



**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Augustine's RC Primary

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School URN: 114240

School DfES: 841/3308

Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Crawford

Chair of Governors: Mr Declan McGuckin

Inspector: Mrs Maureen Galbraith

Date of Inspection: 16th & 17th October 2007

This Inspection Report is produced for Bishop Kevin Dunn, (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.

Characteristics of the school and views of the stakeholders.

St Augustine's Primary School serves the parish of St Augustine's in Darlington. Pupils come from a diverse range of socio economic backgrounds ranging from well above to well below average. The vast majority are from white UK heritage backgrounds and 87% are baptised Catholics. Seven pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, who do not have English as their first language, have been admitted since 2006. No children from other faiths currently attend the school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (including statements of special educational needs) is also lower than average. Pupils are admitted from up to fifteen different pre school settings and attainment on entry is broadly average or below. The Headteacher has been in post for seven years and two Assistant Headteachers since the summer term of 2006. Justly held in high regard, the school is valued by pupils, parents and the community. During inspection many different stakeholders identified the school as being a 'supportive' environment where the 'emotional support was excellent' and where 'the ethos brings out the skills in the children'.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 213

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 87%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 12.7%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 0%

Percentage of learners from ethnic groups: 3.1%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 8.5%

Staffing:

Number of full time teachers: 8

Number of part time teachers: 2

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 100%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 50%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

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:

St Augustine's, Darlington

Key for inspection grades:Grade 1 **Outstanding** Grade 2 **Good** Grade 3 **Satisfactory** Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory****Overall Effectiveness****Grade: 1**

The Overall Effectiveness of the school is outstanding. The Headteacher provides strong, dynamic leadership supported by a capable and knowledgeable subject leader. There is a focused and flourishing sense of purpose and commitment to the school's educational mission ensuring the message of Christ's gospel is explicit in its daily work. This is evidenced on a daily basis by high quality relationships, which break down barriers to learning and a quest for excellence in all aspects of school life and curriculum Religious Education. Effective systems are in place to enable others to be involved in shaping the Catholic life of the school. Collective Worship is outstanding. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in a range of liturgies and celebrations, which contribute significantly to their spiritual and moral development. Pupils speak proudly about the focus on prayer and the importance of Religious Education as a central part of school life; they enjoy their lessons a great deal. Staff are dedicated and hard working. Teaching is very effective, the curriculum meets the needs of learners well and there has been a good improvement in standards over the last year. Governors actively support the school and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The school is highly regarded by parents and the wider community and has an important place in the parish. These close partnerships ensure pupils receive a consistent shared message.

Improvements since last inspection

Good progress has been made and issues raised in the last inspection have all been successfully addressed. The mission statement has been reviewed. The role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator has been developed and the present post holder is very proactive in leading and developing curriculum religious education within school. Assessment and monitoring procedures have been formalised and include levelling of pupils' work; new assessment procedures have been implemented in line with Diocesan recommendations. The teaching of other faiths has been developed throughout the school and resources purchased, which are having an impact on pupils' understanding and appreciation of others.

School's capacity to improve further**Grade: 1**

As a result of rigorous self-evaluation, the leadership and management of the school have a clear view of its strengths and what needs to be done to improve further. The senior leadership have secure, clear plans for improvement as a priority in the school Improvement Plan and some actions have already been taken which are impacting positively on standards such as developing staff understanding and security with strands in assessment. There is strong support from parents and governors and pupil attitudes are extremely positive. These factors taken with the

strong, determined leadership indicate that the school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

In order to raise standards further the governors should seek to:

- use assessment to set challenging targets for pupils in order to further raise achievement in Religious Education;
- review the marking policy to consistently include suggestions for improvement in Religious Education so that all pupils know how to move on to the next steps in their learning;
- ensure implementation of the actions identified in the SED to remediate issues accurately identified by the school's own self evaluation.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. Leaders at all levels are well informed on church teaching and instil a clear sense of purpose to the Catholic mission of the school, which "sharpens the mission of the church". Effective systems are in place to enable others to participate in shaping the Catholic life of the school. Learners achieve as a result of a quest for excellence, the positive role models of staff and a sharp focus on their fullest personal development, underpinned and permeated by gospel values. Inclusion is at the heart of school life and is promoted very successfully. Protection of the weak is a high priority and vulnerable groups are identified and supported effectively through school procedures and outside agencies. Effective monitoring and evaluation feed into the School Improvement Plan. Very strong links exist between home, school and parish. Parents speak warmly about the Catholic life of the school. They feel involved and their views valued. The school works effectively with the parish in the preparation of children for the sacraments, in leading seasonal liturgies and, on occasions, family Sunday Masses, (such as the 'Welcome Mass'), which lead to evangelisation. Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Through Diocesan training they understand direction and are becoming more involved through the link governor role. Many are parents who visit the school regularly. This all has a positive impact on the Catholic life of the school, which is highly valued by governors, parents and clergy.

