher levels of attainment. Pupils benefit greatly from the impressive range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Their participation in and leading the prayer and liturgical life of the school is good but they are only just beginning to develop independent skills in preparing prayer and collective worship. The promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is good.

The school provides a good Catholic education. Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good which enables pupils to make good progress. Parents and carers are kept well informed. The Religious Education curriculum provided is rich and varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and raising standards. Assessment, monitoring and tracking systems which are continually under review and development, impact positively on pupil progress. The quality of collective worship is good. It is well defined within the school day and pupils respond with respect and reverence. The staff are good role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities.

The excellent leadership of the headteacher ensures that all pupils are well cared for, known and respected as individuals and motivated to make good progress. He has established a senior management team who are demonstrating a commitment to strive for continuous school improvement. Leaders are developing a clear sense of direction and purpose in curriculum Religious Education which is recognised as the core subject of the curriculum. Professional development of all staff is a high priority. This is tailored to both whole school and individual needs resulting in competent staff who are committed to ensuring that all pupils make good progress. The effective Religious Education co-ordinator is central to the continuing development of the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education.

What the school needs to do to improve further

To raise standards in Key stage 2:

- ensure that more appropriate tasks and activities enable Key Stage 2 pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment;
- develop pupils' skills in self assessment by embedding the 'I Can' statements into assessment procedures throughout the school;
- ensure a consistent approach to quality marking and feedback so that pupils know how to improve;
- extend further pupils' involvement in liturgies by developing their skills in planning and preparing prayer and collective worship.

PUPILS

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

2

The majority of pupils enjoy Religious Education. They speak enthusiastically about their lessons and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Assessment data, pupil tracking systems and work scrutiny all evidence pupils' continuous improvement. Standards in Religious Education are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. From below average starting points on entry to school, all pupils including boys and girls, Catholics and those other than Catholic make good progress throughout Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and this continues in Key Stage 2. However, pupils in upper Key Stage 2 are not given enough challenging opportunities to enable them to achieve their full potential. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who enter school at other than the normal yearly intake make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and support is carefully adapted to meet them. Pupils are becoming increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge, skills and understanding are developing well according to their age and capability. They discuss their faith confidently and are able to think spiritually.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and obtain much benefit from it. They willingly take on responsibilities and participate in activities within and beyond the classroom which they acknowledge help them to become better people. They are reflective and enquiring and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people. They show interest in the religious life of others, are comfortable when expressing their own beliefs and respect religious objects in the school. They understand the importance of key celebrations in the liturgical year and in the parish community. 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 what is right and wrong.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. They act with reverence and are keen to take an active part in prayer and liturgies. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop skills in planning and preparing liturgies. They know what constitutes good worship. They sing joyfully, reflect silently and know a variety of ways of praying. They are at ease when praying in their school community and appreciate what is taking place. They have a good understanding of the religious seasons 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 the school and understand that some have different beliefs and attitudes to spirituality.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

2

Teaching is good. A range of teaching styles, good questioning techniques, clear explanations, well paced lessons and good use of ICT ensure that all pupils are consistently interested in their learning and make good progress. Effectively planned lessons build on prior learning and meet the needs of most pupils. However, there are not enough challenging activities and tasks to enable upper Key Stage 2 pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which inspires and promotes confident learners. They have high expectations and make learning interesting which impacts positively on pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation. Support staff, are effectively deployed.

Assessment and monitoring procedures are good and give a clear and accurate picture of pupil progress and attainment. Leaders and teachers use this information to good effect, ensuring continuous improvement. Tracking systems for Religious Education have been successfully incorporated into the whole school assessment system which enables the school to focus on ensuring that different groups of pupils achieve equally well. This information is being used effectively by teachers in setting targets for improvement. All have a growing understanding of how to get the pupils where they want them to be. Regular assessment ensures that pupils know how well they are doing but the school recognises that pupils' skills in self assessment are not developed enough to enable them to become more responsible for their own learning. Pupils are provided with feedback, both orally and written, but the quality of marking to move pupils on in their learning is not consistent throughout the school.

The Religious Education curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of most pupils. It is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well planned strategies and relevant resources which engage and motivate the pupils. Long and short term planning ensures full coverage of the religious curriculum and identifies pupils' prior learning. The school is actively and continuously planning for new ways to enrich the curriculum and, by including Religious Education in the 'Creative Partners' initiative, has resulted in obvious enjoyment for pupils. The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for and impacts 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 good and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are well met. It is fully inclusive, reflective and well planned enabling pupils to take an active part. Staff regularly review and plan improvements and recognise the need for pupils to become more skilled in preparing acts of collective worship. Prayer is central to the life of the school and this is reflected in the way the pupils are enabled, from a very early age, to use special prayer areas and are given the opportunity to write their own prayers. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer and pupils eagerly and confidently share prayers in class and school liturgies and school masses in church. Acts of collective worship have a significant impact on pupils, parents and the parish. They are very public demonstrations of the ethos of the school.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

The school's leadership and management promote the Catholic life of the school well. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision. The deep commitment, drive and energy of the headteacher, is an inspiration to the whole school community. Self-evaluation at all levels within the school is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, thorough analysis and self challenge. This results in targeted and coherent planning and actions to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. High quality staff training and induction and procedures for performance management have ensured an awareness, understanding and commitment to the very strong Catholic ethos. As a result pupils have a high level of understanding of the schools' mission and are actively involved in supporting it.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious education are good. The efficient, newly appointed co-ordinator for Religious Education has effectively ensured that monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place and are impacting positively on pupils' learning, progress and standards. They accurately inform areas of strength and development and contribute to the good capacity for improvement. She has high expectations, keeps staff well informed and is very supportive. Detailed and well targeted plans are in place and strategies to effect improvement implemented effectively, resulting in continuously improving outcomes for pupils.

Governors provide effective challenge and support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They play an active part in planning for continuous improvement, showing determination in challenging and supporting the school in order to address areas of development. They are very committed and many have been involved in Diocesan and Local Authority training on how to be a 'critical friend'. They are well informed on issues relating to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school, understand well the school's performance in Religious Education and know what needs to be done to ensure continuous improvement of standards. They have been involved in producing a set of aims from the mission statement which are based on Gospel values and have played a full part in drawing up the school development plan and in particular the sections for Religious Education. Consequently they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and put the well-being and development of the whole child at the centre of their work. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of leaders and staff. They are actively involved in the school community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff.

Leaders and managers are extremely successful at developing partnerships with other providers and organisations. The school engages in an excellent range of partnership activities which impact significantly on pupils' achievement and well-being and to the Catholic life of the school. The dedicated headteacher ensures that links are well established with other Catholic primary schools, the Diocese, the parish and local organisations to provide opportunities which enable pupils and staff to enjoy, achieve and develop well. His work as ambassador for the British Council has resulted in developing links with Catholic schools in Rwanda enabling the pupils to develop relationships with Rwandan children and make a

difference to their lives through the 'Make Poverty History' campaign. Staff training is often shared with other schools in the local Roman Catholic partnership.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The school is a highly inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each other through, for example, the school pastoral system, the school council, the buddy system between year 6 pupils and younger and more vulnerable children. Pupils are offered an extremely extensive range of opportunities to collaborate and engage with those from different backgrounds locally, nationally and globally. As a result they recognise, respect and celebrate differences and have a strong sense of the common good. They demonstrate an excellent awareness and understanding of their global responsibilities. Collective worship is inclusive and the spiritual and religious identity of each individual 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	2
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	2
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education	3
• 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	2
How effective the provision is in promoting 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	2
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	2
• 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	2
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
• 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	2
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being	1
• how effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	1