

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



S48 Inspection Report

**St Joseph's RC Primary School,
Ushaw Moor, Durham**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School:	St Joseph's RC Primary School
Address:	Durham Road Ushaw Moor Durham DH7 7LF
Telephone Number:	0191 3730355
Email address:	ushawmoorstjoseph@durhamlearning.net
School URN:	114272
Acting Headteacher:	Miss Erica Smith
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Mary Everett MBE
Inspector:	Mrs Carole Snee
Date of Inspection:	28 and 29 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

The school is a smaller than average sized school serving the village of Ushaw Moor. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of white British ethnicity, and the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational need is slightly higher than the average. The majority of the pupils in the school are baptised Roman Catholics.

The school has recently undergone a period of staffing instability, and most teachers within the school now, including the headteacher, are relatively new to St Joseph's. The headteacher is also responsible for a neighbouring school, and divides her time equally between the two.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 100

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 61%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 27%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 1%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 11%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 5%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 33%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 4

Number of part time teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 80%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 50%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:

FS	10%	Yr4	10%
Yr 1	10%	Yr5	10%
Yr 2	10%	Yr6	10%
Yr 3	10%		

Parishes served by the school:

St Joseph's, Ushaw Moor

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education	2
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The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
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MAIN FINDINGS

St Joseph's is a good and rapidly improving school where all staff share and live out the Gospel values, and where pupils are well supported in their personal development as future citizens. It is very well led by the recently appointed headteacher, who, together with the effective governing body, knows the broad strengths and areas for development well. Standards in Religious Education (RE) are currently satisfactory. Pupils come into the school with broadly average skills and knowledge, and when they leave the school, they are attaining standards that are still broadly average. They make expected progress, so this too is satisfactory. Pupils contribute to and benefit positively from a well-planned and diverse range of opportunities to celebrate the Catholic life of the school. The quality and provision for collective worship is also good. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of formats for whole school, class and group worship.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with some examples of very good teaching, particularly for the youngest pupils. It is most effective when pupils are actively involved in their learning and teaching is precisely targeted at the needs of individual pupils. The school has also worked hard recently to ensure that the curriculum is becoming more suited to the particular needs of the pupils. The leadership and management of the recently appointed curriculum leader is effective and she has made a very good start in ensuring that the relatively new staff have clear guidelines and expectations. Staff are beginning to use assessments effectively to identify appropriate challenge for children, but this is not yet consistent across the school. The quality of collective worship is good.

The school makes very effective use of its partnerships to promote Catholic learning and well-being, particularly with the neighbouring school with whom they share the headteacher. Their promotion and contribution to community cohesion is also good. The school has a central place in its own community and is forging strong links within the global community. The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. Much has already been put in place in the past year to raise standards in teaching and learning and to address the issues from the previous inspection, although the recent staffing instability has slowed progress somewhat.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- Raise standards in RE at the end of key stage two (KS2) by:
 - improving the quality of teaching to ensure that it is at least consistently good across the school
 - making more effective use of assessment to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged and supported, particularly the more able

- continuing to provide high quality professional development and training, so that teachers' subject knowledge is secure
- further developing the use of pupil tracking to identify where pupils make most progress, and where specific intervention and support is needed
- enabling the subject leader to become progressively more involved in supporting colleagues through regular work scrutinies, lesson observations and other forms of monitoring as appropriate, for both curriculum RE and for the Catholic life of the school.

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
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Pupils learning and progress is satisfactory. They enter their school with skills and knowledge broadly in line with those expected of pupils of that age, although there are some who are below this. There are clear guidelines to ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged to understand their religion (AT1) and reflect upon its meaning (AT2) as they progress through the school. Pupils make most progress in the first class because teaching there is most appropriately matched to their needs. This good progress is then consolidated by the end of key stage one (KS1), so most pupils are reaching the standards expected of pupils their age. Progress then slows when pupils enter KS2, where teaching is not so precisely matched to pupils' needs and they are insufficiently challenged. The pace of progress picks up again for the older pupils, so that by the time they leave KS2, pupils are once again achieving standards in line with those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils with additional learning needs are usually supported by differentiated planning or conscientious teaching assistant input, so that their progress is also satisfactory.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They benefit from a range of opportunities to celebrate and develop their understanding of what it means to be part of a Catholic community and their subsequent responsibilities, such as when a child independently raised money through a family barbecue for children in Africa. Pupils are keen to take part in a range of school activities and are happy to take on personal responsibilities. Pupils respond very well to the range of activities offered by the school, such as visits to the Youth Village and membership of the school choir. They are keen to discuss ethical issues, and during the inspection displayed some extremely mature insights into their faith.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good; it is both reverent and thoughtful. They are able to contribute to worship and make personal prayers; they sing enthusiastically and enjoy being part of a worshipping community. They have a good knowledge of traditional prayers and liturgy and use them independently – as when some pupils in the youngest class 'role played' a prayer group and made the Sign of the Cross and said the Hail Mary. Pupils are developing their skills in preparing their own worship materials, and the school recognises that this is an area for further development. When pupils do lead worship, they do so extremely well, with sensitivity and reverence. This is enabling the pupils to develop well both spiritually and morally and they are very appreciative of the opportunities the school affords them.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	3
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The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good for the youngest pupils. Fun activities are well planned and have a clear focus on learning. The classroom teacher deploys additional adults effectively, so that almost all pupils are making good progress during the course of the lesson. In less effective lessons, pupils are passive for much of the lesson, and teachers' subject knowledge is not always secure enough to enable swift progress in learning. There were some good examples of new technology being used to support learning, as well as links with art. Expectations for attainment and progress are not yet consistently clear enough to ensure good rather than satisfactory progress. While all work is marked, children are not consistently given clear next steps for their learning.

