



Section 48 Inspection Report

**St Joseph's RC Primary School
Newton Aycliffe, County Durham**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Joseph's RC Primary School

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School URN: 114266

Headteacher: Mrs Grainne Duffy

Chair of Governors: Mr Sean O'Keeffe

Inspector: Miss Elaine Mathews

Date of Inspection: 11 and 12 July 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

St Joseph's is a small Catholic primary school situated in Newton Aycliffe. It is one of two Catholic primary schools situated in the parish of St Mary's and St Joseph's. The two schools federated under a single governing body in September 2010. St Joseph's serves a community with a mix of socio-economic circumstances. The school deprivation indicator has risen steadily over the last three years and is currently at 0.28, above the national average of 0.23. Pupils enter school with skills generally below age related expectations. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above national average. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is also slightly above the national average. The majority of pupils are baptised Catholics.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 183

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 58%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 19%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 23%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 21%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 22%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 7

Number of part time teachers: 2

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 76%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 24% teachers

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 Mary's and St Joseph's, Newton Aycliffe

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school’s capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Joseph’s is a good Catholic school where the mission and ethos of Catholic education underpins all that the school does. There is a shared vision which promotes the highest expectations for all members of the school community. Inclusion is given a high priority and staff work effectively as a team to ensure that their pupils have the best possible care. Positive relationships are a key strength of the school. Leaders and managers have 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. All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the school is continuously striving to further improve standards demonstrating a good capacity for sustained improvement. The school is held in very high regard by the parents, the parish community and the governors.

Pupils speak confidently about their school and are very happy to come to school which results in them having a positive attitude to learning. In Religious Education (RE) all pupils make at least the expected progress. From below average starting points attainment is average by the time pupils reach the end of key stage two (KS2). Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. From an early age, they learn about the importance of treating each other in a fair and considerate manner and have a good understanding of right and wrong. This results in a harmonious learning environment and is a clear strength of the school. Pupils respond to worship with respect and reverence. Their level of participation and skills in preparing and leading prayer and worship are good and improving. The promotion of pupils’ spiritual and moral development is good.

The school provides a good Catholic education. Teaching in RE is good which enables pupils to make at least the expected progress. A range of quality resources and teaching strategies are used throughout the school which contribute to the pupils’ enjoyment of their RE lessons. The RE curriculum is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and raising standards. Assessment, monitoring and tracking systems are used to support planning for teaching and learning and impact positively on pupil progress. The quality of collective worship is good. It is well defined within the school day and pupils are continually developing skills in the preparation and leading of worship. The staff are very good role models for pupils and offer a variety of quality prayer and worship opportunities.

The strong leadership of the headteacher ensures that all pupils are well cared for, known and respected as individuals and well-motivated to make progress. The senior management team demonstrate a commitment to strive for continuous school improvement. Leaders have a clear sense of direction and purpose in curriculum RE which is recognised as the core subject of the curriculum. Professional development of all staff is a high priority. This is tailored to both whole school and individual needs resulting in competent staff committed to ensuring that all pupils make progress. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses and provides appropriate challenge and support, demonstrated by their active

involvement in the life of the school. The appointment of a new RE Co-ordinator for the next academic year reflects the understanding of school leaders for a more coherent approach to evaluating the schools effectiveness through rigorous monitoring and analysis of priorities for further improvement.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Provide learning opportunities which are appropriately differentiated to allow pupils to achieve at the higher levels of attainment - level three (L3) and level (L5).
- Provide opportunities for pupils to lead and take responsibility for activities with a religious character in the school and the wider community.
- Ensure the newly appointed RE co-ordinator has the appropriate training and support to allow the RE action plan to be successfully implemented.

PUPILS

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

2

The quality of pupils' learning and progress is satisfactory. In all lessons observed pupils applied themselves diligently. The pupils endeavour to produce their best work and are interested in RE lessons. Pupils are confident when talking about their lessons and have positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils are increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge, skills and understanding continue to develop well in relation to their age and capability. Pupils enter school with starting points that are well below average. Pupils in the foundation stage (FS) make good progress and achieve well. Most pupils make at least expected progress across key stage one (KS1) and KS2, including those who have special needs and/or disabilities and those who enter school at other than the normal yearly intake because their needs are accurately identified and appropriate, effective support given to meet them. Attainment at the end of KS1 and KS2 is average. By the end of KS1, most pupils are attaining L2, which is average, but pupils do not exceed these levels. By the end of KS2 most pupils achieve L4. Current standards are satisfactory overall and improving. Assessment data for the current year indicates that, by the end of KS2, the very large majority of pupils have reached the expected standard.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. Most are increasingly able to take on responsibility for themselves and others. They take advantage of the many and varied opportunities the school provides for their personal support and spiritual development. The pupils from Reception class onwards have a strong sense of their own identity within their 'school family'. They appreciate their learning about other faiths and know that religion is important to many people whose beliefs are different from their own. Many are conscious of the needs of others and have a well-developed sense of justice and concern for others. The 'Statements to Live By' are given a high profile within the school and are effectively used as a focus for prayer and spiritual development. This is shared with the Parish on a weekly basis.

