



St Joseph's RCVA Primary School

Whinfield Way, Highfield, Rowlands Gill, NE39 2JE

School Unique Reference Number: **108391**

Inspection dates: 11 – 12 March 2014

Lead inspector: Jill Burgess

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's RCVA Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- The school demonstrates a shared commitment to celebrating the effort and achievement of all. As a result, effective partnerships exist throughout, and beyond, the school.
- Collective Worship is good, it is central to the life of the school and a key part of school celebrations.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. Governors, senior leaders and staff have a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic Life of the school with their involvement in activities that promote the school's ethos.
- Religious Education is good. The pupils make good progress and make thoughtful contributions in lessons.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Pupils in Collective Worship do not have sufficient opportunities to explore a wider variety of approaches to prayer.
- The policy and programme for Relationships and Sex Education need to be reviewed, revised and implemented across the school to provide an age-appropriate programme.
- In Religious Education the new marking scheme is not yet consistently applied throughout the school and differentiation by task is not fully embedded.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- The school is a smaller than average primary school.
- A well-below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is the additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- A below average proportion of pupils are supported at school action. An average proportion of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes.
- The majority of pupils are of white British heritage.
- The school is housed in a new purpose-built school building which it shares with the Highfield Community School.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Develop Catholic Life further by:
 - Ensuring the Relationship and Sex Education policy is reviewed and implemented appropriately.
- Enhance pupils' experiences of Collective Worship by:
 - Giving pupils the opportunity to explore a wider variety of approaches to prayer.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - Ensuring the new marking policy is consistently applied.
 - Ensuring work undertaken by pupils is consistently differentiated by task rather than outcome.

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 appreciate the community to which they belong. They understand school promotes positive behaviour and can clearly articulate how they are encouraged to be 'helpful, better people'. Behaviour is mostly good and pupils are caring and considerate towards each other. This view is endorsed by pupils themselves as well as parents and staff.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong and are able to clearly explain the importance of reconciliation in building positive relationships. One pupil pointed out, 'it is important when things go wrong to talk about problems and forgive'.
- The concept of vocation has been a focus within school and pupils recognise the value of using one's gifts in the service of others. Pupils talk with maturity of the need, not only to look after each other in school, but to respond to wider, global issues. They demonstrate a sense of pride when discussing their fundraising efforts, in particular, their 'wheelbarrow of pennies' which Cafod will use to buy tools for villagers in Sierra Leone.
- Pupils appreciate that they have a voice in school, helping shape the motto, 'Work hard, love and learn'. As a result, they enter wholeheartedly into a range of activities which promote and support the school's ethos.
- Pupils have a good understanding of key liturgical celebrations throughout the year and have some involvement with parish and diocesan activities and celebrations.

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

- The mission statement is a living document and can be evidenced in the high expectations demonstrated by staff and governors. Morale is high. St Joseph's is a calm, cohesive school with a shared vision and desire to foster positive relationships with its closest neighbour, Highfield Community School, and throughout the wider community.
- The learning environment clearly reflects the Catholic identity of the school. The wide range of displays and focal points remind children of the school's mission and focus on the theme of partnership, for example, 'Special Buddies', 'Playground Buddies' and 'Dig deep to climb high'.
- The school provides high levels of pastoral care to pupils and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable in both policy and practice.
- The school is also mindful of the pastoral needs of staff and works hard to meet the needs of all.
- A number of policies have recently been reviewed and are being implemented to good effect. The school's own self-evaluation has identified the need to review its policy on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) in line with diocesan guidelines.

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

- Leaders and managers, including governors, are clearly committed to the mission of the Church. Recent whole school review of the mission statement has ensured everyone is now immersed in the school's vision. On-going commitment to the development and sustenance of this ethos is evident in the planning of further collaborative working, including involvement in the Gateshead Catholic Primary Partnership.
- The parish priest, who is a regular visitor to the school, works closely and effectively with the headteacher. They are both regarded as good models of Catholic leadership by staff and pupils.
- A range of systematic monitoring activities are now underway relating to provision and outcomes for the Catholic Life of the school. This analysis provides an accurate view of the school's strengths. Identified areas for development are highlighted in a detailed school improvement plan.
- Governors are influential in determining the direction of the school and are fully involved in evaluating Catholic Life. Consequently, they discharge their duties effectively and appreciate the need to offer challenge, as well as support, as this is 'the most important reason we are here'.

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.

