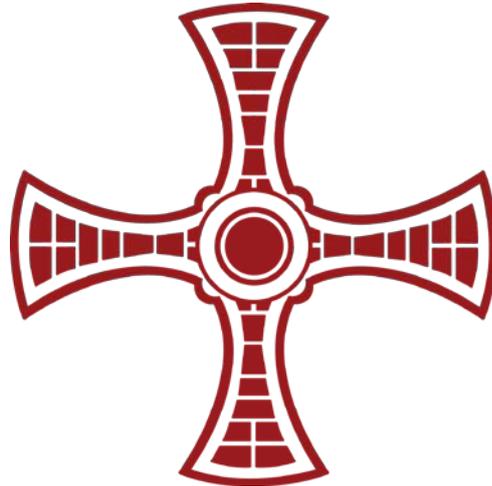




DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION



S48 Inspection Report

**St Leonard's RC Comprehensive School,
Durham**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School:	St Leonard's Catholic School
Address:	North End Durham DH1 4NG
Telephone Number:	01913 848575
Email address:	scampbell@st-leonards.durham.sch.uk
School URN:	114326
Headteacher:	Mr Simon Campbell
Chair of Governors:	Mr Dennis Bradley
Lead Inspector:	Maura Regan
Team Inspector:	Stephen Hammond
Date of Inspection:	28 and 29 May 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 Leonard's is a Catholic comprehensive school serving pupils in the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle and the Durham Local Authority. Pupils travel up to nineteen miles to school from a variety of areas which include the City of Durham, Chester-le-Street and many small villages some of which are ex-mining communities.

The socio-economic background of pupils is varied with 25% of pupils coming from wards where the proportion of adults having received higher education is significantly lower than the national average.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 1391

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 225

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 79.15%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 12.87%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 2.66%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 5.32%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 6.18%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 15.38%

Staffing

Full time teachers: 76

Part time teachers: 21

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 50.52%

RE Department Staffing:

Number of full time RE teachers: 8

Number of part time RE teachers: 0

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 100%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 0%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:

Yr7 8%

Yr 10 10%

Yr8 8%

Yr 11 10%

Yr9 8%

6th Form 4% General RE and 20% 'A' Level

Parishes served by the school:

St Cuthbert's, Chester-Le-Street

St Bede's, Sacriston

St Joseph's, Langley Park

St Michael's, Esh Laude

Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, Newhouse

St Joseph's, Ushaw Moor

St Godric's and St Bede, Durham

St Cuthbert's, Durham

St Joseph's, Durham

St Joseph's, Birtley

St Joseph's, St Patrick and St Cuthbert, Coxhoe

St Patrick's, Langley Moor

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Leonard's is an outstanding Catholic school. The headteacher and the senior team provide outstanding leadership in all aspects of school life. They are outstanding role models of Christian virtue and their beliefs are clearly embedded in Christian values. Staff take a clear lead from them and feel valued and supported in promoting the Catholic life of the school. All members of the school community contribute to the fulfilling of their mission statement by 'pursuing excellence' in all aspects of provision. Senior leaders take 'Christ as the model for life' and demonstrate this through their leadership; so much so that they create and lead 'a community for the greater glory of God and the service of others'.

Pupils make excellent progress in Religious Education (RE) and have a real enjoyment of the subject. Outcomes are outstanding. This is reflected in the high proportion of pupils achieving grades A*-C at GCSE level and in the high uptake of AS and A2 RE courses in the Sixth Form. Less able pupils are well supported and more able pupils are suitably challenged in RE lessons. Pupils are keen to take part in opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils are confident in preparing and leading collective worship and do so with joy. The promotion of spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