Collective Worship

Grade: 1

Overall Collective Worship is outstanding. Prayer is central to the life of the school and the whole school community. The provision of Collective Worship is a priority resulting in daily acts of high quality worship. There are a wide range of opportunities for worship which involve pupils, parents, governors and parish and a key strength is

the quality of preparation and modelling shown by the Headteacher and subject leader. Weekly whole school 'Liturgy of the Word' celebrations develop understanding of the Mass at appropriate levels for children. All pupils are keen to participate. They are progressively involved in the preparation and delivery of acts of liturgy, prayer and Collective Worship. They listen well, are reverent and prayerful during collective worship and join in the singing of hymns enthusiastically. They appreciate the focus areas in their classrooms and speak proudly of the importance of prayer within their school. The contribution of Collective Worship to learners' spiritual and moral development is both significant and a strength of the school.

School's contribution to the promotion of Community Cohesion

Grade: 2

The school's contribution to community cohesion is good with some outstanding features within school. The school effectively promotes community cohesion by having a shared common purpose and sense of belonging within the school community. Strong relationships are a strength of the school and inclusion vigorously promoted. Leaders respect difference and strive to ensure equal opportunities for all, resulting in high levels of pupil achievement both academically and in terms of personal well being, irrespective of levels on entry and wide ranging pupil backgrounds. Pupils recently arrived from Eastern Europe are integrating well and 'enrich the life of the school'. Pupils have a strong sense of justice and an understanding of democracy. The KS2 School Council is a representative voice for the pupils. Parents take an active interest in the life of the school and are kept well informed. They feel welcome and part of a community. Open meetings for parents, staff and governors enhance the sense of community and provide opportunities for everyone's views to be valued and influence decisions. Religious Education programmes follow Diocesan guidelines for the teaching of other faiths and diversity is promoted throughout the curriculum. The Headteacher and subject leader recognise the need to invite into school those of different ethnic backgrounds or other faiths to promote this further. Pupils and parents are generous in supporting various charities throughout the year and international links with Peru, an orphanage in Sri Lanka, local and national charities, plus some lesser known but pertinent to pupils in school, strengthen awareness of moral and global issues and responsibilities.

Curriculum Religious Education

Achievements and standards in Religious Education

Grade: 2

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education are good overall, given learners' capabilities and starting points. Almost all learners, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well overall and there is a recent trend of good

and improving achievement. Learners are gaining knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) at a good rate across all Key Stages. There is no significant difference between the achievements of any groups. In Reception pupils recognise some religious signs of Baptism in welcoming us into God's family and the special signs used. In Key Stage 1 they are able to identify and, some, to explain the meaning of symbols using religious vocabulary. Progress is continued across Key Stage 2 with pupils attaining particularly well in learning from religion. Pupils showed good ability to learn from each attainment target when considering how they could 'let their light shine'. Reflection on personal behaviour and the development of conscience were evident in pupil responses. Towards the end of the Key Stage, pupils demonstrated a particularly good understanding of AT2 when writing poetry reflecting their understanding of the imagery of the Holy Spirit. Across both Key Stages there is evidence of growing security in assessment, but indications that it is not yet being used as effectively as it might to set targets to identify and develop the next steps in pupils' learning. Furthermore marking does not consistently indicate how pupils could improve their work. The school could raise standards further by maintaining a sharp focus in these areas. Pupils with additional needs progress well. They enjoy their work and their attitude and behaviour in class reflects this – they participate willingly and confidently.

Quality of Provision for Religious Education, Teaching and Learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding elements. It is consistent with curriculum guidance. Teachers have good subject knowledge and a secure understanding of the Religious Education curriculum and its key skills. Well planned and structured lessons help pupils to make good progress. Teaching is imaginative and a variety of strategies such as art, music, drama and ICT actively engage all groups of learners. Clear learning objectives are set and the use of talk partners and probing questions are effective in raising standards across the school. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to exemplary. Lessons are well prepared and conducted at a good pace. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and well directed teaching assistants reinforce and support learning effectively – they make a significant contribution. Relationships between staff and pupils are based on mutual respect. This creates a positive atmosphere in the classroom, which supports learning and helps children to enjoy Religious Education. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are in place and there is a clear recognition of the importance to maintain and further develop current good practice. The involvement of parents and carers is good. They receive termly information about the Religious Education programme of work and appropriate information about their child's progress.

