

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School
Address: Cowpen Lane, Billingham, TS23 1LJ
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School URN: 111675
Headteacher: Mrs Julia Rea
Chair of Governors: Mr Graeme Nimmo
Inspector: Mr Michael Ewing
Date of Inspection: 10 and 11 January 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

St John the Evangelist Catholic Primary School is situated in the south of Billingham, in the borough of Stockton on Tees and serves the parish of St John the Evangelist. It is an average-sized primary school with a minority of the pupils coming from Catholic families. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. A lower than average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and none has a statement of special educational needs. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The school has gained Healthy School status, the Activemark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the foundation level International Schools Award.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 219

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 45%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 54%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 1%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 2%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 14%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 8

Number of part time teachers: 4

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 80%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 25%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:

FS	10%	Yr 4	10%
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Yr 1	10%	Yr 5	10%
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Yr 2	10%	Yr 6	10%
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Yr 3	10%		
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Parishes served by the school:

St John the Evangelist, Billingham

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St John the Evangelist RC Primary is a good Catholic school, where the strong Catholic ethos has created a cohesive community within which all are valued and encouraged to play an active role in fulfilling the school's aims. The school's affirming ethos helps pupils to flourish, to develop confidence and to care for each other. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is good because leaders and governors accurate and ongoing self-assessment has resulted in setting clear, challenging targets and appropriate priorities in order to ensure improvement in pupil progress and standards of attainment. Strong links with the parish enrich the Catholic life of the school and enable pupils to see their place as part of the parish community. Parents hold the school in high regard and appreciate the way in which the school works hard at maintaining positive relationships with all stakeholders, "no matter who you are".

The school has worked hard to raise attainment in Religious Education since the last inspection and standards for pupils in Religious Education are now above average at the end of Key Stage 2. All groups of pupils achieve well. The school has an inclusive approach to Religious Education which engages all learners. Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. Pupils respond with reverence in collective worship and participate readily. Pupils have a good understanding of Gospel values and how to apply them in their daily lives to make a difference to themselves and others.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education are good which enables pupils to make good progress. Assessment, monitoring and tracking procedures are continually under review and development and impact positively on pupil progress. The marking of pupils' work is becoming more refined and contributes to pupils knowing what they need to do to move on in their learning. The Religious Education curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and is focused on raising standards. The quality of collective worship is good. Staff are excellent role models for the pupils and offer a variety of opportunities for prayer and worship. Pupils help to lead celebrations within the Church and wider community.

Leadership and management are good. Under the determined, nurturing and widely respected leadership of the headteacher, the effective senior leadership team ensure that developments in Religious Education are given a high priority. Governors make an outstanding contribution to the success of the school through their informed and active participation in school life. All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the school is continuously striving to improve standards. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is good. Strengths and areas for development are recognised, communicated to all stakeholders and plans to improve the school's work are detailed and realistic. Community cohesion is outstanding. The school has recently re-visited its Mission

Statement and further development of this work is required to promote a wider collective understanding of the school's mission.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- To raise standards in Religious Education by:
 - improving pupils' skills of self-assessment
 - introducing pupils to a greater variety of prayer styles and involving them more in the planning and preparation of collective acts of worship.
- To ensure the school's Mission Statement is central to the life of the school by effectively communicating the mission to all stakeholders so that all have an agreed understanding of the school's distinctive purpose and how this impacts on their daily lives.

PUPILS

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

2

Most pupils enjoy Religious Education and achieve well. From below average starting points on entry to school, most pupils make good progress throughout Foundation Stage. This progress continues and by the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above average with a significant proportion of pupils achieving above the expected outcomes. There is little variation in the amount of progress made by Catholics and those other than Catholic. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with pupils in their Key Stage. Their needs are accurately identified and support is adapted to meet them. Most pupils achieve well across all aspects of Religious Education because work is appropriately differentiated.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and obtain much benefit from it. They willingly take on responsibilities and participate in activities within and beyond the classroom which they acknowledge help them to become better people. Pupils are reflective and enquiring and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people. They show interest in the religious life of others, are comfortable when expressing their own beliefs and respect religious objects in the school. They understand the importance of key celebrations in the liturgical year and in the parish community. They respond readily to opportunities to lead celebrations within the parish and wider community. Pupils are considerate to others and respond to the needs of people beyond the school through raising funds for international charities. Pupils understand the need for forgiveness and have a good understanding of what is right and wrong.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. Pupils act reverently and are keen to take part in and lead prayer and liturgies. They know what constitutes good worship. They sing joyfully, reflect silently, read confidently and are introduced to a variety of ways of praying. Pupils are introduced to collective worship from Nursery and the inclusive nature of collective worship means that all feel valued. They have a good understanding of the religious seasons and festivals and are becoming skilled in the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. Collective worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The school recognises the need to increase the role of pupils as "prayer leaders" to further develop opportunities for pupils to plan, prepare and lead liturgies.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

