

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 114264

Headteacher: Mrs Monica Connor

Chair of Governors: Mrs Anne Hall

Inspector: Mr Martin G Humble

Date of Inspection: 13 and 14 October 2010

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 Joseph's is a smaller than average sized Catholic primary school situated in Wear Valley, which is one of the most deprived areas in the country. It serves a community with a mix of socio-economic circumstances but with a significant number of pupils from deprived homes. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is high with 26% of pupils on the Special Education Needs Register and 15% having statements. The headteacher has been in post for a year and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 128

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 43%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 35.2%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 2.3%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 19.5%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 0 %

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 26%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 7

Number of part time teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 100%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 86%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

FS	10.86%	Yr 4	10.0%
Yr 1	10.86%	Yr 5	10.0%
Yr 2	10.86%	Yr 6	10.0%
Yr 3	10.0%		

Parishes served by the school:

St Joseph's, Coundon

St Thomas', Shildon

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. There is a shared vision and a development and promotion of the highest expectations for all members of the school community. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors are all fully committed to the ethos and mission of Catholic education where continuous improvement in every aspect of school life is a clear aim. All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the school is striving to improve standards of attainment. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is good due to rigorous and accurate self-evaluation leading to clear challenging targets and appropriate priorities. Very good relationships and a 'team' ethic are key strengths of the school.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about their 'welcoming friendly school' where they feel safe and happy. They are happy to come to school which results in them having a very positive attitude towards learning. In Religious Education all pupils make good progress from below average starting points and by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is average. Pupils benefit greatly from the good range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. They respond to worship with respect and reverence. Their level of participation and skills in preparing and leading prayer and worship is good. The promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is good.

The school provides a good Catholic education. Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good which enables pupils to make good progress. Parents and carers are kept well informed. The Religious Education curriculum provided is varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and raising standards. Monitoring and tracking systems, which are continually reviewed and developed, impact positively on pupils' progress. Assessment procedures are developing. The quality of collective worship is good. It is defined within the school day and pupils are beginning to develop skills in the preparation and leading of worship as the staff are good role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities.

The leadership of the headteacher ensures that all pupils are well cared for, known and respected as individuals and well motivated to make good progress. The senior management team demonstrate a commitment to continuous school improvement. The new subject leader for Religious Education, ably supported by the previous leader, has a clear sense of direction and purpose in curriculum Religious Education which is recognised within the school as the core subject of the curriculum. Professional development of all staff is tailored to both whole school and individual needs resulting in competent staff that are committed to ensuring that all pupils make good progress. Governors discharge their duties responsibly and leaders and managers develop successful partnerships to promote pupils' learning and well-being. They also promote community cohesion well.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Improve assessment for learning in Religious Education by:
 - developing pupils' skills in self-assessment through the use of 'I can' statements
 - consistently providing quality feedback to pupils, both orally and through written comments, in order that pupils know what they need to do to improve and are involved in their own learning
 - provide opportunities for staff to share good practice in marking pupils' work.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to further develop the skills they need to plan collective worship on their own.

PUPILS

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

2

The quality of pupils' learning and progress in Religious Education is good. Pupils are keen to do well and have a very positive attitude towards their learning. In all lessons observed pupils applied themselves diligently. They endeavour to produce their best work, are interested and enthusiastic about Religious Education lessons and speak enthusiastically about their lessons. Pupils are increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge, skills and understanding continue to develop well in relation to their age and capability with challenge suitably set for all. Attainment at the end of Foundation Stage and both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is average for all groups of pupils. All pupils make good progress across Foundation Stage and the key stages including the large proportion of pupils with special needs and/or disabilities because their needs are accurately identified and appropriate, effective support given to meet them.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit from it. A strong inclusive Catholic ethos enables them to take an active part in shaping activities with a religious character both in the school and the wider community. Most pupils are increasingly able to take on responsibility for themselves and others. They take full advantage of the many and varied opportunities the school provides for their personal support and spiritual development. The pupils from Reception class onwards are imaginative, show curiosity, intuitive and have a strong sense of their own identity. Many can discuss their own faith and spirituality with confidence and know and respect other people have different beliefs. They are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus when talking about how to treat others and how to behave. Many are conscious of the needs of others and have a developing sense of justice and concern for others.