Effectiveness of Meeting Learners' needs and interests

Grade: 1

The Religious Education programme offered to the pupils is outstanding offering a breadth of experiences in meeting the needs and interests of learners. The 'Here I Am' Programme is central to the work undertaken in Religious Education. The curriculum provided is engaging, stimulating and differentiated appropriately. It builds upon prior learning and children's experiences and is enriched by cross-curricular links. Children report that they like 'mixed or linked lessons'. Pupils are very interested in their work and express their views and beliefs confidently. They report favourably on how much they enjoy Religious Education and show understanding of what makes them who they are. 'Religious Education lessons help you reflect about things, think about what God would have done. How to live your life, how to behave'. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures. They understand that a variety of religious beliefs exist and are respectful of the beliefs and values of other traditions and faiths. They show consideration and care for others and their behaviour is exemplary. This enhances the learning process. Religious Education has a strong impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils and those in need. The requirements of the Bishops' Conference are fully met and curriculum time is allocated to maximise learning

Leadership and Management of Religious Education

Grade: 1

The leadership and management of Religious Education is outstanding overall. The Headteacher and subject leader, who is one of the Assistant Headteachers, form a strong, cohesive team with the shared vision and aspirations to achieve the highest possible standards in Religious Education for all pupils. They are confident and well informed. There is a clear sense of direction based on high quality evaluation and resources are effectively used to achieve the school's goals. Performance Management and continued professional development ensure skilled staff are supported in the quest for excellence. Early intervention and high quality teaching assistants ensure the needs and interests of all learners are well met. The subject is well managed by a highly skilled Co-ordinator who leads by example and is involved in monitoring processes. Good improvements have already been made as a result of actions taken. Equality of opportunity is well promoted and discrimination vigorously tackled. The link governor has a clear understanding of his role and both staff and governors contributed to the SED at appropriate levels. Governors are well informed about curriculum Religious Education and the school's plans to raise standards further.

SUMMARY INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: Grade 1 - Outstanding Grade 2 - Good Grade 3 – Satisfactory Grade 4 - Unsatisfactory	School Overall	16-19
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The Catholic Life of the School

The effectiveness of leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school	1	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality care and education;	1	
The quality of the leadership of the headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school;	1	
How effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes learners' spiritual and moral development;	1	
How effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated;	1	
How well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation;	1	
How effectively leaders promote and facilitate the work of chaplaincy;	1	
How effectively leadership at all levels and the school promotes partnership with parish community and wider community.	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	1	
The frequency and quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and the liturgical life of the school;	1	
Learners' response to the school's provision;	1	
How well Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners.	1	
How effectively the school/college promotes Community Cohesion	2	
The school as a community with common, inclusive values, where differences and similarities are recognised and valued;	1	
The quality of provision for engagement, dialogue and collaboration with groups and individuals within/beyond the school;	2	
The school's commitment to serving the common good;	1	
The contribution of curriculum Religious Education to promoting Community Cohesion;	2	
The contribution of the school's Collective Worship in promoting Community Cohesion.	2	

Curriculum Religious Education

How well do learners achieve?	2	
The standard of learners' work;	2	
Learners' success in achieving challenging targets, with trends over time and any significant variations between groups of learners;	2	
Learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential, with any significant variations between groups of learners.	2	

The effectiveness of teaching and learning	2	
How well teaching is used to meet learners' needs and curriculum requirements;	2	
The suitability and rigour and assessment in planning, monitoring and informing;	2	
The identification of, and provision for, additional learning needs;	1	
The involvement of parents/carers in their children's learning and development.	2	
The effectiveness of the Religious Education curriculum in meeting the needs and interests of learners	1	
How well the curriculum matches learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience;	2	
How the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' conference;	1	
How learners enjoy their work;	1	
How the curriculum in Religious Education contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners.	1	
The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education	1	
How well senior and subject leaders in Religious Education lead and support their staff;	1	
How performance in Religious Education is monitored and improved through quality assurance and self-assessment;	2	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are well taught;	1	
The adequacy and suitability of the learning resources and accommodation, and how effectively and efficiently these are deployed to achieve high standards;	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve their full potential;	1	
How well governors discharge their responsibilities.	1	

Overall Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners	1	
The overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic life of the school;	1	
The overall effectiveness of the provision for curriculum Religious Education;	1	
The effectiveness of any steps taken to ensure improvement since the last inspection;	1	
The capacity to make further improvements;	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation.	1	

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Darlington**

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Copies of the full report are available from the school.

Summary of Findings

The Overall Effectiveness of the provision of Catholic Education is outstanding.
Leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school are outstanding.
The provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.
The school's contribution towards Community Cohesion is good with some outstanding features.
Achievements and standards in Religious Education are good.
Teaching and Learning in Religious Education is good with some outstanding features.
The Religious Education curriculum in meeting learners' needs and interests is outstanding.
Leadership and management of Religious Education are outstanding.

The school's capacity to improve further is outstanding.

In order to raise standards further the governors should seek to:

- use assessment to set challenging targets for pupils in order to further raise achievement in Religious Education;
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