



St Robert's RC First School

Oldgate, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1QF

School Unique Reference Number: **122312**

Inspection dates:	07 – 08 June 2016
Lead inspector:	Karen Holmes

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Robert's RC First School is a good Catholic school because:

- St Robert's is a very warm, welcoming school where everyone shares the headteacher's clear vision.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good as it is central to the life of the school. Pupils are developing skills in planning and leading acts of worship.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the mission and ethos of Catholic education underpin all aspects of school life. The well-being and personal development of all pupils and staff is at the heart of this faith community.
- The quality of Religious Education is good and the areas for development from the last inspection have been addressed.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- In Collective Worship there are limited opportunities for pupils to plan and prepare worship independently.
- The quality of Religious Education is inconsistent in the quality of assessment, marking and feedback.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- This is a small first school serving the parishes of St Robert of Newminster, Morpeth and St Thomas of Canterbury, Longhorsley.
- The proportion of pupils who have a disability or special educational need is average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is significantly below average. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, for pupils who are looked after by the local authority and for the children of service families.
- The majority of pupils are of white British heritage.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Providing more opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in planning, preparing and leading a variety of forms of Collective Worship in whole school and class based contexts.
- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - Ensuring that all teachers consistently plan differentiated tasks across and within the levels of attainment.
 - Further develop marking in order to consistently provide information to pupils about how to improve their work.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- 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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1

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

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. Pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their school community and parents comment that, 'the school is the strength of the community where children live out their catholicity every day'.
- Pupils are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and are able to express their own beliefs with some confidence, having a good understanding of how their faith impacts upon their own lives and the lives of others.
- Relationships within the school are very positive and pupils value the many opportunities available to them. They are actively involved throughout the school, taking on responsibilities very conscientiously and enthusiastically. The development of the role of pupil 'servant leaders', who consult with pupils, identify concerns and act to address these concerns, promote the notion of service throughout the whole community.
- Pupils are very alert to the need of others, seeking justice within and beyond the school community through activities such as membership of Mini Vinnies, collections for harvest festival and the support of local and national charities. They can articulate their views with confidence explaining the purpose of fundraising. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of moral justice which helps them to understand their place in the world and the influence they can have to make the world a better place.
- Pupils work well together demonstrating very positive and enthusiastic attitudes to all aspects of school life. Behaviour is very good; pupils are polite and considerate of others demonstrating good emotional awareness with a strong emphasis on 'putting other people first'.
- Pupils show a good understanding of the liturgical year and its key celebrations both in school and in the parish.

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

- The school's mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the church and was developed through a collaborative effort, over time, by all of the community. 'We care, we serve, we learn together in the love and truth of Jesus' underpins everything they do.

- The school is a vibrant, happy and prayerful community and its Catholic character is reflected through attractive displays, numerous prayer stations and artefacts in a rich learning environment.
- Staff have a shared vision with regard to the school's ethos and to the church's mission in education. They are involved in living out the school's mission statement and are fully committed to providing opportunities enabling all pupils to know that Christ is at the centre of everything they do. All pupils are nurtured to be fully rounded members of society where they can exemplify Jesus' teaching in their own lives.
- There are clear policies and structures to provide pastoral care and an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy, for example, the prayer walk through the charity shops of the town. These experiences have a very positive effect on pupils' personal development and parents speak very highly of them.
- Programmes for personal, social and health education and relationships and sexual education have been thoughtfully designed and carefully planned in line with Catholic teaching. The highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour are promoted through clear and consistent communication of the school's expectations.

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

- Leaders and managers throughout the school are instrumental in ensuring that the church's mission in education is lived and breathed by all connected with the school. They have a very clear understanding of the vision of Catholic education and role of the Catholic school in the mission of the Church.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for all children in the school, ensuring quality moral and spiritual development based on the gospel values of love and respect.
- Leaders conduct a range of robust monitoring activities. There is a three year plan for improvement systematically planned with all stakeholders. Therefore self-evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is accurate, providing a clear and effective framework for school improvement.
- High quality staff training, the importance placed upon relationships and the care and concerns each member of the school community show one another are major strengths of the school.
- Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well. Through attendance at termly Religious Education monitoring group meetings and their many visits to school, they work effectively with the staff and headteacher, committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists throughout.

