

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



S48 Inspection Report

St Bega's RC Primary School, Hartlepool

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School:	St Bega's RC Primary School
Address:	Thorpe Street Hartlepool TS24 0DX
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School URN:	111697
Headteacher:	Mr Michael Cooney
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Pat Carroll
Inspector:	Mrs Angela Boyle
Date of Inspection:	29 and 30 May 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 Bega's is a smaller than the average-sized primary school serving the parish of St Mary's in Hartlepool. This is an area of significant social disadvantage that has undergone considerable regeneration in recent years. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and increasing. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is just below average. Most pupils are from a white British background, there are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none speak English as an additional language.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 157

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 68%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 30%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 2%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 0

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 4%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 17%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 6

Number of part time teachers: 2

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 54%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 27%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:

FS	10%	Yr4	10%
Yr1	10%	Yr5	10%
Yr2	10%	Yr6	10%
Yr3	10%		

Parishes served by the school:

St Mary's, Hartlepool

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Bega's is a good Catholic school where the mission and ethos of Catholic education underpins all that the school does. The school is a welcoming, friendly community with a strong family ethos, there is a strong sense of belonging where all are respected. Very good relationships and the close co-operation of the whole school team, is a key strength of the school. Parents are highly appreciative of the school's work stating that they are happy their children are part of St Bega's family and that Christian teaching permeates all that the school does.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good because leaders and governors ensure that strengths and areas for development are well identified. There is a clear vision and plan in place for the future direction of Religious Education (RE). Action to improve has been concerted and effective and standards have risen rapidly. Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed. Strong links with the parish community are well established and the school has an important place in the life of the parish.

Pupils are proud of their school and have a positive attitude to learning. Standards attained in RE are average with significant improvement evident since the last inspection. Most pupils are making good progress however more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Pupils work effectively and are productive but they are not yet able to identify ways to improve their work and marking guidance does not support them in this. Pupils benefit greatly from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils respond to worship with respect and reverence. Some pupils have experience of planning and leading worship and express their enjoyment in doing so, but independent skills in planning and leading worship are not well developed.

The provision for Catholic education is good. Teaching and learning are good overall with some outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. However, activities are not always sufficiently differentiated to allow more able pupils to make the progress they are capable of achieving. Marking guidance and feedback given to pupils is supportive but is not consistently used to enable pupils to improve their work further. The monitoring and tracking systems are a key feature of continuous improvement and have a significant impact on achievement and progress. The quality of collective worship offered to pupils is good.

The leadership and management of the school are good. Leaders have a clear sense of direction and purpose, the vision is shared by committed staff and a well informed governing body. The highly motivated senior leadership team have communicated high expectations to staff about securing improvement. The professional development of all staff has been given a high priority and has had an impact on teaching and learning. Challenging but realistic plans are in place which are detailed and accurate and continue to have a measurable impact. The governing body discharge their responsibilities well and ensure all statutory and canonical responsibilities are met. Very good links and partnerships exist with a number of agencies which reinforce the high standard of care and support for pupils' safety and well-being. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Develop further the effectiveness of the learning process in Religious Education by:
 - ensuring that differentiation and appropriate levels of challenge are integral to teaching and learning.
 - ensuring that marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.
 - ensuring that pupils are given opportunities to develop skills in self assessment.
 - continue to develop pupils' skills in preparing and leading acts of collective worship

PUPILS

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

2

Pupils are happy to come to school, have very positive attitudes and speak enthusiastically about their learning. They work with concentration and want to do well. They enjoy their RE lessons, are interested and enthusiastic and produce work of a good standard. Pupils' religious literacy as well as their knowledge, understanding and skills are now developing well as they move through the school.

Pupils enter the early years foundation stage with abilities and skills which are below average. Attainment at the end of key stage one (KS1) and key stage two (KS2) is average but very few pupils achieve level three (L3) at the end of KS1 or level five (L5) at the end of KS2. This indicates that pupil progress is hindered when they are not sufficiently challenged. Inspection evidence, current tracking data and predictions for 2012 show evidence of improving levels of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and support is adapted to meet them. Systems are in place to evaluate the progress of all different groups of learners. Inspection findings show little variation between boys and girls, and Catholics and those other than Catholic.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. Pupils are proud of their school and appreciate what it means to belong to a Catholic school community. They understand and can articulate gospel values and have a good understanding of right and wrong stating to 'we are helped to make the right choices'. They know about key celebrations in school and in the parish community throughout the liturgical year. Pupils respond willingly to the needs of people beyond the school and can talk about why they fundraise for various charities and the importance of doing so.

