

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



**Section 48 Inspection Report
Our Lady Star of the Sea
RC Primary School
Thorpe Road Horden
County Durham SR8 4AB**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School:	Our Lady Star of the Sea RC Primary School
Address:	Thorpe Road Horden County Durham SR8 4AB
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School URN:	114281
Headteacher:	Miss Joanne Jones
Chair of Governors:	Mr Julian Hunt
Inspector:	Mrs Lucie Stephenson
Date of Inspection:	11 & 12 October 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.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Our Lady Star of the Sea is a smaller than average primary school situated in a former mining town, in an area of high deprivation. It serves the parishes of Our Lady Star of the Sea, St Mary's and Our Lady of the Rosary. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities or a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. Most pupils are of white British origin, with a small minority from other ethnic groups. The school has gone through a number of significant changes in the last year including a move to a new building, the appointment of an experienced Headteacher who is responsible for two schools and the appointment of a new Deputy Headteacher.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 95

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 34%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 30%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 2%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 34%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 5%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 28%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 5

Number of part time teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 80%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 40%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:

FS	10%	Yr 4	10%
Yr 1	10%	Yr 5	10%
Yr 2	10%	Yr 6	10%
Yr 3	10%		

Parishes served by the school:

Our Lady Star of the Sea, Horden

St Mary's, Easington

Our Lady of the Rosary, Peterlee

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

Our Lady Star of the Sea is a satisfactory school on a journey of improvement. The school has many strengths including a welcoming and caring atmosphere and ethos. The recently appointed Headteacher and new Deputy Headteacher have total commitment to the ethos and mission of Catholic education where continuous improvement in every aspect of school life is an ongoing priority. Over a period of great change, staff work hard together as a team to ensure that their pupils have the best possible care. Priorities for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed and the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good because there is an accurate self-evaluation in place. Strong links exist with partners enriching the Catholic life of the school and enabling pupils to see their place as part of the parish community. Parents hold the school in high regard.

Overall, outcomes for pupils in Religious Education are satisfactory. The large majority of pupils have a very positive attitude to school and learning. They are happy, motivated and are proud of their school. From below age related starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress in Religious Education. However, their overall attainment is low as pupils are not achieving all they are capable of and performance at Level 4 is low. Pupils' contribution to the Catholic life of the school is satisfactory and developing and the promotion of spiritual and moral development is good. Pupil participation and engagement in the prayer and liturgical life of the school is satisfactory as they are not given opportunities to prepare and lead worship.

The provision for Catholic education is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning in Religious Education is satisfactory although there are some examples of good teaching. The recent development of rigorous assessment, tracking and ongoing monitoring procedures is a focus for improvement. This is not embedded across school and there is not enough challenge and support for more able pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment. In addition, due to inconsistencies in marking, pupils do not always know exactly what they have to do to improve their work. The quality of collective worship offered to pupils is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The Catholic life of the school is monitored informally and self-evaluation is accurate. The Headteacher who is supported well by a recently appointed Deputy Headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve further. They are totally committed to school improvement and have a sharp focus on learning and teaching. Systems are in place to track pupil progress and monitor and evaluate learning and teaching but this is at an early stage of development and is yet to impact on standards. The Governing Body are very supportive and committed to the school which has established a good range of partnerships to promote Catholic learning and well-being. Community cohesion is effectively promoted.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- raise standards in Religious Education by:
 - improving assessment for learning in Religious Education by:
 - developing pupils' skills in self-assessment through the use of 'I can' statements
 - providing quality feedback to pupils, both orally and through written comments, so that pupils know what they need to do to improve
 - ensuring lessons are planned with differentiated tasks to cater for and challenge pupils
 - further developing systems to monitor and improve staff awareness of the higher levels of attainment
- providing opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they need to plan, prepare and lead collective worship

PUPILS

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

3

The majority of pupils are keen to do well in Religious Education and have positive attitudes towards their learning. The quality of pupils' learning and progress is satisfactory overall. In lessons observed, pupils applied themselves conscientiously. From below age related starting points in Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress. However, progress in Key Stage 1 slows with the majority of the class attaining Level 1 by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. However, attainment is low with very few pupils reaching the expected level for their age by the end of the Key Stage. Evidence during inspection shows little variation in progress between Catholic pupils and those other than Catholic, pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities and other pupils in the Key Stage. However, there is a variation in the achievement of boys and girls in Key Stage 2. The school is aware of this and working hard to 'narrow the gap'. There are also inconsistencies in the differentiation of tasks and work set which means that pupils with higher abilities are not sufficiently challenged and therefore not making sufficient progress.