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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2

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

- St Robert's is a prayerful community where pupils respond well to the opportunities the school provides for them to participate in Collective Worship. Pupils speak of feeling calm and peaceful during and after Collective Worship which contributes positively to their spiritual, moral and personal development.
- Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of what worship is about and are at ease when praying with their school community in large and small gatherings. Pupils take an increasing lead, according to their stage of learning, in planning and preparing the prayer life of St Robert's school. They do so with confidence, enthusiasm and increasing independence. Their knowledge of the variety of prayer styles is limited however, and needs to be more creative.
- Pupils are familiar with traditional prayers, appropriate to their age. They learn to 'sign' some prayers and are at ease in sharing these experiences with the parish community during Mass.
- Adults provide good role models for the pupils and contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship with a well-structured programme of liturgies and assemblies which reflect the Catholic character of the school. Celebrations are many and varied throughout the year, making good use of the neighbouring parish church and beautiful grounds of the school.
- Staff and pupils pray together regularly and all pupils have daily opportunities for prayer. The use of class prayer books and prayer spaces, both inside and outside of school, promote a sense of reflection and have further developed good spiritual awareness.
- Collective Worship has a clear structure and purpose: it is carefully planned and resourced using 'Statements to Live By' and the liturgical year.
- The school continues to develop the skills of its staff and pupils in planning and delivering worship. Collective Worship is based on clear themes and messages which engage the community such as the Year of Mercy liturgy based on refugees.

- The school warmly welcomes families and parishioners to participate in worship. Parents and governors appreciate and enthuse about the opportunities to attend popular prayer events in church and in school.

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

- The headteacher, staff and governors place the school's life of prayer and worship at the very heart of the school. They constantly seek to develop it through the school and parish community. Parents value this and speak highly of the impact on pupils.
- The school leaders have good knowledge of how to plan and deliver liturgy and worship. They lead the school community to understand and appreciate these by making all forms of worship relevant to the pupils, appropriate to their age, needs, experience and backgrounds.
- The headteacher, as Religious Education coordinator, has a very visible presence in school and a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in Collective Worship through formal and informal monitoring.
- The professional development needs of leaders and staff are identified and supported. Effective evaluation of staff strengths has resulted in an effective professional development programme for all staff with appropriate performance management targets. The school makes effective use of professional development opportunities in-house, through joint planning and working with partner schools.
- Leaders and managers regularly review Collective Worship as part of the self-evaluation process and are keen to improve the quality of its provision.

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.

2

2

1

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

- The quality of learning and progress in Religious Education is good. Most pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education and display positive attitudes to their learning. They find it interesting and can explain why it is important.
- Pupils generally display good behaviour for learning and apply themselves well in lessons, working at a good pace. They generally take pride in their work and enjoy talking about their tasks in Religious Education, becoming more religiously literate and reflective in their responses.
- Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are secure in their understanding. They develop a range of skills well and are able to consider the impact of religious ideas on their daily lives: 'To be caring, show forgiveness and put other people first'.
- Outcomes are good overall. Evidence from book scrutiny and lesson observations show a good variety and range of learning activities where progress is evident. Photographs are used very well to illustrate the wealth of drama and role-play opportunities provided.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are well supported and achieve well according to their age and ability.
- Inspection findings and evidence presented by the school showed no differences between groups of learners.

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

- The quality of teaching in Religious Education is good overall with some examples of outstanding teaching. A wide range of teaching strategies, together with well-paced lessons, ensure that pupils engage well with their learning and make good progress.
- Teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education which they communicate effectively to pupils. Most teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge which they use in planning and teaching Religious Education to provide well planned, thoughtful lessons. Effective questioning encourages pupils to explore feelings and empathise with others. Pupils were clear about the message of the story of the lost sheep, 'God loves everyone, even those who have done wrong'.
- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and, as a result of sharing 'I Can' statements

pupils are beginning to understand how well they are doing. In some instances questions are used effectively to challenge and provide the next steps in learning, but this is not consistent across all age groups.

- Teachers mark work regularly and the quality of feedback given is generally positive and supportive. However, this is not consistent across the school and pupils are not always aware of their targets or how to improve their work.
- The school has a rigorous tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and achievement in Religious Education. The school moderates work with partner schools to ensure accuracy in their assessments.

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

- The headteacher clearly demonstrates and shares her strong vision for the school and for what every pupil and teacher can achieve.
- A rigorous and systematic range of activities, planned with all stakeholders, are in place for the monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education. This has enabled the leadership team to have an accurate awareness of the areas for development.
- Leaders have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development founded on sound observations, and have a comprehensive and detailed action plan to ensure that the school is continually improving.
- The leadership team has a very clear vision and sense of direction for what is needed to bring about further improvement. They are enthusiastic and highly effective in promoting the high profile of this subject amongst staff.
- Religious Education is well resourced. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well.
- Sacramental provision is well embedded and is in line with diocesan policy.
- Governors are highly visible around the school and are routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. They are supportive but also questioning in their approach. They discharge their canonical duties well.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**2****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

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

1

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

1

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

1

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

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.

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Robert's RC First School
Unique reference number	122312
Local authority	Northumberland
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus 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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