



St Joseph's RC Primary School

Church Lane, Murton, Seaham, Co Durham, SR7 9RD

URN 114276

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 September 2013

Lead inspector: Mrs Maureen Galbraith

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	PREVIOUS INSPECTION:	Good	2
	THIS INSPECTION:	Good	2
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	CATHOLIC LIFE:	Outstanding	1
	COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:	Good	2
	RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:	Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's school is a good school.

- The overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education is good.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- How the school promotes, monitors and evaluates Collective Worship is good.
- The quality of Religious Education is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupil progress is not consistent across the school.
- Pupils are not always given time to act on advice given.
- Tracking systems do not allow underperformance or assessment issues to be identified early enough.
- Modelling of more creative prayer opportunities is not as well developed as it needs to be.
- Not all pupils regularly plan and lead worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- The school is much smaller than the average size primary school.
- There has been a recent period of staffing instability.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action, school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- Most pupils are of white British heritage and speak English as their first language.
- Lower than average proportions of pupils join or leave the school at other than the normal time.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - Ensuring teachers consistently give advice to pupils when marking on what they need to do to improve
 - Ensure pupils are given time to respond to advice given by teachers.

- Improve assessment procedures by:
 - Setting individual targets based on prior attainment
 - Refining the tracking system so that school leaders (including governors) can monitor progress towards targets set
 - Ensuring staff have opportunities to develop appropriately levelled learning activities
 - Ensure opportunities for moderation of pupils work with other schools.

- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Ensuring all pupils are involved in the planning of Collective Worship
 - Develop more creative prayer opportunities to model for pupils.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- 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.

1

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

- Pupils know the school's mission statement and can say how they are being helped to become better people. They feel valued and are keen to share their views and feelings on improving the Catholic Life in class and school council discussions.
- Very proud of their school, pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their 'school family'. They are enthusiastic about responsibilities and see their roles as buddies, school councillors and 'Mini Vinnies', for example, as important because 'Jesus helped people and we have to try and be like him'.
- Older pupils can confidently say what makes their school a Catholic community. They value the strong links with the parish, community and diocese, whilst also respecting and appreciating those who come from other faith communities.
- Pupil behaviour is exemplary and underpinned by a strong sense of justice and care for others. This is reflected in how well older pupils support younger ones and in caring for the animals at the school as well as planning their own fundraising for different charities such as CAFOD and the Crocus Appeal.

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

- The Catholic Life of the school is a high priority and reflected in the mission statement which is displayed in all classes and both shared and understood by pupils, staff, governors and parents. Pupils feel valued as individuals, their talents are celebrated and they are taught about God's love and are shown it by example in all areas of school life.
- There are excellent relationships between all members of the school community – staff, pupils, governors, parents and the wider community. All say that there is a strong 'family feel' that is very welcoming.
- The school is a cheerful, prayerful community and its Catholic character is well reflected in the environment through displays, prayer areas and the new 'Quiet Room'.
- Clear policies and procedures are in place, which provide a high level of support for pupils, staff and the wider community. There is regular fundraising for the neediest in society, for

example, the Christmas present appeal, and policies refer to the teachings of the church.

- The positive behaviour policy emphasises personal responsibility. It is rooted in a culture of respect, praise, rewards and choices, whilst encouraging reconciliation.
- Leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school are outstanding.

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

- The headteacher and governors have a very clear vision for the Catholic Life of the school, which is welcoming and inclusive, and share the responsibility for evaluating and promoting it.
- The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers; they have a clear understanding of the school's mission, feel the Catholic ethos is strong and are very supportive of it.
- High quality staff training, the importance placed on relationships and the care and concerns all members of the school community show one another are major strengths of the school and show strong support for the Catholic Life.
- The governing body is influential in positively shaping the Catholic Life of the school. Governors visit the school regularly to discuss the Catholic Life and confidently offer both support and challenge. They are passionate about the school's mission in Murton and have an excellent grasp of the challenges faced by the school.
- Leaders carry out a range of monitoring activities to evaluate the Catholic Life of the school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

- 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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Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good

