



St Benet's RC Primary School

St Benet's Way, Ouston, Chester-le-Street, DH2 1QX

School Unique Reference Number: **8403346**

Inspection dates:	03 – 04 October 2016
Lead inspector:	Miss Elaine White
Team inspector:	Mrs Elizabeth Seagrove

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Benet's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Benet's is an inclusive and welcoming community with a strong family ethos. It is very clear as soon as you enter the school that the prime purpose is Catholic education, helping children to develop their faith to understand that God loves them.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. Governors and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life and take leading roles in activities which promote the school's ethos within the school and wider community.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. It is at the heart of the school. From an early age pupils are encouraged and supported in their ability to plan and lead worship and are confident when praying with the school community.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. The areas for improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed and the school is continuing to ensure that all pupils make good progress because of good teaching.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Benet's is an average sized Catholic primary school situated in Ouston near Chester-le-Street in County Durham. It serves a community with a mix of socio-economic circumstances.
- The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is lower than the national average as is the proportion of pupils with learning and/or disabilities.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop the Catholic Life by:
 - Providing opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved in formal monitoring of the Catholic Life of the school.
- Further develop Collective Worship by:
 - Providing a wide range of opportunities for Collective Worship that includes spontaneous prayer as well as structured and planned worship.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - Ensuring that accurate marking and assessment consistently provide information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.

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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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and gain much benefit from it. They are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and are able to express their own beliefs with confidence having a good understanding of how their faith impacts on their own lives and others.
- Pupils and staff have a deep sense of belonging to a family; they are very proud of their school and the strong links with the parish community.
- Relationships within the school are very positive and pupils value the many opportunities that they are given. They are actively involved throughout the school taking on responsibilities very conscientiously and enthusiastically such as Buddies, school councillors and Mini Vinnies. Pupils say they feel valued.
- They are very conscious of the needs of those beyond school and have a strong sense of justice and concern for others and can articulate their views with confidence, explaining the purpose of fundraising for charities such as CAFOD and MacMillan. Most pupils have a strong sense of morals and justice which helps them to understand their place in the world and the influence they can have to make the world a better place.
- Pupils work well together demonstrating very positive and enthusiastic attitudes to all aspects of school life. Behaviour is exemplary: pupils are very polite and considerate of others demonstrating good emotional awareness.
- Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a very good understanding and importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- The quality of provision for Catholic Life has the highest priority.
- All staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regards to the school's ethos and to the church's mission in education. They are involved in living out the school's mission statement and are fully committed to provide every opportunity to enable all pupils to know that Christ is at the centre of everything they do.

- There is a strong sense of family in all areas of school life evidenced in the quality of relationships that exist throughout the school.
- The school displays a clear commitment to its most vulnerable pupils and their families. Parents speak very highly of the care and concern shown to each pupil and family and feel privileged to be part of the family of St Benet's.
- Clear policies and procedures are in place, which provide the highest level of pastoral support to all.
- The 'Statements to Live By' programme is well used throughout the school and pupils are very clear about how these can help them to live by Gospel values.

