

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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| <b>School:</b>             | <b>St. Lawrence's RC Primary</b>                                      |
| <b>Address:</b>            | <b>Headlam Street,<br/>Byker,<br/>Newcastle upon Tyne<br/>NE6 2JX</b> |
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| <b>School URN:</b>         | <b>108509</b>   |
| <b>Headteacher:</b>        | <b>Miss Bernadette Lamb</b>   |
| <b>Chair of Governors:</b> | <b>Mr T Cunningham</b>  |
| <b>Inspector:</b>          | <b>Mrs Christine Lynch</b>  |
| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | <b>25 &amp; 26 September 2012</b>                                     |

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 Lawrence's RC Primary School is an average sized school serving the parish of St Lawrence's in Byker. This is an urban area of Newcastle that has high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Pupils enter nursery with skills well below those expected for their age. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage but the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is rising. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average and the number of pupils with special educational needs is above average. Approximately one third of the pupils are baptised Catholics and a large proportion are from other Christian denominations or of no religious affiliation.

## **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 205

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 36%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 25%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0.5%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 38.5%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 17.5%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 18%

### **Staffing**

Number of full time teachers: 8

Number of part time teachers: 3

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 63%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 63%

### **Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:**

|      |     |      |     |
|------|-----|------|-----|
| 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:** St. Lawrence's, Byker, Newcastle

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

### MAIN FINDINGS

St Lawrence's Primary is a good Catholic school. It is led by a dedicated headteacher, senior staff and governing body who share a vision to develop the Catholic life of the school by promoting respect and equality for all. Positive relationships are a key strength of the school and everyone feels valued. The school's capacity to improve is good due to the determination of the leaders and managers to improve all aspects of school life. All priorities since the last inspection have been addressed successfully.

Outcomes for pupils are good overall. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very positive about their learning in religious lessons. All groups of pupils make good progress especially when compared to their very low starting points on entry to school. Standards of attainment overall are good and show an improving trend. Pupils benefit from the many opportunities they are offered to develop the Catholic life of the school. They take an active part in prayer and liturgical services and are becoming more competent in preparing, planning and leading acts of collective worship.

The schools provision for Catholic Education is good. Teaching and learning is good overall and all pupils make progress. Assessment, monitoring and tracking systems are improving and are used to ensure progression and improvement, however there is not a consistent approach to marking across school. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils and is reviewed regularly. It is focused on providing opportunities for pupils to improve and on raising standards. However planning does not include differentiated tasks to challenge the more able sufficiently. Collective worship is good and pupils enjoy the opportunity to prepare and lead worship.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher ensures that everyone in school feels that they have a positive contribution to the school community. Leaders and managers are developing systems to promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school. These systems are beginning to provide information and data which is analysed regularly and in turn provides information to improve provision and raise standards. Leaders have a clear sense of purpose in curriculum Religious Education and it is recognised fully as a core subject. The governing body are well informed and totally committed to supporting and challenging the school and as a result make a good contribution. The development of partnerships and the promotion of community cohesion is good.

**What the school needs to do to improve further**

**Raise standards in Religious Education by:**

- **developing monitoring systems that ensure information is used to inform teaching and learning priorities**
- **ensuring assessment procedures are further developed to enable pupils to reach higher levels of attainment**
- **ensuring teachers plan appropriate differentiated tasks to enable all pupils, especially the more able to achieve higher levels of attainment and provide them with more challenge**
- **developing a more consistent approach to quality marking and feedback so that individual pupils know how to improve.**

## PUPILS

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

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The majority of pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons, they achieve well and progress and learning is good overall. Pupils behave very well and take an active part in the tasks provided. Pupils generally want to do their best work in lessons because of the enthusiasm and encouragement from their teachers. From well below average starting points on entry to school the majority of pupils including boys and girls, Catholics and pupils from other religious backgrounds make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the support and intervention provided. However the more able need to have more challenging activities to achieve higher levels. Attainment at the end of key stage 1 (KS1) is good, although no pupils have achieved level three in the last three years and at the end of key stage 2 (KS2) it is average, but shows a rising trend (apart from 2011 which showed a decline due to a unique cohort). The school has identified the need to attain higher levels at the end of both key stages.

Pupils make a positive contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The vast majority of pupils take full advantage of the opportunities that the school provides. They are reflective and enquiring and ask searching questions about their own religion and that of others. They know and understand major celebrations in the liturgical year and are beginning to speak confidently about them. Pupils have a strong sense of caring for those less fortunate than themselves and understand they have an important responsibility to fundraise and pray. Pupils see their teachers as important role models and realise they influence the ethos of the school.