Pupils' response to and participation in the school's collective worship is good. The pupils are confident in leading and contributing to collective worship. Their level of participation is good; they are reflective and focused during collective worship. There is a range and variety of prayer opportunities provided. Pupils respond enthusiastically when singing and most singing is accompanied by signing, which engages and focuses pupils well. Pupils express their thoughts and feelings openly when worshipping within their school community. The pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and festivals. The good collective worship is having a positive impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

2

Teaching is good. A range of teaching styles, good questioning techniques, clear explanations and good use of ICT ensure that all pupils are consistently interested in their learning and make progress. Effectively planned lessons build on prior learning and meet the varying needs of pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge which inspires and promotes confident learners. They have high expectations and make learning interesting which impacts positively on pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation. Support staff are effectively deployed and contribute actively to the learning of the pupils.

Assessment and monitoring procedures are good and give a clear and accurate picture of pupil progress and attainment. Leaders and teachers use this information to good effect, ensuring continuous improvement. Tracking systems for RE 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. This information is being used effectively by teachers in setting targets for improvement. All have a growing understanding of how to get the pupils where they want them to be. Good guidance ensures that pupils know how well they are doing but the school recognises that pupils' skills in self-assessment need to be developed further enabling them to become more responsible for their own learning. Pupils are provided with feedback, both orally and written, and the quality of marking to move pupils on in their learning is developing well throughout the school.

The RE curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. It is enriched through a variety of well-planned strategies and relevant resources which engage and motivate the pupils. Planning ensures full coverage of the curriculum and identifies pupils' prior learning. The RE curriculum provides good opportunities for and impacts positively on pupils' spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are well met. Prayer is central to the life of the school, is fully inclusive, reflective and well planned, enabling pupils to take an active part. Pupils increasingly plan, prepare and lead acts of collective worship and are provided with very good role models. There is a varied range of formal and informal opportunities for prayer, reflection and liturgy and pupils confidently share different forms of prayer in class, school liturgies and school masses. Acts of collective worship have a significant impact on pupils, parents and parishioners. They are very public demonstrations of the ethos of the school.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

The school's leadership and management promote the Catholic life of the school very well. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision. The deep commitment, drive and energy of the headteacher is an inspiration to the whole school community. The priority given to the Catholic life of the school is reflected in the school's development plan. This results in targeted and coherent planning and actions to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. Good quality induction and staff training have ensured an awareness, understanding and commitment to the very strong Catholic ethos.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for RE are good. Monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place which impact positively on pupils' learning, progress and standards. They accurately inform areas of strength and areas for further development and contribute to the good capacity for improvement. The co-ordinator (role currently held by headteacher) has high expectations, keeps staff well informed and is very supportive. Detailed and well-targeted plans are in place with identified strategies for improvement, including the appointment of a new RE Co-ordinator effective from September 2012, which ensure a focus on continuously improving outcomes for all pupils.

Governors provide significant challenge and support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They are well informed on issues relating to RE and the Catholic life of the school, understand well the school's performance in RE and know what needs to be done to ensure continuous improvement of standards. Governors are visible in and around school on a regular and frequent basis and are an integral part of this community. Consequently there is a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and they put the well-being and development of the whole child at the centre of their work. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties very well and are extremely supportive of leaders and staff.

Leaders and managers are successful at developing partnerships with other providers and organisations. The school engages in a good 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 enables pupils and staff to enjoy, achieve and develop well.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is good. The school is an inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each other through the school pastoral system and as a result they recognise, respect and celebrate differences and have a strong and well defined sense of the common good. The school has recently federated with another Catholic primary school in the parish providing opportunity for joint planning, training and participation in a wide variety of cross-curricular and extra-curricular events.

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE 	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 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ pupils' standards of attainment in RE 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship 	2
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in RE 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which RE curriculum meets pupils' needs 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<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 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils 	2
<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 	1
<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. 	2