Provision for Catholic education is outstanding. The school delivers a comprehensive induction programme for new staff to ensure that they are enabled to play a full and active part in contributing to the values and ethos of the school. Assessment practices within the RE department are well documented and rigorously implemented and this has a positive impact on student achievement. All collective acts of worship are well prepared and secure a high level of pupil engagement. Experience of daily prayer is provided and well resourced for all staff and students.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher is committed to the development of the school as a vibrant worshipping community. He is supported in all aspects of his mission by pupils, staff, governors and the local clergy. Pupils and staff feel safe, valued and supported in all aspects of school life and this gives them the courage and affirmation to be witnesses to the gospel through positive acts both within the school and the wider community. The fabric of the school is characterised by signs and symbols of witness and this is particularly evident in the RE department and in the chapel area.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Provide an effective coaching and modelling programme within the RE department so that teachers are able to learn from the outstanding pedagogical practice of the head of department and second in department.
- Re-appraise the amount of assessment carried out at key stage three (KS3) so as to maintain rigour but create time to consolidate learning.
- Further develop strong parish links building on existing good practice.

PUPILS

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

1

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. The vast majority of students enjoy their learning as demonstrated by their enthusiasm and interest. The expert balance of challenge and support given to students with particular learning needs enables them to achieve very well. Attainment at (KS3) is good and standards are rising as assessment procedures become more secure. Standards at key stage four (KS4) are high with at least 86% of year eleven (Y11) students securing A*-C grades at GCSE for each of the last three years. The percentage of students attaining A*-B grades is impressive at 73%. The RE department performs very highly relative to other GCSE subjects within the school. Achievement at AS is strong, averaging 50% A*-B grades on a three year trend. 2011 A*-E results show a marked improvement on 2010 results rising from 83% to 95%. This demonstrates the impact of the department's strong, targeted intervention programmes. Achievement at A2 is strong with the vast majority of students meeting or exceeding their targets which is a product of the high quality teaching they receive and in turn the pupils' commitment to the subject. The NOCN Level 2 and 3 courses are well established and other than those students who are studying the Religious Studies GCE, all year twelve and thirteen (Y12 and Y13) pupils follow and complete the course successfully.

Pupils are outstanding in their contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They take pride in being members of the St Leonard's community. They are positive about the school and believe staff are aware of their spiritual and emotional needs. They are provided with a wealth of opportunities to develop as caring individuals committed to supporting the most vulnerable members of society. Pupils believe that the experiences afforded them allow them to truly live out the 'golden rule' and to mirror the teaching of Christ.

Pupil participation in and experience of collective worship is outstanding. All pupils have the opportunity to take an active part in collective acts of worship. They are effusive in their praise for the quality of provision and for the way in which they are encouraged to take an active part in this central aspect of school life. The role of the school chaplain is key to this provision and her work is valued by pupils. Collective acts of worship provide a platform from which all aspects of the Christian life of the school is nurtured and promoted. The central role of pastoral staff in the delivery of collective worship ensures added credibility to the experience for pupils.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

Most teaching is at least good with many outstanding features across the department. There are occasional examples of satisfactory teaching. Questioning and differentiation are the elements which distinguish the outstanding teaching from the rest. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Planning across the department is aided by detailed schemes of work and reflects a clear sense of purpose. The department has a well structured learning programme and students are fully aware of their progress which is effectively tracked. Teachers work hard to ensure that pupils are well engaged in their learning. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly as part of the school's rigorous monitoring system.

Assessment is approached with rigour and is central to all RE lessons. Assessment is clearly identified as a way to improve pupil achievement. Assessment for Learning is clearly embedded into the daily practice of both staff and pupils. The use of peer assessment is a particular strength of the department. An extensive amount of time and work is invested into assessing pupils' work and providing regular formative feedback. At times, the drive to assess limits the pupils' ability to consolidate their learning or pause and reflect in order to formulate their own questions.

The RE curriculum is very well planned and leads to pupils effectively developing their religious literacy as they journey through school. The levels of religious language used by lower ability year nine (Y9) and year ten (Y10) pupils observed was a testament to the high expectations teachers had of and for their classes. Work is well matched to students' prior learning and contributes very effectively to promoting the school's mission and values. As a consequence academic achievement in RE is high and students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in KS4 and KS5. Pupils in KS3 have 8% curriculum time allocated to RE. Formal curriculum RE is supplemented and enriched by the way that faith, spirituality and prayer permeate the life of the school.

