

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Matthew's Catholic Primary

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School URN: 122313

Headteacher: Mrs Bernadette Pye

Chair of Governors: Mrs Patricia Hodgson

Inspector: Mrs Angela Andrews

Date of Inspection: 15 and 16 July 2010

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 Matthew's changed from a first school to a primary school in 2009. It is a smaller than average rural school in the South East of Northumberland and serves the parish of Our Lady and St Cuthbert's, Prudhoe. Nearly all of the pupils are from white British Heritage. The number of pupils with special educational needs is well above the national average.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 97

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 72%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 23%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 5%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 0%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 13%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 5

Number of part time teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 80%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 40%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

FS	10%	Yr 4	10%
Yr 1	10%	Yr 5	10%
Yr 2	10%	Yr 6	10%
Yr 3	10%		

Parishes served by the school:

Our Lady and St Cuthbert's, Prudhoe

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Matthew's is a good school with many outstanding features. Excellent relationships and communication with all stakeholders are a key strength of the school. There is a shared vision which is reinforced in the schools mission statement and promotes the highest of expectations of all pupils spiritually, morally and intellectually. The dedicated headteacher and managers have total commitment to the ethos and mission of Catholic education where continuous improvement in every aspect of school life is an ongoing priority. All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the school is continuously striving to improve standards. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is good because of accurate and rigorous self-evaluation leading to appropriate priorities and challenging targets.

Pupils have a very positive attitude to learning they are very happy, motivated and are very proud of their school. Pupils make good progress in Religious Education from below average starting points and their attainment is above average. Pupil participation and engagement in the prayer and liturgical life of the school is outstanding and they are developing independent skills in preparing prayer and worship. Pupils benefit greatly from a creative and impressive range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good which promotes good progress. Rigorous assessment, tracking and ongoing monitoring procedures impact positively on pupil progress. However, there is not enough focus on Attainment Target 2 (learning from religion) Staff are excellent role models for the pupils and offer a wide range of opportunities for prayer and worship. The quality of collective worship is outstanding. The Religious Education curriculum is inclusive and is adapted to meet the needs of pupils to enable them to meet their full potential in Religious Education.

The dedicated and excellent leadership of the headteacher ensures all pupils are motivated to make good progress and are well cared for and treated as unique individuals. The headteacher, staff and governors together effectively ensure continuous improvement and development of the Catholic life of the school and the provision for Religious Education. The Religious Education co-ordinator plays a central role in this process. Leaders and managers develop excellent partnerships to promote pupil well-being and their promotion of community cohesion is good.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Focus on Attainment Target 2 (learning about religion) in order to enable pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment in Religious Education.

PUPILS

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

2

Pupils have very positive attitudes towards Religious Education and demonstrate high levels of enjoyment. They speak with enthusiasm about their Religious Education lessons and achieve well. Standards of attainment at both key stages are above average and trends over time and demonstrable current evidence show continuous improvement. At the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is improving with more pupils achieving level 2 or 3. By the end of Key Stage 2 almost all pupils are achieving level 4. From below average starting points on entry to school, all pupils including boys and girls make good progress throughout Early Years, Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and this continues in Key Stage 2. Pupils who have special education needs make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and support is adapted to meet their varying needs. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in Religious Education are developing well according to their age and capabilities.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. Pupils are very proud of their school and display mature and positive attitudes. They are willing to take on responsibilities within and beyond the classroom and use their voice confidently to talk about how the school is helping them to become better people. They show a mature understanding of what is right and wrong, are very well behaved, understand the need for forgiveness and have a strong sense of justice and tolerance. They are reflective and enquiring and understand the importance of various celebrations in liturgical year and in the parish community.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is outstanding. They take part in, lead, and prepare prayer and liturgy with ease, confidence and enthusiasm. Vibrant acts of worship enable a high level of pupil participation in a variety of ways. In both small and large gatherings pupils are reverent, prayerful, respectful and reflective. They reflect silently and know of a variety of ways of praying, including taking part in liturgical dance. Many are acquiring a range of skills which enable them to prepare and lead a liturgy. Pupils' liturgical formation is exceptionally well.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

2

Teaching in Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy Religious Education and they display high levels of interest, engagement and motivation. Teachers have good subject knowledge and encourage pupils to be confident learners. Effectively planned lessons build on prior learning and meet the needs of most pupils. However, a sharper focus on Attainment Target 2 would promote and improve higher levels of attainment in Religious Education. A good range of teaching styles, good questioning techniques, clear explanations, well paced lessons and good use of ICT ensure that pupils are interested in their learning. Support staff are effectively deployed and their work is of an exemplary quality in promoting learning.

