

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



**Our Lady and St Joseph's RC Primary School  
Leadgate County Durham**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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<b>School URN:</b>	114253
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mrs Sharon Fenwick
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Mr Tom Clark
<b>Inspector:</b>	Miss Maria Elliott
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	7 and 8 December 2011

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.



## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**How effective the school is in providing Catholic education**

2

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

2

### MAIN FINDINGS

Our Lady and St Joseph is a good, fully inclusive Catholic school where everyone is welcomed, valued and affirmed. The mission and ethos of Catholic education is lived out daily by staff and pupils alike. Strong relationships and pastoral care underpin the life of the school community. The area for improvement from the last inspection has been addressed and developments are on-going. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. The school works very closely and effectively with the parish priest in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The school is held in high regard by the pupils, parents and the local community and has a vital place in the life of the parish.

Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, engage well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. From starting points well below the national average, all pupils make good progress in Religious Education and attain standards that are average. Pupils are very well supported in their learning by additional adults. They benefit from the range of opportunities offered to them and make a positive contribution to the Catholic life of the school which has an impact on their lives. Pupils respond with respect and reverence to the collective worship opportunities offered. The level of pupil participation in the liturgical life of the school is good and this increases as they move through the school. The promotion of spiritual and moral development is good.

The school provides a good Catholic education. Teaching is good leading to purposeful learning and motivated, interested and engaged pupils, but variations in medium term planning does not give a clear overview of continuity and progression throughout the school. Good assessment procedures are in place. However, pupils have limited knowledge of how to improve. The Religious Education curriculum provided is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils. However, inconsistencies in differentiation and marking guidance do not allow some pupils to make appropriate progress. The quality of collective worship is good.

The promotion of the Catholic life of the school by leaders and managers is good. As a result of the headteacher's passion, pupils are able to articulate the distinctive mission of the school and staff share the vision to ensure the best for each pupil. There is a good sense of direction regarding curriculum Religious Education and all are committed to raising standards. Systems are in place to continue to drive school improvement forward. The governing body provides good support and fulfils its responsibilities well. The development of partnerships in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being is outstanding. The good promotion of community cohesion

enables pupils to have a well-developed awareness of difference and positive attitudes of tolerance and respect.

**What the school needs to do to improve further**

- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring:
  - that differentiation and appropriate levels of challenge are integral to teaching and learning;
  - medium term planning is consistent throughout school in order to give an overview of provision across the school.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance by ensuring:
  - assessment, marking and target setting are an integral part of the planned learning process;
  - pupils are involved in the assessment process so that they know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

## PUPILS

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

2

Outcomes for pupils are good overall. Pupils are keen to do well in Religious Education and most speak with varying degrees of enthusiasm and enjoyment about their lessons and they apply themselves well. They generally seek to produce their best work and share and celebrate their learning. Pupils enter Our Lady and St Joseph's with starting points well below average and a high proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, all pupils make good progress in Religious Education throughout Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. There are no significant differences between groups of learners and all are supported to ensure they make progress according to their capabilities. Current data shows that attainment is average with a large majority of pupils achieving Level 4 by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils have a developing sense of religious literacy and their knowledge, skills and understanding are becoming more developed in line with their age and capabilities. Pupils work effectively when provided with appropriate tasks but lack the guidance, knowledge and confidence to improve their work.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and are beginning to show signs of benefiting from it. Older pupils are very clear that their role is to set a good example. Pupils take on responsibilities willingly and eagerly, and are becoming more active in the Catholic life of the school beyond their routine lessons. Their ability to articulate how school is helping them to become better people is emerging and they have a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are reflective and can discuss the school's weekly 'Statement to Live By' and how the values expressed there are lived out in daily life. Pupils understand the key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and in their parish community. They are pro-active in their response to the needs of people beyond the school.

Pupils' response to and participation in the school's collective worship is good. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in a variety of community prayers appropriately and with confidence. Staff and pupils are at ease when praying with their school community. Older pupils are being supported to develop their ability to plan and lead school worship and confidence is growing. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of the religious seasons and feasts, such as Advent being a time of preparation for the birth of Jesus at Christmas. Collective worship is modelled effectively by staff in school. It makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral growth of the pupils.

## PROVISION

2

### How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall. All teaching is effective in ensuring that pupils are consistently engaged and keen to learn resulting in good progress being made. However, staff medium term plans do not give a clear overview of continuity and progression throughout school. Differentiation and appropriate levels of challenge are both emerging but are not embedded fully across the whole school, resulting in some pupils not making progress of which they are capable. Feedback to pupils is not detailed enough; as a result pupils are not confident in their knowledge of how well they are doing, or what they need to do to improve. Support staff are effectively deployed.