Pupils' contribution to the Catholic life of the school is satisfactory. The majority of pupils are keen to participate in school activities and take responsibilities around school as buddies, mediators, school councillors and members of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The large majority of pupils can discuss their own faith and spirituality with developing confidence and know and respect other people who 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 pupils are conscious of the needs of others and have a developing sense of justice and concern for others.

Pupils' response to and participation in the school's collective worship is satisfactory. Prayer is part of the everyday life of the school and from an early age pupils enjoy taking part in worship activities. The large majority of pupils show reverence and respect when participating in acts of worship, they join in community prayers and sing well. Pupils are beginning to write their own prayers and use them within worship. However, opportunities for pupils to be involved more in leading, planning and preparing collective worship are yet to be developed in school.

PROVISION

3

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is satisfactory, although there is some evidence of good teaching. Lessons are planned on pupils' prior learning but don't always meet the wide range of pupils' needs existing in classes. Teachers have good subject knowledge which is helping to interest and inspire the majority of pupils. A good range of strategies ensures that pupils are generally engaged by their work and behaviour in lessons is good. The support staff are effectively deployed in lessons which has a positive impact on the progress of both individual learners and groups of learners. The information given to pupils about their progress is very limited with inconsistent use of the 'I can' statements. There is a good range of resources used in lessons including technology to support learning.

Assessment and academic guidance are unsatisfactory. Systems are now in place which give a broadly accurate view of pupil progress and achievement and the school is beginning to use 'I can' statements to support learning and assessment although this is not embedded. The school recognises that pupils' skills in self-assessment are not developed enough to enable them to become more responsible for their own learning. There is some evidence of marking and feedback which is beginning to move pupils on in their learning although this is not consistent throughout the school. The school recognises the need to develop the quality of marking of pupils' work to raise attainment.

The Religious Education curriculum is satisfactory overall and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. On the whole, the curriculum offered takes into account the variety of learning styles, age and interests of the pupils, as a result of which the vast majority of pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm. However, the more able are not provided with challenging activities. The Religious Education curriculum impacts positively on the large majority of pupils' spiritual and moral development and helps to prepare them for the next stage in their lives.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is satisfactory overall with some evidence of good practice which ensures that the spiritual needs of most pupils are met. Prayer is a developing part of school life. There are a range of formal and informal prayer opportunities in school which staff prepare and lead enabling pupil participation. The school has recognised that this is an area for development and has plans in place to involve the pupils in preparing and leading worship. Liturgies have a positive impact on pupils, parents and parishioners. Key seasons of the Church's year are celebrated appropriately and other religious festivals acknowledged.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

3

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

The promotion of the Catholic life of the school by leaders and managers is satisfactory overall. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision. The appointment of an experienced Headteacher and the recent appointment of a Deputy Headteacher has led to a renewed focus and strive for improvement. Many informal opportunities are taken by the governors and school leaders to monitor the Catholic life of the school and there are detailed plans to support this process. Self-evaluation at all levels within the school provides an accurate picture of current achievements and there are detailed plans to tackle weaknesses.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education are satisfactory but improving. Assessment and tracking systems are developing but currently have limited impact on pupils' learning, progress and standards. Although areas for action have been identified and plans are in place, the strategies to effect improvement are at an early stage of development.

The governing body is fully committed to supporting and challenging the school. They are 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 improvement of standards. Governors are visible in and around school on a daily basis and are an integral part of the community. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties and are very supportive of leaders and staff.

Leaders and managers are actively committed to developing partnerships with other providers and organisations and are involved in a number of partnerships which help to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being. The school leadership team ensure that there are strong links with other primary and secondary schools which are impacting positively on the provision and outcomes for pupils. This commitment ensures that pupils benefit in a number of areas which the school alone could not provide.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory overall. The school is an inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each other through the school council, buddy system and the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society. The school supports various charity projects 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. The school is developing opportunities for pupils to engage with those from different backgrounds.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

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

Overall effectiveness	3
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship 	3
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education 	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of collective worship provided by the school 	3
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion. 	3