



St George's RC Primary School

Bells Close, Lemington, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE15 6XX

School Unique Reference Number: **108499**

Inspection dates: 07 – 08 March 2019
Lead inspector: Jill Burgess

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St George's RC Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of the school, expressed through the mission statement, is appreciated and valued by all members of the school community.
- Pupils, throughout school, benefit from a variety of forms of prayer and worship. Pupils enjoy a range of leadership roles and the school is keen to support charities locally and internationally.
- As a result of determined leadership, positive relationships are clearly evident between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves. This ensures behaviour is good.
- Staff work in close partnership with neighbouring Catholic schools with the aim of sharing good practice and raising standards.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St George's is a smaller than average primary school, in the outer west of Newcastle.
- There are 138 pupils on roll – including nursery provision.
- Cohorts vary in size and are taught in mixed aged classes.
- The current executive headteacher took up post in January 2014 and is currently working within St George's and St Mark's, which are within close proximity.
- At present, the deputy headteacher is seconded, by the diocese, as acting headteacher in another primary school.
- 38.4% of pupils are Catholic.
- 60% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium funding.
- 21% of pupils have special educational needs.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Build on the existing good level of monitoring of Catholic Life by:
 - incorporating sustained and active involvement of pupils.
- Increase the rigour of Religious Education monitoring and moderation by:
 - strengthening the process of self-evaluation to include deeper analysis and self-challenge, in order to lead to sustained improvement in teaching and learning.
 - ensuring quality feedback is consistent, progressive and in line with school policy across year groups, allowing pupils to move forward in their learning.
- Widen opportunities for pupils to lead Collective Worship independently by:
 - formulating a whole school approach which details skills progression and expectation.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

2

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good.

- Pupils at St George's experience a learning environment which holds love, tolerance and cooperation firmly at its core. The mission statement, 'Growing and learning through faith, love and laughter', has helped pupils develop positive attitudes to school and to each other.
- Pupils believe they can make a real difference to the lives of others. They demonstrate high levels of participation in a range of school activities which support charitable organisations and promote social justice. The school is rightly proud of its fundraising efforts including: the Elmer appeal through St Oswald's Hospice, Make-a-Wish Foundation, West End foodbank and clothes collections with the local church.
- Pupils appear happy in school and enjoy a range of roles such as Mini Vinnies and as members of the school council. When one pupil was asked to explain how St George's is special, she replied, 'I could give a thousand reasons'. This view is repeated by others who recognise that they are tasked with creating a welcoming and friendly school. Pupils are considerate and caring towards peers. When asked how they deal with any issues of conflict which may arise pupils responded by saying, 'Sometimes, we just need to give each other a bit of space'. At St George's pupils stressed, 'arguments are quickly forgotten'.
- As a result of time and energy spent on promoting positive behaviour, pupils demonstrate a firm understanding of right and wrong and they appreciate the need to forgive and be forgiven. Good behaviour is shown throughout school.
- There is a whole school policy to enable pupils to develop a good understanding of loving relationships and sexual development. This policy is reviewed as part of the school's own self-evaluation cycle.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.

- The school's mission statement sends a strong message to all regarding the central aim of the school and the educational mission of the Church. Staff at St George's talk of a shared commitment to ensure the whole community is fully involved and included in school life. Staff questionnaires highlight, 'Everyone is a valued member of our school family'. Another stated, 'children of all faiths are encouraged to be proud of their religious identity'. A parent commented, 'I have found that the school encourages and nurtures all aspects of the children's social, moral and religious development and I am very happy that my child

attends'.

- Staff readily engage in activities which further enhance their own spiritual development. Senior leaders have built a culture within the school which focuses on the importance of high quality prayerful experiences and opportunities for reflection. The headteacher leads prayerful walks both within and beyond the school grounds and staff and children have experienced thought-provoking, prayerful retreats including visiting Holy Island.
- The Catholic identity of the school is visible through the range of pupils' work, prayer stations and religious artefacts on display. The 'welcome' display at the entrance to the school, created by pupils, affirms the positive views and ambition they hold for their school community. Pupils enjoy participation in prayerful celebrations as part of diocesan events as well as through their partnership of schools.
- Pastoral care for all pupils is given high priority. There is a genuine demonstration of patience, understanding and respect for pupils. This emphasis on practical support is shown in the allocation of additional staff working with the most vulnerable pupils, enabling the school to utilise targeted intervention programmes to address emotional and academic needs. Parents say they are keen to recommend the school to others, due to the provision and commitment school offers to pupils who need additional help.
- Due to the supportive mechanisms in place, staff feel valued and supported in their own professional and spiritual development.
- Highly committed teaching assistants, who are catechists in their own parishes, lead sacramental preparation. They talk of their role with great energy and enthusiasm.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.

- Communication of the school's commitment to Catholic Life is effective. As a result, parents are extremely supportive. They talk of the relentless energy of the school to ensure their children have access to the best provision possible as well as diversity of faiths within school and the extent to which this is celebrated.
- Senior leaders, including governors, exhibit a clear understanding of the role of the school in the mission of the Church. As a faith community, they appreciate the influence and impact the school has on the local area.
- Monitoring of Catholic Life is evident through recent parent and staff questionnaires. Governors are involved in learning walks, ensuring 'an inclusive environment for all', as well as participating in a range of aspects of school life, liturgies and services. Governors are supportive but are ready to challenge 'to ensure children blossom here'.
- Self-evaluation is clear and accurate demonstrating that all senior leaders have a good grasp of success and areas for future development. Self-review would be further enhanced with the sustained and active involvement of pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good.