Pupil's response to and participation in the school's collective worship is good. They are at ease in their worship and in times of reflection and prayer. Acts of worship engage all pupils and inspire them to respond thoughtfully, reverently and respectfully. Pupils, with the support of staff, prepare and lead worship confidently and enthusiastically in a variety of gatherings and settings. Most are knowledgeable about and skilled in using a variety of ways, such as scripture, music, silence and artefacts, to pray and worship. They sing joyfully and express their thoughts and feelings openly when worshipping within their school community. The development of good quality collective worship is having a positive impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. A range of teaching styles, good questioning techniques, clear explanations, well paced lessons and good use of ICT ensure that pupils are interested in their learning and make good progress. Effectively planned lessons build on prior learning and meet the wide range of pupils' needs existing in all classes. Teachers have good subject knowledge which is helping to develop confident learners. They have high expectations and make learning interesting which impacts positively on pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation. The support staff are effectively deployed in lessons having a positive impact on the progress of both individual learners and groups of learners.

Assessment and monitoring procedures in Religious Education are satisfactory and developing. They provide an accurate picture of pupil progress and attainment. Leaders and teachers use this information to good effect, ensuring continuous improvement. Tracking systems for Religious Education have been successfully incorporated into the whole school assessment system which enables the school to focus on ensuring that different groups of pupils achieve equally well. This information is being used effectively by teachers in setting targets for improvement. All have a growing understanding of how to get the pupils where they want them to be. Teacher guidance to ensure that pupils know how well they are doing is inconsistent. The school recognises that, pupils' skills in self-assessment need to be developed further enabling them to become more responsible for their own learning. Pupils are not always provided with adequate feedback and the quality of marking to move pupils on in their learning is not consistent throughout the school. The school recognises the need to share good practice in marking pupils' work.

The Religious Education curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. It is enhanced through a variety of imaginative and well planned strategies and relevant resources which engage and motivate the pupils. Planning ensures full coverage of the curriculum and identifies pupils' prior learning. The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for and impacts positively on pupils' spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are very well met. Prayer is an important part of school life; it is fully inclusive, reflective and well planned enabling pupils to take an active part. Pupils regularly prepare and lead acts of collective worship and are provided with good role models but pupils do not yet plan their own collective worship. There is a varied range of formal and informal opportunities for prayer, reflection and liturgy and pupils confidently share different forms of prayer in class, school liturgies and school masses. Acts of collective worship have a positive impact on pupils, parents and parishioners. They are very public demonstrations of the ethos of the school.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

The school's leadership and management promote the Catholic life of the school well. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision. The deep commitment of the headteacher is an inspiration to the whole school community. Self-evaluation at all levels within the school is a coherent reflection of effective monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. This results in targeted and coherent planning and actions to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. Good quality induction and staff training have ensured an awareness, understanding and commitment to a strong Catholic ethos.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education are good. Assessment and tracking systems are in place and impact positively on pupils' learning, progress and standards. They accurately inform areas of strength and areas for further development and contribute to the good capacity for improvement. Detailed and well targeted plans are in place and strategies to effect improvement are implemented effectively, resulting in continuously improving outcomes for all pupils. A new subject leader is benefitting from the support of her predecessor and has the knowledge, skills, enthusiasm and dedication to continue the good work.

Governors provide effective challenge and support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They are well informed on issues relating to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school, understand well the school's performance in Religious Education and know what needs to be done to ensure continuous improvement of standards. Governors are visible in and around school on a daily basis and are an integral part of this community. Consequently there is a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of leaders and staff.

Leaders and managers are very successful at developing partnerships with other providers and organisations, which is particularly important when considering the deprivation issues and challenges in the Wear Valley area. The school engages in a wide range of partnership activities which impact significantly on pupils' achievement and well-being and to the Catholic Life of the school. The Learning Mentor is a very valuable member of the school team and an invaluable support to pupils and their families. The school also utilises 'Parent Support' Adviser' support for families in need. The dedicated headteacher ensures that links are well established with other Catholic primary schools, the Diocese, the parish and local organisations to provide opportunities which enable pupils and staff to enjoy, achieve and develop well.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is good. The school is an inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each other through the school pastoral system. The pupils benefit from international links to The Gambia and through the Comenius Project. The school support projects through St Cuthbert's Care and CAFOD to develop an understanding of working for the common good. Religious Education enables pupils to develop an understanding of other faiths and collective worship is inclusive.

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 Religious Education	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 Religious Education	3
• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
• 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 Religious Education	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	3
• the extent to which Religious Education 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 Religious Education 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	1
• how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	2