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

- The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator have a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education; personal development and high quality care are paramount. They give very clear direction for improvement and ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development are frequent and have significant impact.
- The school engages extremely well with parents and carers to the great benefit of all its pupils and families. Parents have a very good understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it.
- Governors involve themselves wholeheartedly in the life of the school and are fully committed to promoting religious and spiritual life. Together with the headteacher, they have a very clear vision and high aspirations for future developments.
- The school's mission statement is a living document which underpins all policies throughout the school and has a high profile.
- High quality staff training, the importance placed upon relationships and the care and concerns each member of the school community show one another are strengths of the school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- 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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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Pupils demonstrate interest and engagement in Collective Worship in response to age appropriate stimuli; their singing, liturgical dance and participation in whole school and class worship is thoughtful and reflective. The pupils are able to articulate extremely well what Collective Worship means to them.
- Pupils are skilled in planning and leading acts of Collective Worship at age appropriate levels.
- Pupils have an outstanding knowledge of the liturgical year, seasons and festivals which they contribute to across the key stages. This was very evident in the articulate and heartfelt responses they were able to give.
- Parents commented that they regularly witness their children being able to take gospel messages and relate them to their own life. They have a class prayer book which links school and home.
- All of these contribute very positively to their spiritual and moral development which is outstanding.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and makes a significant contribution to the moral and spiritual needs of the pupils. Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff.
- Opportunities for worship, Masses, liturgies and other liturgical celebrations are well planned and resourced. Excellent use is made of Caroline's Library to provide a focal point for prayer and worship for all members of the school community.
- Families are involved in pupils' religious development through 'Travelling Cribs', 'Year of Mercy Boxes', 'Lenten Bags' and the class prayer books. This practice is well embedded throughout the school.
- Parents, parishioners and governors are welcomed into school to share with classes or the whole school an experience of worship or the celebration of specific feasts.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Leaders have ensured there are systems and structures in place that allow outstanding Collective Worship to take place across the school. They have a deep understanding of the church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols. A range of artefacts, symbols and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are used to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders review Collective Worship throughout the school. They seek the views of pupils and parents through the use of questionnaires. Pupil and parent responses are very affirming of their experiences and of the school.
- The Religious Education coordinator has a very visible presence in school and a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in Collective Worship through both formal and informal monitoring. Effective involvement by governors ensures they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for further development in Collective Worship.
- Continual professional development in-house and at diocesan level is promoted for all staff. Training on developing prayer stations around the school has contributed to the prayerful atmosphere evident around the school.
- The chaplain works across the school providing the pupils with a wide variety of prayer experiences including meditation and opportunities for reflection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- 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 promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- The quality of learning and progress in Religious Education is good. Most pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education, have positive attitudes and work well in lessons, applying themselves to the tasks working at a good pace. They are able to say why they enjoy it and what they learn from it, "We learn how Jesus helped other people and that helps me to know how to help others". The Religious Education curriculum impacts positively upon the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Good behaviour has a positive impact on learning across the school. Pupils are thoughtful and articulate in their responses.
- Those pupils identified as having a special educational need make good progress. The school is effective at meeting their needs by ensuring that work is closely matched to their ability. Very good support from skilled teaching assistants ensures that their attainment and progress are similar to that of other pupils.
- Current tracking shows that the standards of attainment of the large majority of pupils across the school is mostly in line with diocesan averages.
- Excellent relationships exist in the school between pupils and staff.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding practice observed. As a result pupils are achieving well over time.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan lessons well building on prior learning.
- Effective use of ICT inspires and motivates pupils as observed in a year five lesson where pupils were involved in research about how the behaviour of significant people, such as Mother Theresa, can affect the lives and behaviour of others.
- Teachers mark work regularly and the quality of feedback given to pupils is generally positive and supportive. This however is inconsistent across the school and pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to teachers' feedback or know the next step for learning about how to improve their work.
- As a result of sharing 'I Can' statements, pupils are beginning to understand how well they are doing and what is expected of them

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- A systematic range of activities is in place for the monitoring and assessment of Religious Education which gives a clear picture of pupil progress and attainment however there are some inconsistencies across the school.
- The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator have a very clear vision and sense of direction for what is required to move the school forward. They are highly effective in promoting the high profile of this subject amongst staff.
- The senior leadership team (SLT) makes very good use of professional development opportunities in-house as well as through the diocese.
- Both staff and governors are kept well informed of the priorities which are identified through the strategies undertaken to evaluate the provision and outcomes for pupils. They are very well informed and knowledgeable about the schools' strengths and further areas for development.
- The governing body is closely involved in the daily work of the school. They make a significant contribution; giving their time generously, providing both support and challenge where necessary. They are extremely supportive and discharge their statutory duties effectively. The link governor for Religious Education works closely with the SLT to monitor provision and assessment and his skilled contributions are appreciated by all staff.
- Diocesan guidelines for sacramental preparation are followed enthusiastically. The parish deacon works very effectively with pupils, parents and staff.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are committed to striving for the very best. This ensures that all pupils are well cared for and known and respected as individuals.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

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.

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

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

1

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:**2**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Benet's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	8403346
Local authority	Durham
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Mrs Joanne Wollaston
Head teacher	Miss Catherine Harper
Date of previous school inspection	January 2012
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