

# DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education  
Collective Worship  
and  
The Catholic Life of the School



**School:** St Gabriel's Catholic Voluntary Primary Academy

**Address:** Allendale Road  
Middlesbrough  
TS7 9LF

**URN:** 111716

**Head Teacher:** Mrs Michelle Ryan

**Chair:** Mrs Lesley Wilson MBE

**Date:** March 31 & April 1 2015

**Inspector:** MJ Gallagher

**Date & Grade of Last Inspection:** April 2010 Grade 1, Outstanding

**Overall Grade for this Inspection:** Grade 1, Outstanding

A Report from:  
The Diocese of Middlesbrough Schools' Service  
Section 48 Inspection Team  
50a The Avenue  
Linthorpe  
Middlesbrough TS5 6QT

Revised: 2013

## INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. 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 Religious Inspectors and Advisers.

## What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	These features, though of adequate quality, require improvement to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Gabriel's Primary School is a smaller than average school whose roll has increased significantly from 146 pupils during its previous inspection to its present roll of 216 pupils. Situated on an attractive site in Ormesby, St Gabriel's appears to be in an affluent area of Middlesbrough but Raise On Line shows that it serves one of the most deprived areas of the country with a deprivation indicator of 0.40. Consequently pupils' attainment, on entry to the Nursery, is below the national average. The majority of pupils are White British, with a small percentage from ethnic minorities. The percentage of pupils with Special Educational Needs including those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs is well above the national average. 69% of pupils are Catholic as are 70% of the teaching staff, 31% of the pupils are from other Christian backgrounds with no pupils from other world faiths.

St Gabriel's parish has not had a permanent Parish Priest for over a year, but the school has been served well by the two temporary priests appointed by the Bishop and by the present locum awaiting the arrival of the permanent appointment in May 2015. Staffing in the school is now settled with three new permanent teachers joining the school in September 2014, however, the Deputy Headteacher is presently absent on long-term sickness.

St Gabriel's is a member of St Oswald's Multi Academy Trust, the first Catholic academy in the Diocese of Middlesbrough, formed on April 1 2014 and the school is now known as St Gabriel's Catholic Voluntary Primary Academy.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- Teaching was observed in all classes, Nursery to Year 6; as were 5 acts of collective worship that included 2 school assemblies;
- Discussions with: Headteacher, Chaplaincy Team, Parish Representatives, Religious Education Subject Leader, Local Management Board, two temporary Parish Priests, the present locum and a group of parents.
- Informal discussion with support staff and pupils as well as formal discussions with: Faith in Action Group (pupils), Liturgy Council (pupils), Prayer Leaders (pupils), Minni Vinnies (pupils).
- A vast amount of school documentation was read that included; pupil tracking, records of monitoring and evaluation of teaching, Self-Evaluation Document, the previous Section 48 report, the previous Ofsted Report, Subject Leaders file.
- A cross-section of pupils' books was scrutinised.

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll:	216
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	69%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations:	31%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	0
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	14.6%

### **Teaching Staff:**

Full-time Teachers:	7
Part-time Teachers:	3
Percentage of Catholic Teachers:	70%

### **Support Staff:**

Full-time Classroom Support Staff:	10
Part-time Classroom Support Staff:	1
Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff:	91%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	40%

### **Percentage of learning time given to R.E:**

All classes 10%

### **Parishes served by the School:**

St Gabriel's

# 1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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## MAIN FINDINGS

The quality of Catholic Education at St Gabriel's is outstanding.

The school's Mission Statement, "Excellence Through Jesus" is evident in every aspect of school life. Pupils' attainment and progress are at least good and continually improving on account of the outstanding provision they now receive from their teachers. There are extensive and effective systems in place for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school, by the Senior Leadership Team, ensuring on-going improvement. Pupils' progress is monitored through an efficient electronic tracking system and any underachievement observed is immediately addressed. Pupils' books are scrutinised by the Headteacher and Subject leader on a four week cycle and any inconsistencies addressed immediately. The Religious Education subject leader is enthusiastic and determined to drive standards in religious education upwards. She is supported in her work by an inspirational Headteacher whose vision for the school is exemplified in its core values of, 'Love, Joy, Peace, Respect, Reconciliation, Forgiveness and Justice,' these permeate every aspect of school life. Pupils were able to give examples of how these core values affected their day to day lives. All pupils are actively involved in the life of the school and benefit enormously from the provision of its Catholic life. Relationships within the school and between the school and Parish are outstanding. School Governors already make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and are in the early stages of a whole new chapter of their own development. As part of St Oswald's Academy Trust, Governors are poised to shoulder a whole new range of responsibilities that will shape the school's future. Parents appreciate the welcoming environment created by school leaders where, within a climate of mutual respect, they are confident in approaching any staff member with issues or concerns confident that resolutions are quickly reached.

### What the school needs to do to improve further:

Working within the existing strong school partnerships links, devise wider learning tasks and opportunities which appropriately challenge pupils to use higher order skills in developing their knowledge of scripture.

Allow pupils time to produce extended pieces of writing in Religious Education that use writing skills already acquired in literacy lessons.

Embed the newly revised assessment and marking policy so that pupils know what to do to progress in their learning.

Continue with the system of shared leadership where all adults feel valued and supported and are able to take risks in their curriculum delivery.