Assessment and monitoring in Religious Education are good. Assessment procedures have greatly improved since the last inspection and give a clear and accurate picture of how pupils are achieving and what progress they are making. The school has introduced the principles and practices of assessing pupil progress in line with the new Diocesan assessment guidelines. Leaders and teachers use this information effectively to ensure continuous improvement. There is well established target setting for its pupils and progress towards achieving these targets is monitored frequently. Pupils are provided with feedback both orally and through quality marking which informs how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further.

The school provides an outstanding curriculum which is creative and stimulating and is adapted sensitively and appropriately to meet the varying needs of the pupils. Good use of ICT and appropriate resources enhance the curriculum significantly and enable high levels of enjoyment, motivation and engagement of pupils. The Religious Education curriculum provides many opportunities which impact significantly on pupils spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishop's Conference well.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding. The high quality collective worship provision ensures that the spiritual needs of pupils are very well meet. Whole school acts of worship have a significant impact on pupils, parents, the parish and the wider community. Collective worship is given the highest priority and prayer is central to the life of the school. Acts of worship are very creative, vibrant and reflective. Pupils are offered an excellent range and variety of prayer styles. Teachers are very imaginative and skilled in leading worship and are excellent role models for pupils who are becoming increasingly skilled at preparing and leading worship independently.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

Leaders and managers are outstanding at the promotion of Catholic values and principles. The Catholic mission of the school is given the highest priority and pupils' spiritual and moral development are central to the school's vision and mission statement. The deep commitment, drive and energy of the headteacher and staff are a source of inspiration to the whole school and parish community. Robust ongoing self evaluation, both formal and informal, ensures that continuous improvements are made in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. High quality staff training and induction have developed understanding and deep commitment to the school's strong Catholic ethos. This has enabled a high level of pupil involvement and participation.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education is outstanding. The effective co-ordinator has ensured that rigorous monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place. These robust monitoring procedures are having a significant impact on pupils' learning, progress and standards. The headteacher and co-ordinator keep staff up to date and well informed, have high expectations, set achievable targets and as a result outcomes for pupils are improving and pupils are making good progress. Leaders have detailed, well targeted plans in place which are constantly renewed to ensure pupils reach their full potential.

The work of the governors is outstanding. They are highly involved and committed to the Catholic life of the school. They make a very significant contribution to the school's work especially supporting the school changing from a first school to a primary status school. They discharge their responsibilities very well and have played a very active part in planning for the school's continuous improvement by challenging and supporting leaders and staff. They are very well informed and place the well-being and all round development of pupils at the heart of their work. They understand well the school's performance in Religious Education and are confident and questioning in their approach and know what needs to be done to raise standards even further.

The school is outstanding at developing partnerships with other providers and organisations. The dedicated and visionary headteacher, supported by staff is constantly planning with and engaging with other groups such as other Catholic schools, the diocese, the parish and local organisations to provide rich and varied opportunities for pupils and staff opportunities to enjoy, achieve and develop well.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is good. The school is a highly welcoming inclusive community with a clear shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. The rich and vibrant Religious Education curriculum promotes attitudes of respect, tolerance and justice for all faiths and for those people without any particular religious affiliation. Acts of worship in the school are inclusive and each one's spiritual and religious identity is respected. Leaders are good role models; they respect difference, value, diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. The pupils are developing an understanding of the common good and an awareness of global responsibilities. The school sponsors a child in Uganda through 'Action Aid' and are raising funds for a Township school's new school hall in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, after a member of staff attended an International Leadership programme in Port Elizabeth this year. The quality of the school's work beyond the school to ensure pupils are

offered a wide range of opportunities to collaborate with those from different backgrounds, cultures and faith is good. The school has recently established partnerships with a city school in Birmingham with a higher percentage of pupils from other cultural backgrounds in order to further develop pupils to recognise, respect and celebrate difference. Home/school cohesion has been developed further through the “Advent Travelling Cribs”. This consists of a small nativity scene and prayer journal which was circulated to all families in school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

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

Overall effectiveness	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
• how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education	2
• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
• how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	2
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	2
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
• 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
• 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
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
• 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
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being	1
• how effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	2