The school has a broadly accurate picture of pupils' achievement. It has begun to develop a rigorous tracking programme of assessment and clear academic guidance, but this has not been in place long enough to have had an impact on standards and progress. Assessments are not yet used precisely enough to consistently inform planning that challenges all pupils appropriately through individual targets, particularly the more able. Differentiation is sometimes based on pupils' literacy skills, rather than their abilities in RE. Progress has been made in ensuring that assessments are accurate, but the school is in the early stages of tracking the outcomes of assessments to identify rates of progress across individuals and cohorts. While pupils are keen to discuss their work, they are not yet consistently involved in assessing their own work and evaluating their own progress.

The school provides a good RE curriculum. It is enriched with a variety of resources, and utilises a range of teaching strategies to engage pupils' interests, ensuring that it is becoming more accurately matched to their needs. It meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well and is eager to take advantage of any recent diocesan curriculum guidance. The school is outward looking in its pursuit of improvement and has collaborated well with its 'partner' school in order to search out new curriculum developments. Training has already been accessed to support the introduction of new curriculum developments from the diocese. As a result, pupils are well supported to develop both spiritually and morally through an appropriate and meaningful curriculum.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good. It is fully inclusive, and carefully planned to meet the particular needs of the pupils. There is a strong focus on a range of spiritual themes and there are explicit links with the liturgical year. There is not as yet, however, a clear and planned progression in prayer methods and styles. The subject leader, however, is keen to develop these and pupils in a KS1 liturgy during the inspection had a very spiritual experience in a simple outdoor setting which was entirely appropriate to their needs. The school is encouraging pupils to take a more active part in leading aspects of collective worship and parents and carers are very appreciative of the efforts the school makes to include them.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	2
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Leaders and managers show a real commitment to developing the Catholic life of the school by providing a broad and balanced curriculum with spiritual and moral development a clear priority. They have a very clear vision for the continuing development of St Joseph's as a very caring community, deeply rooted in the Catholic faith and at the centre of a vibrant parish community. This is shared by all staff. While provision for the Catholic life of the school is not yet explicitly monitored and evaluated, leaders and managers have used a range of informal monitoring strategies to enable them to have a clear grasp of the school's areas for development and build on areas of strength. As a result, pupils are very clear about what it means to be a Catholic.

The school is in the early stages of developing a systematic and rigorous programme of monitoring, taking into account not just written data and lesson observations but also the views of the pupils. As a result, while leaders and managers do have a broad overview of the strengths and areas for development in the provision for RE across the school, self-evaluation is not yet sharp enough to inform precisely targeted improvement strategies. Improvement planning tends to focus on the general rather than specific actions and strategies and is not always appropriately prioritised. Different groups of pupils are not yet separately tracked, so that the school can compare rates of progress within cohorts and across the school. Consequently, outcomes for almost all pupils are satisfactory.

The governors make a significant contribution to the work and the Catholic dimension of the school. They are well led by a very committed Chair, and together with an active governing body, they support and challenge the school to continuously improve their provision. The governors are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and engage very effectively with staff, parents and pupils in order to obtain an accurate picture. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties well, and have a good understanding of their role in holding the school to account and the need to tackle any weaknesses decisively.

Leaders and managers of the school have made good use of a variety of partnerships to support improvements in pupils' learning and well-being. They have accessed all available and appropriate training and resources from the diocese in order to improve staff subject knowledge, but this still requires strengthening. Very positive links with the parish have enabled a truly shared and supportive approach to sacramental preparation. Strong links have been made with a neighbouring school in order to identify examples of best practice, and share resources and ideas, as well as training days. The school is just beginning to reach out to visitors from other faith communities, and recognises that this is an area it needs to develop further.

Community cohesion is promoted well by all leaders and managers. The school is an inclusive community with a strong sense of belonging. Pupils are well equipped with skills such as co-operation and teamwork to respond positively to each other and to others in their neighbourhood. They work towards the common good by involvement in a number of fundraising activities and through global links with pupils in India and Venezuela. The school recognises the need to provide even more opportunities for pupils to encounter people from different faiths and cultures and appreciate their similarities and differences. Acts of worship are inclusive and everyone's spiritual identity respected. The RE curriculum promotes attitudes of

respect, tolerance and justice for all faiths and those with none. Parents are actively encouraged to take part in activities to support the pupils, both academically and in the Catholic life of the school.

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	3
the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE	3
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	3
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