

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
SPIRITUALITY, FORMATION & EDUCATION SERVICE



**S48 Inspection Report
St Gregory's RC Primary School,
South Shields**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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| School: | St Gregory's RC Primary School |
| Address: | Harton House Road South Shields Tyne and Wear NE34 6DZ |
| Telephone Number: | 0191 4552909 |
| Email address: | stgregorysrc@s-tyneside.net |
| School URN: | 108716 |
| Headteacher: | Ken Smithson |
| Chair of Governors: | Mrs W Horwood |
| Inspector: | Michael Ewing |
| Date of Inspection: | 13 and 14 March 2012 |

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 Gregory's is a single form primary school of average size serving the community since 1939. The school serves the parishes of St Gregory's and Holy Rosary in South Shields in an area with high levels of unemployment and social deprivation. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average as is that of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school offers fully extended provision with established breakfast and after-school club provision. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. It holds the 'Healthy School', 'Activemark' and the International Schools Intermediate awards.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 218

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 75%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 22%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 3%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 0%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 3%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 25%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 7

Number of part time teachers: 3

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 75%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 3

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:

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|----|-----|------|-----|
| 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 Gregory's, South Shields

Holy Rosary, South Shields

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Gregory's is an outstanding, fully inclusive Catholic school where faith and practice are prominent features of daily school life. The mission of Catholic education not only underpins all that the school does but is lived out by staff and pupils alike. The pastoral care the school offers is outstanding and is a major feature in the school's success. The school is held in high regard by the pupils, parents and the local community and has an important place in the life of the parishes it serves. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding due to the broadly-based school leadership's drive and determination to continue to raise standards. All areas from the last inspection have been addressed.

Outcomes in Religious Education (RE) are outstanding. Pupils enter the school with skills that are below those that are expected for their age. All pupils make at least expected progress throughout all key stages with many achieving beyond the expected standard at the end of key stage two (KS2). Pupils' work is consistently of a high quality. Pupils show enthusiasm for RE lessons and speak confidently about the religious topics they study. Pupils' contribution to the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Relationships within the school between pupils of all ages create a harmonious environment where pupils have a strong sense of personal worth. They show high levels of respect and seek justice for all within and beyond their community. Their response to the school's collective worship is outstanding. They act with reverence and are keen to participate fully through drama, music and leading prayer. Pupils from the earliest years onwards require more opportunities to plan and prepare liturgies.

The school's provision for Catholic Education is outstanding due to purposeful learning, highly effective teaching and the range of good quality resources and artefacts that are used to enhance the experiences offered to all pupils. A range of teaching strategies, including the use of art and drama are used throughout the school. Appropriate differentiation, particularly at upper KS2, enables all groups of pupils to make at least good progress with some pupils making exceptional progress. Assessment and tracking procedures are well developed and are used effectively. The school sets challenging targets for all pupils. Regular assessment ensures that pupils know what they are doing well and are guided in how they need to improve. Achieving greater consistency in the quality of marking pupils' work is an area which the school has identified as a development area. The RE curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners extremely well and the quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding.

Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The RE team, established in a time of transition, has ensured that this central area of school life has a high profile. School leaders are a source of inspiration to the whole community. A range of monitoring activities provide strong evidence of the school's strengths and weaknesses in the Catholic life and provision for RE. There is a clear vision which is shared by all. The governing body has an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses

and demonstrate their outstanding support through their active involvement in the life of the school. School leaders recognise the need to establish a more coherent approach to evaluating the school's effectiveness through rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. The school has developed excellent partnerships to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being. The leadership team is successfully developing stronger links to ensure the feeder parishes are fully involved in the life of the school. The promotion of community cohesion by leaders and managers is outstanding.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Raise standards in curriculum RE by ensuring that the 'best practice' evident in the marking of some pupils' work is developed and consistently followed throughout the school.

- Further embed monitoring and evaluation by ensuring that the school has a rigorous and coherent plan for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Catholic life and RE.

PUPILS

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

1

Outcomes for pupils at St Gregory's in RE are outstanding. Pupils from all year groups achieve well. They engage positively during RE lessons and want to do their very best. They are able to talk confidently about their learning in RE and are keen to participate, demonstrating their enthusiasm for learning. There are no notable differences between groups of learners and the school ensures that pupils are supported in order to make progress according to their needs and capabilities. Pupils enter the school with skills that are below those that are expected for their age. Through tracking the progress of pupils, the school ensures that challenging targets are achieved. Pupils' attainment is high. Assessment data indicates that the very large majority of pupils have achieved the expected level at the end of KS2 with many exceeding. Pupils accelerate their progress as they progress through KS2 with the majority of pupils making exceptional progress in year six (YR6).