Pupils' response to and participation in the school's collective worship is good. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in liturgies and worship. All pupils, from the youngest in nursery to pupils in year six (Y6) sing enthusiastically and join in prayers with confidence. Pupils are becoming skilled in the use of scripture and religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer and there is evidence of this being at the early stages of development. However, they do not regularly prepare and lead worship independently. 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

2

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good overall with some outstanding teaching observed during the inspection. A variety of teaching strategies, good questioning skills, clear explanations and well paced lessons ensure that pupils are interested in and enjoy their learning. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and good use is made of ICT which inspires and promotes confident learners. However, tasks are not sufficiently differentiated nor challenging enough to ensure more able pupils achieve higher levels of attainment and teachers' expectations of what is required vary. Support staff are effectively deployed and less able pupils are supported well in their learning.

Assessment and academic guidance are satisfactory. Effective assessment systems are in place and monitoring is securing improvement. Assessments are accurate; pupil progress is tracked and is now being used to produce targets for pupil attainment. Appropriate actions are now in place to tackle areas of under-achievement. Teachers mark work regularly using RE level descriptors and their comments are positive and support learning. However, guidance, feedback and marking to move learning on are not consistent and systems to allow pupils to respond are not effective. There is some evidence that the school is using the 'I Can statements' to support learning and assessment. However, this is inconsistent throughout the school. The school recognises the need to develop self-assessment.

The RE curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well. It is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well planned strategies and relevant resources which promotes a high level of motivation and engagement of pupils. Planning ensures full coverage of the curriculum and identifies pupils' prior learning. The RE curriculum, the effective use of 'Statements to Live By' and activities such as Current Affairs and Reflection Time make a significant contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are met. A regular rhythm of prayer is built into the daily life of the school and an established pattern of opportunities are offered for the school community to gather for prayer, reflection and liturgy. Some pupils can plan, prepare and lead acts of worship but this has yet to become embedded throughout the school and the need for further development is recognised. Parents and parishioners are welcomed and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the school to be involved in worship. There are facilities within the school for pupils with different beliefs to practice their faith.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

2

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. The headteacher, senior staff and the governors have a clear understanding of the school's role in the mission of the Church. Leaders demonstrate commitment to Catholic values and principles. These values are at the heart of school life and are clearly expressed to the whole community. Staff have responded very positively to intensive support from the diocese and they are highly motivated and committed to school improvement. Effective systems are now in place to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school which are clearly linked to school improvement. Findings are regularly commented upon in reports to governors.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for RE is good. The commitment and leadership of the headteacher, who is also the RE co-ordinator, has had a significant impact on the raising of standards in RE. Self-evaluation within the school is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge. The robust systems which are now in place and the commitment of the whole staff team are having a measurable impact on standards. Detailed and well targeted plans are in place and strategies to bring about improvement are implemented very effectively, resulting in continuously improving outcomes for all pupils.

The work of governors is good. Governors discharge their canonical and statutory duties effectively. The challenge and support provided by the governing body have ensured rapid improvement since the last inspection. They make informed decisions which determine the direction of the Catholic life of the school. They have an excellent grasp of the challenges faced by the school and are involved in setting appropriate priorities for improvement. Governors understand the school's performance in RE and know what needs to be done to raise standards. They have positive relationships with staff, pupils and their families, are supportive of leaders and are confident and questioning in their role.

Leaders and managers are successful at developing partnerships with other providers and organisations. The school engages in a wide range of partnership activities which impact significantly on pupils' achievement and well-being. The headteacher is actively committed to the Hartlepool family of schools which involves collaborative working with a local primary school and other Catholic schools. The headteacher plans with these and other groups to offer varied and purposeful opportunities for the pupils which the school alone could not provide. The area pastoral co-ordinator who aims to draw young people into their parish community is a significant partner. The parish and school community collaborate well together in a range of activities; both communities benefit positively from the effective partnership.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is good. St Bega's is a truly inclusive welcoming community with a strong sense of belonging and respect for diversity. Pupils have a well developed understanding of the common good and a commitment to their global responsibilities. The school has established strong links with schools in India and holds events to aid local, national and international communities, pupils are able to explain the impact of their many fundraising efforts. The RE curriculum makes a positive contribution towards community cohesion. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures which helps to prepare them for life in a diverse society.

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 RE	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 RE	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 RE	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in RE	3
• the extent to which RE 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 RE 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	2
• how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	2