

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



Section 48 Inspection Report

**St Cuthbert's RC Primary School,
New Seaham, Durham**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School:	St Cuthbert's RC Primary School
Address:	Mill Road New Seaham Durham SR7 0HW
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School URN:	840/3300
Headteacher:	Mr Michael McNichol
Chair of Governors:	Mr David Groark
Inspector:	Mrs Christine Ingle
Date of Inspection:	20 and 21 June 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 Cuthbert's primary school is a smaller than average primary school which serves the parish of St Cuthbert's in New Seaham but it also draws pupils from neighbouring parishes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Lower than average proportions of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and/or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported with school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school is held in high regard by the community.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 185

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 74%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 20%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 1%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 5%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 3%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 13%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 9

Number of part time teachers: 0

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 78%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 55% with further 22% attending course

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:

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 Cuthbert's, New Seaham

St Mary Magdalen, Seaham Harbour

St Joseph's, Murton

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 which makes good provision for Catholic education. It is a warm and welcoming community in which everyone gives a high priority to promoting their Catholic mission. Relationships within the school are good and pupils work well together. They are sensitive to the needs of others, well-mannered and caring. Discussions with parents demonstrate they are supportive of the school and appreciative of the care given to their children. The school has a good capacity for improvement and is held in high regard by the community.

Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils enter school with attainment which is in line with national expectations. Standards of attainment are good. Overall progress is good but the rate of progress is not consistent across the school. It is fastest in the foundation stage (FS) and key stage two (KS2) where teacher feedback points to improvement and assessments are used to match learning tasks to pupil ability. This mismatch of learning tasks to ability prevents more able pupils attaining higher levels. Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and the benefits they gain are demonstrated in the gentleness with which they treat each other and their awareness of the value of forgiveness. Pupils say they enjoy collective worship and they respond well to the opportunities offered by the school. Their participation is good; they are confident in leading worship and their skills in preparing worship are growing.

The provision for Catholic education is good. Teaching is good overall but there are some inconsistencies in the use of assessments and in the provision of activities carefully matched to pupil abilities. Teachers' marking, although very good in some classes, is not consistent across the whole school. It is best where it clearly points children to make improvements in their Religious Education (RE) work. The RE curriculum is good and matched to pupil needs. The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good with a varied programme of formal and informal prayer experiences offered to the pupils.

Leaders and managers are good at promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school. This aspect of the school's work is monitored informally by the leadership team and formally through the school development plan. The monitoring and evaluation of RE is good. The RE co-ordinator has ensured systems are in place to bring about improvement and managers are aware of the improvements they need to make. The governing body fulfils its role to a satisfactory extent and is growing in its ability to challenge for improvement. Catholic partnerships are well developed and extend the opportunities available for pupils. Community cohesion is good. The school reaches out into the community and pupils benefit from learning experiences available there.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Ensure consistency and raise standards by :
 - using teacher feedback which points to improvement in all classes;
 - using assessments to match learning tasks to pupil ability especially for the more able in all classes.

- Continue governor development.

PUPILS

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

2

Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their learning in RE and say their lessons are interesting because teachers give them variety in what they do. Pupils enter school with skills in line with national expectations but have low knowledge in RE. In the FS they gain knowledge quickly and they can demonstrate they know stories about Jesus and that it is important to say sorry. By the end of key stage one (KS1) most pupils attain level two (L2). This is average attainment. At the end of key stage two (KS2) more than 80% of pupils are attaining level four (L4) which demonstrates good attainment. Achievement at levels three and five (L3 and L5) is low as the mismatch of learning tasks to ability prevents more able pupils attaining higher levels. Data for KS2 demonstrates improvement and pupils work shows understanding and thoughtfulness across a variety of topics. Progress across the school is good but is faster in FS and KS2 where teacher feedback points to improvement and assessments are used to match learning tasks to pupil ability. Less able pupils are well supported and their progress is carefully tracked. The school is aware that progress in KS1 slows down and is addressing it.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They take on responsibilities as 'buddies' and friends to younger children and do it well. The school council are thoughtful and express their views well. They know they represent all the pupils in school and are keen to ensure fairness. Pupils are knowledgeable about other religions and know that religious beliefs effect everyday living. Pupils benefit from the school's Catholicity in a variety of ways. They are aware of a duty to help others and are active in support of a variety of charities. They care for each other and understand the importance of forgiveness.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. Most pupils act with reverence and know some traditional prayers. They are keen to take part in prayer opportunities. Conversations with pupils show they are knowledgeable about scripture stories and can talk about feasts and seasons within the Church's year. Pupils are able to write their own prayers and are confident in leading worship. Their skills at preparing worship are growing. Collective worship and the themes used from 'Statements to Live By' make a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