- The quality of learning and progress in Religious Education is good. When asked about their learning in Religious Education, one pupil commented, 'It makes us feel and think'.
- Evidence in books, supported by observations, show that pupils are engaged in lessons and are keen learners. Resources are used to good effect, for example pupils were allowed to hold the chalice and paten when exploring the Liturgy of the Eucharist and table flip chart prompts were available to pupils when planning their year 6 worship. A visit to St George's Church allowed staff to explore specific religious artefacts and relevant religious terms with pupils in nursery, reception and year 1.
- Behaviour in lessons is good and support is well targeted for pupils with additional needs, to ensure best possible outcomes.
- In 2018, there was a marked improvement in results for Religious Education with data above diocesan averages. This compares favourably with the pattern of results for the previous two years, which were significantly lower than diocesan averages. Data shows progress of cohorts fluctuate; this can be a result of small or changing cohorts. Senior leaders attributed these improved pupil outcomes to the increased focus on Religious Education and increased professional development opportunities.
- Self-review activities are evident and the school has devised a system, in key stage 2, which enables pupils to reflect in more detail on their learning. Some pupils understand and reference driver words in their work and demonstrate an understanding of how to move forward with their learning.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- Teachers generally demonstrate good subject knowledge. When advice is needed, regarding curriculum content, staff readily seek the support of senior leaders and colleagues including the effective support of teaching assistants – some of whom have completed the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. Teachers and teaching assistants are paired to ensure the sharing of knowledge and skills. This positive approach is highly regarded and staff speak of 'the high level of support', as well as the additional training opportunities offered through the diocese.
- Teaching is mainly good and book scrutiny shows pupils have access to a range of activities to support learning. Pupils' work is detailed and generally well presented although

consistently high expectations need to be shared across all classes.

- Appropriate vocabulary is used ensuring pupils themselves become more religiously literate. Some examples of challenge were evident through focused questioning or additional tasks during independent work.
- The school's policy stipulates that marking and feedback should take learning forward and that pupils should have opportunities to respond to the feedback given. Marking is regular but the standard of feedback is variable. The quality of children's responses do not always reflect the age of the pupil and more systematic monitoring is needed to ensure expectations are clear and that feedback is progressive across year groups.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- Time, energy and commitment is given to Religious Education. The curriculum leader for Religious Education has a clear vision for teaching and learning. Collaborative working amongst all senior leaders, including governors, has resulted in heightened expectations in Religious Education lessons. The school has undergone recent staff changes and leaders recognise the next step is to ensure consistency across the school. Opportunities for training have also been a priority. Consequently, latest results have improved when compared with the diocesan averages for specific year groups.
- Governors talk of key questions asked and answered regarding the provision for pupils with additional needs. Governors, staff and parents work tirelessly to ensure the needs of the most vulnerable pupils are adequately met. One parent stated that leaders, 'never stopped fighting until my child got the help he needed'.
- The close link between St Mark's Primary School and St George's is a means of strengthening leadership, 'giving staff autonomy to grow'.
- Regular opportunities are also planned to work across the partnership of schools to focus on moderation of pupils' work. Staff welcome these opportunities as supportive and affirming but the school recognises that more rigour is necessary to ensure longer term impact and improvement.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is good.

- During whole school Collective Worship, pupils are attentive and engaged. They gather respectfully and respond appropriately when called upon to dress the focus area, engage in reflective silence, communal prayer and singing. At St George's, Collective Worship is enjoyed by pupils. Themes explored are echoed in pupil interactions during the course of the day.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and talk of the range of prayerful opportunities offered. Their knowledge and appreciation of liturgical themes is developing well.
- Evidence in books demonstrates that pupils are given opportunities to become involved in planning and preparing Collective Worship. This skill is finely tuned in year 6, where pupils are adept at using available resources to select scripture passages, hymns and artefacts to lead class prayer and reflection. This was clearly demonstrated in their liturgy on 'Unity'.
- Generally, Collective Worship is more adult led. Staff and pupils would benefit from a clear expectation of skills progression across year groups. This would lead to more consistency, greater pupil independence and opportunities for pupils to lead larger gatherings.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, prayerful community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of many pupils. Pupils are rightly proud that their school celebrates, '...different ways of living and praying'.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Praying together is a fundamental aspect of life at St George's and different experiences are explored according to liturgical seasons.
- As a result of observing skilled role models, pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship. Pupils throughout the school are now well poised to plan and deliver liturgies and prayerful experiences with greater independence and freedom.
- Prayer journals are used in school and evidence of pupils formulating their own prayerful reflections is evident across classes.
- Staff prayer is given high priority and the headteacher is creative in her modelling of high quality worship with colleagues.

- Adults appreciate the range of opportunities offered to attend liturgies and celebrations. This further enhances the view of the school as an 'extended family'.
- The emphasis on the importance of Collective Worship means that this area is well-resourced.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is good.

- School leaders have a good knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. They recognise that it is a fundamental part of maintaining the positive ethos that exists in school. School values such as love, humility, peace, tolerance and hope are celebrated and embedded during class and school gatherings.
- The Religious Education coordinator has recently monitored Collective Worship throughout the school. As a result, there is a confident, clear and current understanding of strengths as well as potential areas for development.
- The professional development of staff is evident through training opportunities and the sharing of good practice. Staff are comfortable supporting and advising each other.
- The views of pupils, parents, staff and governors are sought through informal meetings and questionnaires. Leaders and managers take these into account when moving forward.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**2****CATHOLIC LIFE:****2**

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

2

The quality of provision for 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.

2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**2**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St George's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108499
Local authority	Newcastle
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Seamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the governing body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
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