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They are reflective and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important to many people and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people. They demonstrate great maturity and respond well to being given responsibilities. They enjoy the pastoral care which the school offers and show great care and high levels of respect to each other and to adults within the school community. They are extremely articulate when expressing their own beliefs and respectful of those with beliefs different to their own. They understand the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and benefit greatly from the chaplaincy offered to them through the support given by the priest. They respond to the needs of people beyond the school and show a well-developed awareness of compassion for others.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is outstanding. They take part in and lead prayer and liturgy with ease, confidence and enthusiasm. They show reverence and respect during liturgies and are keen to participate with music, drama and other forms of prayer. Collective worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupil's involvement in planning and preparing routine class liturgies from the earliest years in the school is an area for development.

PROVISION

1

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

The overall standard of teaching in RE is outstanding resulting in high quality and purposeful learning. Teachers plan thoroughly and creatively using their knowledge of pupils' capabilities and prior learning. Good deployment of support staff ensures that identified pupils achieve their best. Resources, including ICT, are very well used to make learning exciting and accessible. Pupils are highly motivated because the majority of teachers have excellent subject knowledge and are secure and skilled in facilitating excellent learning and pupil progress.

The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance is good. The schools sets challenging targets for children which are monitored systematically and frequently. Pupils are aware of how well they are achieving and are becoming increasingly skilled at knowing how to improve. There are excellent examples of best practice in the marking of pupils' work which enables pupils to apply their learning in RE lessons to their lives. The school recognises that greater consistency in the use of learning objectives and consistency in marking will accelerate further the rate at which pupils make progress.

The school provides an outstanding RE curriculum which fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The well embedded pastoral care programme is a very strong feature of the school's provision in this area. Teachers provide a rich and stimulating range of experiences and activities which enable the pupils to thrive in their learning. The curriculum contributes significantly towards developing pupils' spiritual and moral development. Staff and pupils alike are highly motivated and engaged. Pupils speak warmly, knowledgeably and with enthusiasm about their work in pastoral care groups. The learning environment is vibrant and eye-catching which enthuses pupils and captures their imagination. Pupils are encouraged to share their own ideas and concerns and know that their contributions are highly valued.

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and its quality is outstanding. Pupils' liturgical and spiritual formation is well planned, appropriate to faith background and age and is progressive. Developing links with the parishes support pupils' ability to lead and participate in a variety and range of prayerful and liturgical celebrations with parishioners. Attendance by parents and others associated with the school is facilitated and encouraged and has a profound impact on parents. The school's high quality provision ensures the spiritual needs of the pupils are well met.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

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

Leaders and managers are outstanding at the promotion of Catholic values and principles. The Catholic mission of the school is given the highest priority and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision. The deep commitment, energy and drive of the headteacher and senior leaders are a source of inspiration to the whole school community. The priority given to the Catholic life of the school is reflected in the school's development plan and the establishment of the RE team, consisting of key people within the school community. The RE team ensures that improvement in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school is continuous and constant. High quality staff training and induction have developed awareness, understanding and commitment to the school's strong Catholic ethos.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for RE is good. The RE team ensures that good assessment and tracking systems are in place and these have had a good impact on raising standards. There is good evidence of pupils being challenged to achieve at the highest level. School leaders conduct a range of monitoring activities although the school recognises its need to develop a more coherent programme of monitoring, analysis and self-challenge to further enhance the plan for improvement.

The governing body makes a significant and outstanding contribution to the work and Catholic dimension of the school. The effectiveness of the governing body has improved since the last inspection. It discharges its statutory and canonical responsibilities very well. There is a good range of expertise amongst governors who work efficiently and effectively with parents, staff and pupils for the good of the school. They are more fully informed about the strengths of the school since the last inspection and are proactive in tackling areas of weakness and holding the school to account. The relationship between governors and the school is both strong and supportive.

There are excellent partnerships with parents, parish and the wider community resulting in a variety of activities which improve the school's provision. These activities also impact significantly on pupils' achievement and well-being and notably promote Catholic learning. Leaders and managers effectively develop partnerships with other providers and organisations. Well established links with other Catholic primary schools, the diocese, the parish and other local organisations provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to enjoy, achieve and further develop as well as promoting the personal and professional development of staff.

Leaders and managers' promotion of Community Cohesion is outstanding. The school is a highly inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and strong sense of belonging. As a result, the school is developing pupils who recognise, respect and celebrate difference, have a strong sense of the common good and show a heightened awareness of how they contribute to and learn from those on the margins. They are developing into exemplary global citizens. Acts of worship in the school are inclusive and each one's spiritual identity is respected. The RE curriculum promotes attitudes of respect, tolerance and justice 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**

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| Overall effectiveness | 1 |
| The school's capacity for sustained improvement | 1 |
| How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ pupils' standards of attainment in RE | 1 |
| <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"> • how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship | 1 |
| How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in RE | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which RE curriculum meets pupils' needs | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils | 2 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being | 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion. | 1 |