## 2. PUPILS

### How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account variations between groups.

The contribution pupils at St Gabriel's make to the Catholic life of the school and the benefits they receive from it are outstanding because they are fully involved in the planning of religious activities and take responsibility for preparing, leading and delivering acts of worship. They are rightly proud of their school and recognise its positive contribution to their moral, social and spiritual development. One year 6 pupil when asked about the school said, "St Gabriel's is all about finding your gift and embracing it." Pupils' attitudes are a consequence of the Headteacher's vision for the school: she talks about the development of the Catholic life of the school being so big that, to be effective, everyone needs to take responsibility for it and that within St Gabriel's there are, 'many leaders', including pupils. This is clearly evident in the organisation of groups to support the Catholic life of the school where responsibility is delegated to them by the Headteacher and the results then monitored and evaluated. Within the pupil body the Minni Vinnies organise contributions to local charities, while the Faith in Action Group deal with more global needs. The Liturgy Council plans the termly liturgies and acts of worship while the prayer leaders plan and lead liturgies for groups of pupils, in the school chapel, during breaks. The Parish supports the Catholic life of the school through a vibrant Chaplaincy team that, through practical activities, such as, art and craft projects and growing vegetables in the school garden, support and broaden pupils' experiences as well as the adults being witnesses to their own faith. The parish also support the school in their sacramental preparation programme. The out-going Parish Priest described the contribution made by St Gabriel's school as, "This school gives life to the Parish".

Standards of attainment in Religious education are judged to be good overall with those in Key Stage 1 as outstanding. Attainment in Key Stage 2 is not yet outstanding because the recently revised marking policy has not had time to impact upon pupil outcomes, nor has the outstanding teaching had time to fill the gaps in pupils' knowledge of scripture. All pupils make, at least, good progress.

Pupils have the opportunity to regularly prepare and lead acts of worship. There were many examples of outstanding practice observed during the inspection but the Holy Week assemblies of, 'Garden in Gethsemane' and 'The Trial', by Year 4 and 5 pupils, were, not only, dignified and moving, but also inspiring. A voluntary prayer service for Key Stage 1 pupils during break time, in the school chapel, planned and led by two Year 6 pupils was outstanding. The atmosphere created, the texts used and the manner in which the Year 6 pupils talked to the younger children was exceptional. Pupils' singing is outstanding and is a major factor in creating the peaceful and prayerful atmosphere that promotes contemplation and reflection

• The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
• How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
• How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1

### 3. PROVISION

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#### How effective the provision is for Catholic education

Teaching is at least good in all lessons and often outstanding. Where teaching is outstanding there is evidence of excellent subject knowledge being used in conjunction with skilful questioning that continually move pupils' learning forward. Teachers used a variety of techniques to make lessons interesting and purposeful and accessible to all pupils; for example in Year 2 pupils used pointillism techniques to create their own Stations of the Cross, captions were added and the intended audience was the rest of the school; in Year 4 pupils used role play and hot-seating to explore feelings and emotions during the washing of the feet, and recorded these on iPads. While in Year 6 the teacher approached the complex task of exploring the reasoning behind the actions of some of those in the crowd witnessing the crucifixion. Her enthusiasm and confidence ensured pupils found the presented tasks challenging but interesting and through open ended discussion they soon became engrossed in their work. All pupils made progress during the lesson but there were gaps in their knowledge that the teacher had to work hard to fill.

The recent changes to the marking policy are being applied consistently across the school with each lesson beginning with a 'Can I' statement and pupils being encouraged to respond to teachers' marking in their books. The arrangements have not yet had time to become embedded and result in raising the quality of pupils' written work from good to outstanding.

The Religious Education programme, 'Come and See', is effectively embedded and its resources used efficiently to help pupils learn. In all classes observed teachers made very good use of technology to support pupils' learning. The Religious Education Curriculum meets the external requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

Collective worship is central to the day to day life at St Gabriel's and pupils participate in it freely with enthusiasm and reverence. They are skilled at planning their own acts of worship and do so from an early age beginning in the Nursery where pupils were asked to explain why they chose articles for the focal point and what they represented. There is a well-planned schedule of events that allow everyone connected with the school to experience prayer in a range of settings. Parents are actively encouraged to join their children at all acts of worship and they commented positively on the lengths the school goes to accommodate them. They appreciate the inclusive and welcoming nature of the school and the efforts school leaders made to keep them informed specifically valuing the school's web site and the half termly assessment tracker.

The provision for the Catholic Life of the school has the highest priority; the learning environment is bright and colourful with pupils' work displayed throughout the building celebrating their achievements. Behaviour of pupils is outstanding; they are polite, cheerful and helpful. Older children are keen to take on extra responsibilities that help the smooth running of the school.

• The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
• The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school	1

## 4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

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

The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education clearly evident in the steps they have taken to ensure future provision of Catholic schools in the Ormesby area of Middlesbrough by entering into partnership with two other primary schools and one secondary to form St Oswald's Academy Trust. Now as part of a 'Local Management Board' sitting with representatives from the other trust schools they are in a position to evaluate the work of St Gabriel's within a wider context and are in a more informed position to both support and challenge the Headteacher. Having already revised the school's Mission Statement in September and, in conjunction with the other trust schools, a Mission Statement to represent the vision of the newly formed trust. The Local Management Board have also been instrumental in introducing a unique Team Charter, that states, concisely, what is expected of the adults in St Gabriel's and how they will behave. Consequently, relationships within the school and externally are outstanding. There is unequivocal and explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is a priority along with spiritual and moral development of pupils.

Data from the rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating the curriculum used by the senior leadership team are shared with the Governors through the Headteacher's reports and along with Governors own systems of monitoring allow the Local Management Board to be fully informed of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. They are well positioned to support the Headteacher in realising her vision for the school and to contribute to and support its on-going development.

St Gabriel's is the heart of the Catholic community in Ormesby. The Headteacher is passionate about the school's success and together with an insightful Local Management Board they are determined that the pupils in their care will receive the best possible education.

The school's capacity for improvement is judged to be outstanding.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How well leaders, managers and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including collective worship, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils</li></ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li></ul>	1