The quality of teaching in RE is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use diocesan guidance to plan a variety of interesting activities which ensure pupils concentrate well in lessons. Learning is most effective where teacher feedback points pupils to improvement and accurate assessments allow activities to be carefully matched to pupil ability. The school is aware there is more work to be done in this area especially in KS1. The school is focused on extending good practice and raising standards especially for more able pupils. Good quality resources and ICT are well used to support learning in RE. Additional adults are well deployed to support learning.

Assessment and academic guidance in RE is satisfactory. The school has a broadly accurate picture of pupil achievement but teacher feedback is not consistent across the school. It does not always point pupils to improvement and accurate assessments are not always used to ensure activities are carefully matched to pupil ability. This slows progress especially for more able pupils. The school has identified this and is working to tackle it. Targets are used to ensure pupils understand how they are progressing in RE. Pupils can talk about their involvement in assessing their work.

The RE curriculum is well matched to most pupils' needs. Teacher's plans show there is full coverage of the programme of study. A wide range of strategies are used by teachers to increase interest such as thinking skills, hot seating, and talk partners. The use of differentiation and target setting ensures most pupils receive learning tasks suited to their stage of learning. However, there is some inconsistency in this provision which slows progress especially for more able pupils. The curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual and moral development and meets the requirements of the Bishops' conference well.

The school provides good quality collective worship and ensures the pupils' spiritual needs are well met. Worship is given a high profile and there is a regular timetable of formal and informal opportunities to pray. Pupils can talk about occasions when they pray privately and why they do so. Pupils are confident in leading worship and their skills in preparing worship are growing. Themes used in worship are consistent with the Catholic character of the school. There are very few pupils from backgrounds other than Christian but the school is very inclusive of them. The school engages well with parents, parish and the wider community.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

Leaders and managers demonstrate commitment to the mission of the church by providing a rich curriculum in which the spiritual and moral development of pupils is given a high priority. There are a range of formal and informal systems to evaluate the Catholic life of the school. The monitoring is taken seriously and governors are interested in the impact made by initiatives such as raising the profile of the 'Mission Statement'. The whole school promotes an ethos of co-operation and respect. Leaders and staff are committed to improvement as witnessed by the promotion of and attendance at in-service training such as CCRS. Provision for pupils' sex and relationship education is in place

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for curriculum RE is good. Self-assessment is accurate and focused on improving outcomes for pupils. The very efficient RE co-ordinator carries out systematic monitoring activities which include checking planning, lesson observations and book scrutiny. Information and data are well used to identify strengths and areas for development. The school recognises the need to have more consistency in the use of differentiation and teacher feedback to raise standards further especially for more able pupils. This systematic approach and targeted plans are bringing about improvements in pupils' attainment.

Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities to a satisfactory level. They are visible in the school community and very supportive of staff and pupils. They are interested and knowledgeable about most aspects of the school's work and help to make decisions. The governing body has several new members. As a group they are growing in the experience necessary to challenge leaders and managers and hold them to account for improving outcomes for pupils. Governors engage often with parents and the whole parish community, they have developed a link governor role to support them in listening and responding to concerns.

Catholic partnerships are developed well. Leaders and managers ensure the school works regularly with the parish, the Diocesan Youth Service Team, and attend Diocesan training. School is involved in Parish prayers of remembrance in November and at other special times in the Church's year. Pupils are given opportunities to attend residential retreats and St Vincent de Paul (SVP) Holy Island camp. The school works well with other Catholic schools in the pyramid group to raise standards through moderation and discussion. Leaders and managers are committed to developing further links and partnerships.

Community cohesion is promoted well. Everyone in the school has a respect for difference and the well developed international links ensure pupils are aware of diversity and are interested in different cultures. The school is involved in local initiatives such as the 'Cultural Heritage Project', 'RNLI Keep Safe at Sea' and the 'Who do we think we are?' project in which pupils designed posters to represent their local community. Collective worship is inclusive. The small number of Sikh children are encouraged to share their beliefs and are happy in the school. The RE curriculum promotes community cohesion well and parents of different backgrounds come to school for assemblies and liturgies.

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress 	2
<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 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship 	2
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in RE 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which RE curriculum meets pupils' needs 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<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 	2
<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 	3
<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 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion. 	2