The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education is good. The school's detailed information on the pupils is used effectively to highlight achievement and progress and any areas for concern so that pupils achieve well. The school sets challenging targets for pupils and progress towards achieving these targets is monitored. Regular assessment is carried out throughout school, and used for planning the next steps in the pupils' learning journey. However, pupils are not involved in self-assessment activities, or the assessment for learning process resulting in them having limited knowledge about their progress in Religious Education, or what they need to do to improve further.

Religious Education is seen as the core of the curriculum and as such is given high priority in teaching time. A good Religious Education curriculum is provided by the school which generally meets the needs of pupils well, but inconsistencies in differentiation do not always ensure enough challenge to enable pupils make progress matched to their capabilities. The curriculum is enriched with role-play, ICT, thinking skills and art. Pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities to enrich their spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets the needs of the Bishops' Conference well.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good. Prayer is at the heart of the life of the school. Prayer and collective worship are fully inclusive, reflective and well planned by staff, enabling all pupils to take an active part. Opportunities are emerging to ensure the pupils are developing an awareness of the structure of worship in order to plan and take a leadership role in their own liturgies. A good variety of opportunities for prayer and reflection ensures that all pupils are confident to pray spontaneously for themselves and others. Key seasons and feasts of the liturgical year, which are consistent with the Catholic character of the school, are celebrated within school and are supported positively by members of the parish.

## LEADERS AND MANAGERS

2

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

The promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for the Catholic life of the school is good. The Catholic ethos underpins all aspects of school life. The Headteacher is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and is a source of encouragement for the whole community. The school ensures that a rich, broad and balanced curriculum is provided with pupils' spiritual and moral development at the heart. Informal monitoring activities are conducted feeding into the self-evaluation process and identifying strengths and areas for development. Effective staff training and induction ensures that all staff have an understanding of both the ethos and the vision of the school and contribute to its success. Consequently the pupils in upper Key Stage 2 are becoming more competent and confident in their ability to articulate the school's distinctive Catholic mission with growing understanding.

Leaders and managers' monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is good. The subject leader, who is also the Headteacher, is focused on raising standards, has a clear sense of direction and understands how to bring about improvement. The school uses a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes and the analysis provides a firm basis for accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Appropriate staff training has developed staff confidence and competence. Detailed, targeted plans are in place. Consequently outcomes are good and evidence shows that they are improving steadily.

The work of the governors is good. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties well. The governing body is very supportive. It has the expertise to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the direction of the Catholic life of the school. Through regular meetings, visits to school and information from the headteacher they have an overview of the strengths and areas for development as well as the challenges it faces. They are well informed and have an understanding of matters relating to the school's performance in Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. However, they are not fully involved in the self-evaluation processes within school.

As a result of the dedication and commitment of the headteacher, the school is outstanding at developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services which impact significantly on pupils' well-being and achievement. She actively seeks ways in which the school can engage in partnership activities to promote the Catholic learning and well-being of pupils. She is also influential in co-ordinating partnerships which other schools can engage in, such as organising moderation meeting within the 'St Bede' cluster. The school benefits greatly from the St Bede Cluster and as a result Key Stage 2/3 links were greatly enhanced by collaborative work on the Northern Saints and a visit to Holy Island by all Year 6

pupils in the partnership, thus enabling the pupils to develop in areas which the school alone could not provide.

The promotion of community cohesion is good. There is a common sense of belonging and relationships among pupils are very good. Difference and diversity are both valued and respected. Pupils are equipped with skills which enable them to take an active role in their local community and develop relationships with people from different backgrounds. A range of partnership activities, for example, CAFOD, Alzheimer's and Children's Cancer UK make a good contribution to pupils' well-being and to the Catholic life of the school. The head teacher ensures that links are well established with other Catholic primary schools, the diocese, the local parishes and other local schools and organisations. These provide opportunities which enable pupils and staff to enjoy and achieve well. Pupils' ability to articulate the impact these partnerships have on them as individuals is emerging. Collective worship is inclusive and the Religious Education curriculum promotes the attitudes of respect and tolerance for all.

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**Key for inspection grades:**

Grade 1 **Outstanding**      Grade 2 **Good**      Grade 3 **Satisfactory**      Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of collective worship provided by the school</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>