- All pupils at St Joseph's respond respectfully when participating in Collective Worship. They are encouraged to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer, described by one pupil as, 'peaceful, prayerful moments'. As they move into key stage two, they show an increasing confidence and ability to prepare and lead worship within the classroom and for the whole school.
- Pupils approach Collective Worship in a variety of ways incorporating religious artefacts, scripture, music and drama. Whole school themes are interwoven effectively providing links between oldest and youngest pupils, for example, in the engaging 'Dig Deep' worship led by years five and six, the reception and year one pupils also contributed.
- The level of engagement is good. Pupils enjoy the opportunities given to pray together. They listen to their peers, sing joyfully and join in with community prayers appropriately. Pupils now need further opportunities to initiate prayer and worship at a more informal level through the development of sacred spaces around school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of religious seasons and feasts; liturgies show an appreciation of other faiths and cultures.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Collective Worship is central to the school's mission. Staff and pupils pray together regularly and prayer is an integral part of school celebrations.
- There is a clear policy in place for Collective Worship. The development of this key aspect of school life has been a priority and, as such, additional resources have been allocated to ensure good quality materials are available for pupils to access.
- Collective Worship is centred on current key themes. The Wednesday Word, which reflects the Sunday Gospel, figures prominently during weekly whole school gatherings.
- Parents and parishioners are invited to attend liturgies, although the school wishes to provide further opportunities to promote parental involvement in school worship. School is actively attempting to recruit volunteers to allow more frequent visits to church.

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

- The headteacher is highly focused and is committed to promoting greater pupil independence in the planning and leading of Collective Worship. In a short time, children have made rapid progress; pupils readily share their views and are willing to take the initiative. This model of

good practice is having a positive impact on all staff and pupils. Parents talk appreciatively of the opportunities available to children.

- Throughout school, staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols. This knowledge is transferred effectively to pupils.
- Collective Worship is reviewed as part of the on-going self-evaluation process. The school has a good understanding of its current position and there is a clear commitment to continue to improve provision in this area.
- School and parish have made the decision to move Sacramental preparation to year four pupils and, although undergoing a period of transition, it is in line with Diocesan policy.

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.

- Overall, outcomes for pupils in Religious Education lessons are good. From their starting points, pupils make sustained progress over time. Individual work books indicate that children have access to a wide variety of activities. Work in books is detailed and well presented.
- Pupils are religiously literate and many are very articulate and thoughtful in their oral responses. Within lessons, most pupils are keen to contribute ideas and enjoy 'learning about Jesus'. Pupils collaborate well and, it is clear, positive relationships are fostered effectively throughout the school.
- Pupils identified as having a special educational need are well supported by teaching assistants and programmes are in place to ensure good progress is maintained. Outside agencies are also utilised well.
- Due to the state of transition in level expectations across all of diocesan schools, the current averages for attainment and progress are not reliable benchmarks, therefore no judgement will be made in this report against diocesan averages for either attainment or progress.

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

- Overall, teaching is good as teachers are knowledgeable and use appropriate resources well. There is a high level of expertise and a willingness to share good practice. Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education, evident in the quantity and quality of work in children's books.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and constructive which contributes to the quality of work produced.
- Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils understanding, referring to appropriate learning outcomes throughout the lesson. Targets are evident in books and children talk readily of their involvement in self-assessment. Sufficient differentiation is not consistently evident in all classes. Good protocols are in place for moderating work and staff liaise well with St Thomas More and other partner schools to ensure assessments are accurate.
- The introduction of a new marking policy ensures feedback is provided regularly for children. However, this is not consistently applied and not all pupils have the opportunity to respond effectively to teacher comments.

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

- Leaders and managers, including governors, are systematic and thorough in their approach to monitoring activities in Religious Education. They have a precise understanding of areas of strength and areas for development.
- Leaders at all levels are highly knowledgeable and well informed. There is a common desire to constantly evaluate and improve teaching in order to raise attainment.
- Staff are enthusiastic and are encouraged to work effectively as a team. Leaders are keen to coach staff; channelling effort and skills to good effect. Leaders have visited other schools with a view to sharing best practice and they are fully committed to giving Religious Education a prominent profile in school. Consequently, this area makes a positive contribution to the moral and spiritual development of pupils.
- A good range of enrichment activities are used to support the curriculum and good parish links are evident.
- The governing body fulfils its role well with regard to Religious Education and offers both challenge and support. They ensure that all statutory and canonical responsibilities are met.

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

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**2**

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' 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

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Joseph's RCVA Primary School
Unique reference number	108391
Local authority	Gateshead
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 schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.	
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