- Pupils have a good understanding of what worship is about and are at ease when praying with their school or parish community. Reverent and respectful during worship, they are keen to take part, sing joyfully, reflect in silence and pray confidently.
- Pupils regularly plan and lead worship in class groups, though due to changes in teachers, this is currently not the case in some classes.
- Pupils are becoming more confident in leading worship and are beginning to use a variety of ways to support their own ideas when presenting them, for example music, scripture and images. The school's modelling of more creative prayer opportunities is not yet as developed as it should be.
- Pupils know that there are different kinds of liturgies and show an understanding of the liturgical year.
- Pupils say worship helps them to think about God. That they feel calm because He always listens to them and that it 'takes the pressure off'.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- High priority is given to acts of worship so that they are well resourced, spiritual experiences which bring the community together in prayer.
- The 'Quiet Room' provides a peaceful space for children and staff to develop their spirituality.
- A pattern of prayer is part of the daily life of the school and there are regular opportunities for the school to pray and worship together. Parents, parish and governors regularly join the pupils in worship and prayer. They appreciate the opportunity to attend, comment enthusiastically and speak of the impact on pupils.
- Staff have a good understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the different forms it can take; they model high quality worship for pupils.
- Staff consider the age and experiences of the children when planning worship, which is very inclusive. It includes the beliefs and backgrounds of all pupils and shows progression as the children move through school.

Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Collective Worship is good.

- The leadership team is highly skilled in planning and delivering high quality worship. They provide opportunities for pupils to think about the Church's liturgical year, seasons and symbols in a manner appropriate to their age.
- Liturgical development is a high priority in ongoing training and support; staff respond well to the opportunities given to them.
- Leaders also ensure that pupils have a good experience for sacramental preparation in line with diocesan policy
- There is regular monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship including feedback from pupils, staff, governors and parents. Findings are used to set targets for improvement in the school improvement plan and to identify staff training needs.
- The headteacher and governors place the school's life of prayer and worship at the very heart of the school. They constantly seek to develop it through the school and parish community. Parents value this and speak highly of the impact on pupils.

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 monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

3

2

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning requires improvement

- There are good levels of pupil enjoyment in Religious Education though achievement requires improvement.
- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education and are keen to do well. Behaviour in lessons is good – pupils work well, try hard at activities set and mostly work at a good pace. They show interest and enthusiasm about their learning.
- Due to the stage of transition in level expectations across all diocesan schools, the current averages for attainment and progress are not reliable benchmarks. Therefore no judgement will be made in this report against diocesan averages for either attainment or progress.
- Pupils enter school broadly in line with expected skills, though many have little experience of church. The school's own data shows pupils make good progress across the early years foundation stage and key stage one (KS1), but this slows down in key stage two (KS2), where it is inconsistent. Work currently in children's books, however, shows an improving picture.
- Systems are not yet in place to evaluate the progress of different groups of learners, though inspection findings show little difference between the progress of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and progress well from their starting points.
- Pupils at risk of falling behind are not identified early enough.

The quality of teaching in Religious Education and assessment are good overall, with some outstanding teaching observed during the inspection.

- A wide variety of teaching strategies, good subject knowledge, questioning skills and creative activities ensure children are interested in their learning and make good progress in most classes.
- Current work in children's books shows increasingly differentiated learning activities which are well matched to the children's needs.
- Other faiths are well taught and the curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors.

- Support staff are effectively deployed and less able pupils supported well in their learning. Assessments are regular and systematic and external moderation shows levelling of pupils' work is accurate.
- Teachers mark children's work regularly and the written guidance and feedback given to pupils is always positive and supportive. However, written comments by teachers to improve learning are not consistent across the school. Nor are pupils consistently given time to respond to questions asked and advice given. KS2 pupils are involved in self-assessment and some can speak of targets and 'I Can' statements. This good practice is not yet embedded.
- Children's work is shared, celebrated and displayed. Children feel proud when their work is used as a good example with the rest of the class.

The leadership and management of Religious Education are good.

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together sharing responsibility for Religious Education. They regularly check on the quality of teaching and, as a result, have a largely accurate picture of strengths and areas for development.
- Leaders are well informed about current developments in Religious Education and plan staff training so that teaching continues to improve.
- Staff are enthusiastic, work well together and share a common vision to improve, as a result of which Religious Education has a high priority within the school. It makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' moral and spiritual development.
- The Religious Education curriculum is carefully planned by teachers to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The school works well with partnership schools, community groups and the parish to extend the curriculum and increase the range of learning opportunities for pupils such as international links with Malawi and attending Churches Together services.
- The 10% timetable requirement is met for all classes.
- Close school parish links result in a very successful sacramental programme.
- Governors evaluate the impact of Religious Education on the spiritual and moral development of pupils well.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

2

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:

2

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

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship

2

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

2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

2

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

3

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

Unique reference number 114276

Local authority Durham

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 schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

Type of school Primary

Chair of governors Mr Michael Sawyers

Head teacher Miss Joanne Jones

Date of previous school inspection 28 January 2009

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