2

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall. There is good teaching throughout the school and teachers use a variety of strategies and styles to engage the pupils. As a result behaviour is good and pupils are well motivated. Effective planning builds on prior learning which meets the needs of most pupils and is pivotal to enabling good outcomes in attainment and progress. Support staff are effectively deployed and the quality of their work and the positive relationships built by all the adults in the school, result in pupils enjoying their learning and making progress.

Assessment and monitoring procedures are satisfactory and give a clear and accurate picture of pupil progress and attainment. 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. Staff have a growing understanding of how to get the pupils where they want them to be. Regular assessment ensures that pupils know how well they are doing. However, pupils' skills in self-assessment are not sufficiently developed. Pupils are provided with feedback, both orally and written. The quality of marking to move pupils on in their learning is not consistent throughout the school. This is an area which the school has recognised and early actions in this regard are beginning to make an impact.

The Religious Education curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of most pupils and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. It is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well planned strategies which are stimulating and memorable. Resources are well used to support learning and the school allocates funding to enable new priorities to be appropriately resourced. The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for and impacts positively on pupils' spiritual and moral development. Enrichment activities enhance pupils' engagement with the wider community and have a high uptake.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are well met. It is fully inclusive, reflective and well planned enabling pupils to take an active part. Staff regularly review and plan improvements. Prayer is central to the life of the school and this is demonstrated by the way staff and pupils pray together. There is a good range of formal and informal opportunities for prayer. Opportunities for pupils to lead liturgies in the parish church and take part in community events at various times of the year enhance the quality of provision and develop pupils' skills.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

Leaders and managers are good at promoting the Catholic life of the school. They demonstrate a total commitment to the mission of the church and are always looking to improve and develop the Catholic character of the school. Spiritual and moral development is a high priority for all. The effective leadership by the headteacher and senior management team results in clear monitoring activities which inform decisions and plans for improvement. They see that gathering the views of stakeholders makes an essential contribution to the school improvement plan. Through good self-evaluation procedures leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of strengths and areas to develop.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education are good. During the last year, school leaders have taken on the shared responsibility of leadership of Religious Education in the absence of the Religious Education co-ordinator to ensure that the subject remains central to the school's work. Leaders ensure that monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place and that they are impacting increasingly positively on pupils' learning, progress and standards. They accurately identify areas of strength and development and contribute to the good capacity for improvement. Detailed plans, which are constantly reviewed, are in place and strategies to effect improvement are implemented effectively, resulting in continuously improving outcomes for pupils. The school uses a variety of monitoring strategies to improve its work and actions for improvement are based on sound evidence.

Governors provide highly effective challenge and support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They play an active part in planning for continuous improvement, showing determination in challenging and supporting the school in order to address areas of development. 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 are confident in providing high levels of challenge to ensure continuous improvement of standards. They have been involved in revising the Mission Statement and play a full part in drawing up the school development plan and in particular the sections for Religious Education. Governors have high levels of expertise and discharge their statutory and canonical duties well. They are actively involved in the school community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff. They make a highly significant contribution to the work and Catholic dimension of the school.

Leaders and managers are successful at developing partnerships with other providers and organisations. 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 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. There is a particularly effective partnership with other schools in the local Catholic partnership which enables a successful transition between primary and secondary school.

Promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The school is a highly inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. Leaders respect difference,

value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Pupils from different backgrounds and religious beliefs are able to work together through a variety of opportunities for prayer and collective worship enabling them to respect and celebrate difference. The views of others are respected and pupils display an attitude of respect for all faiths. Provision in Religious Education enables pupils to develop an understanding of the common good and a commitment to their global responsibilities. Parents from all backgrounds feel part of this community.

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	2
• 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	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	1
• 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.	1