The quality of collective worship is outstanding. All pupils have the opportunity to take an active part in a diverse range of acts of collective worship. A variety of mediums cater for all pupil needs. Full year assemblies and form group time provide pupils with the opportunity for prayer and reflection and to challenge their own beliefs and those of others. Opportunities for silent reflection and stillness give pupils the time and space to deepen their own inner spirituality. Acts of worship are pupil driven and therefore have greater impact on the individual. The celebration of liturgy is a key feature in the life of the school and confirms it as a truly worshipping community. The celebration of Mass during curriculum time endorses the centrality of worship in the life of the school. The use of school facilities for major parish services makes St Leonard's a worshipping community in the fullest sense.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

Leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and is supported in his mission by a strong leadership team. They lead by example and have a visible presence around the school. Senior leaders provide an outstanding and structured approach to care, guidance and support that allows pupils to feel valued and supported in all aspects of school life. Leaders are committed to developing the catholic life of the school and this takes precedence over all other aspects of provision. Staff recognise and appreciate this leadership and this in turn affirms them in their commitment to promoting Christian values and translating these into action. The strength of this leadership is evidenced by the positive way in which pupils respond to and are engaged in the catholic life of the school. The Headteacher is line manager of the school chaplain which is tangible evidence of his commitment to promoting the catholic life of the school and ensuring the centrality of this for pupils.

The head of RE provides outstanding leadership and has a clear vision for moving the department forward. She is ably supported by the second in department who shows enthusiasm, commitment and an understanding of outstanding pedagogy. The headteacher is the senior leadership team link for RE which demonstrates the importance and centrality of the subject in the life of the school. Departmental self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and leads to realistic plans for development. There has, quite rightly, been an emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning so it is consistently effective across the department. Pupils speak very positively about the care, support and guidance they receive from their religious education teachers.

Governors are deeply committed to supporting and promoting the Catholic life of the School. They provide effective challenge and support in all aspects of school life. Governors have a clear strategic vision for the school and work closely with the headteacher to ensure that St Leonard's is a centre of excellence for all. Their understanding of education and their commitment to the faith is such that they are involved in, have an understanding of and provide clear direction for the headteacher. This in turn provides him with a clear mandate to promote the catholic life of the school and to ensure high standards and commitment from all staff. Governors regularly challenge the headteacher on aspects of school life; challenges that he relishes as they continue to make him reflect on provision, standards and the quality of experience he affords all pupils. This healthy approach to governance and governors' relationship with the headteacher is the essence of why St Leonard's is an outstanding Catholic school.

Partnerships are a key strength of the school. The school has developed links with a wide and diverse network of partners and organisations. There are strong partnerships with feeder primary schools and effective collaboration with parishes. The work of the schools St Vincent de Paul (SVP) group has done much to further promote these links. Pupils are encouraged and actively supported in their work to live out the gospel with charitable works and support for vulnerable and the marginalised in society. The deployment of the head of department to support National Open College Network (NOCN) development across the Diocese is a further testament to the outward facing spirit of partnership embraced by the school.

St Leonard's is a vibrant Christian community that provides pupils and staff with extensive opportunities to understand the importance of community cohesion. This ensures that all groups feel valued and affirmed so that they can grow in Christ. Pupils and staff have a clear

commitment to the mission of the school and reflect this in the enthusiasm in which they embrace work with the weak, the vulnerable and the poor. The CAFOD water project is a positive example of the way in which pupils and staff were able to live out the schools mission. Pastoral teams, departments and the chaplain used the project to widen the understanding of pupils of what it means to be global citizens with global responsibilities. The project is just one example of many that provides pupils with the opportunity to live out their Christian principles.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

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

Overall effectiveness	1
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ pupils' attainment in RE 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship 	1
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	1
<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 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of collective worship provided by the school 	1
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	1
<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 	1
<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 	1
<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 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion. 	1