Pupils response to and participation in collective worship is good. They have very good role models in the staff. The pupils act with reverence and respect during liturgies and assemblies and they are confident and at ease talking about their contribution to worship. They understand the importance of prayer and how it affects and influences their everyday life. Resources are varied and used effectively during acts of worship. Collective worship contributes well to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

## PROVISION

2

### How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

Teaching and learning is good overall. Nearly all of the teaching is effective in ensuring pupils are interested in their learning and are making progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they encourage pupils to ask questions and reflect on their learning. Planning is linked to assessment and prior learning. Resources are used well in lessons, that engage pupils' interest and maximise learning opportunities. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. Teachers generally plan well. However, there are not always enough differentiated or challenging tasks for the more able.

Assessment and monitoring strategies are in place and are used to measure individual progress satisfactorily. Leaders and managers are beginning to use this information more effectively to ensure improvement. However assessment procedures do not always ensure that higher levels of attainment are achieved. Feedback and marking are not consistent across school and systems to allow pupils to respond are not yet effective. Written feedback does not tell pupils how to improve their work.

The Religious Education curriculum is good. It meets the needs of most of the pupils and prepares them well for the next stage of their lives. The curriculum reflects and responds to local, national and international issues and pupils are able to make links between what they are taught and how it impacts on their lives. The learning environment reflects the importance placed on religious education. The curriculum and the enrichment activities provide many opportunities for the pupils' spiritual and moral development. It meets all of the statutory requirements.

The quality of collective worship throughout the school is good. It is fully inclusive and ensures that the spiritual needs of all the pupils are well met. Worship is given a high priority in the school and is well resourced. The staff review and plan for collective worship and are focussed on giving pupils more opportunities to prepare and lead prayer. Parents and the parish community are actively encouraged to attend liturgies and assemblies. The school acknowledges and recognises different religious beliefs and assemblies reflect this.

## LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

The leadership and management team promote the Catholic life of the school well and they ensure the Church's mission is present in every aspect of school and parish life. The headteacher and staff provide excellent role models for the pupils. Staff training and awareness ensure a strong commitment to the Catholic mission. There is evidence that the Catholic mission of the school and the pupils' spiritual and moral development are seen as priorities for the school. The school's Catholic mission is reflected in school development planning which in turn identifies areas for development and builds on areas of strength. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the school's mission and are actively encouraged to develop its purpose and promote its success.

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is satisfactory. Leaders and managers monitor and track the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. However, this information is not evaluated, analysed or used sufficiently to impact on the progress of the more-able pupils or the quality of some teaching and learning. Planning to make improvements is identified in the School Improvement Plan and the schools self-evaluation documents.

The work of the governing body is good and governors provide effective challenge and support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They are committed to the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas to develop. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. Their relationships with staff are constructive and governors show an eagerness and determination to ensure the school improves and that any areas for development are tackled effectively. The governors have a good understanding of their roles and are well informed on matters of Religious Education. They have clear systems for seeking the views of parents and pupils and mechanisms for acting on these.

Leaders and managers effectively develop local and national partnerships. These partnerships have a positive impact on the pupils' learning and understanding and they make a positive contribution to the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. Pupils benefit immensely from strong links with local primary and secondary schools as well as being involved with Churches Together and St Cuthbert's Care. Leaders and managers seek out opportunities to develop partnerships that provide experiences for the pupils that the school would not be able to provide alone.

The promotion of Community Cohesion by leaders and managers is good. There is a strong sense of belonging around the whole school and leaders and managers are committed to fostering their shared vision through respect for all and by celebrating differences. Religious Education enables pupils to learn about other faiths and traditions. The school has links with the wider community, as leaders are committed to providing opportunities to foster a global awareness. Collective worship is inclusive and celebrates religious diversity. Relationships amongst pupils are positive and this contributes significantly to the ethos of the school.

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### Key for inspection grades:

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

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>   | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</li> </ul>  | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress</li> </ul>  | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education</li> </ul>  | <b>3</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>   | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship</li> </ul>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>  | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education</li> </ul>  | <b>3</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs</li> </ul>  | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the quality of collective worship provided by the school</li> </ul>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>   | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>  | <b>3</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul> | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being</li> </ul>  | <b>2</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.</li> </ul>  | <b>2</b> |