

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Patrick's RC Primary School

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School URN: 111687

Headteacher: Nora Moffatt

Chair of Governors: Chris Wilson

Inspector: Angela Boyle

Date of Inspection: 29 and 30 March 2011

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 Patrick's is a larger than average sized primary school in a suburb of Stockton on Tees. Most of the pupils are baptised Catholics and are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The school is held in high regard by parents and parish.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 289

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 93%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 6%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0.5%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 0.5%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 6%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 6.9%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 10

Number of part time teachers: 3

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 87%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 33%

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. Patrick's

St. Gregory's

St. Bede's

St. Cuthbert's

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Patrick's is an outstanding Catholic school where the mission and ethos of Catholic education underpins all that the school does. The school is a welcoming, friendly community with a strong family ethos. Inclusion has a high priority. Excellent relationships and the close co-operation of the whole school team are key strengths of the school. Staff are excellent role models for the pupils who are confident, articulate, happy and responsive.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. It has a very clear picture of its strengths and areas for development and expectations are high. The headteacher has the vision and determination to continue to take the school forward and achievable plans are in place. There is a strong spirit of teamwork and a dedicated commitment to achieving high standards. Governors are supportive and share the vision. All areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed. Pupils are extremely well cared for and this extends to vulnerable pupils and their families. The school has made adaptations so that a child with complex medical needs can receive treatment in school. The school is held in high regard by pupils and parents and has an important place in the life of the parish.

Pupils are very proud of their school and have an extremely positive attitude to learning. Standards attained in Religious Education are high and all groups of pupils make outstanding progress. Pupils are well supported in their learning by the effective use of additional adults. They benefit greatly from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils' levels of participation in prayer and the liturgical life of the school are good and they are developing independent skills in preparing and leading prayer and collective worship. The promotion of spiritual and moral development is very good.

The provision for Catholic education is good. Teaching and learning is good overall with some outstanding teaching in both Key Stages. The robust monitoring and tracking systems are a key feature of continuous improvement and have a significant impact on achievement and progress. Effective assessment systems are in place, but practice is not always consistent across the school. Feedback given to pupils impacts on their awareness of their current learning but is not consistently used to enable pupils to improve their work further. The quality of collective worship offered to pupils is good.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding and are a major factor in the school's success. Leaders and managers at all levels have a clear vision of where they are taking the school in its development of the Catholic life. The vision is shared by a committed staff and a well informed governing body. Leaders have a clear sense of direction and purpose with regard to curriculum Religious Education which is recognised as the core subject of the curriculum. Co-ordination of the subject is extremely efficient and central to the continuing development of Religious Education securing improvement in standards. The governing body discharge their responsibilities well and ensure all statutory and canonical responsibilities are met. Excellent links and partnerships exist with a number of agencies

which reinforce the high standard of care and support for pupils' safety and well-being. The school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Develop further the effectiveness of the learning process in Religious Education by:
 - ensuring that marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.
 - ensuring that best practice in pupil self-assessment is implemented consistently across the school.

PUPILS

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

1

Achievement in Religious Education is outstanding and standards are high. Pupils come into school broadly average, by the end of Key Stage 1 standards in Religious Education are above average and by the end of Key Stage 2 well above average in both attainment targets. Progress is consistent and sustained across all classes. Pupils are able to articulate their challenging targets. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because their needs are accurately identified and support is adapted to meet them. Robust systems are in place to evaluate the progress of all different groups of learners. Inspection findings show little variation between boys and girls, and Catholics and those other than Catholic.

Almost all pupils are becoming increasingly religiously literate and demonstrate high quality learning. Discussion with pupils and the scrutiny of work reveals pupils' knowledge and understanding of Religion is outstanding. They are becoming more skilled in reflecting on meaning and in their ability to relate knowledge and understanding in Religious Education to their everyday lives. Some pupils are able to express their understanding in depth. Pupils work hard in all classes, speak enthusiastically about their learning and show very positive attitudes in all aspects of their work. They work with concentration and want to do well.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and have an excellent understanding of what it means to belong to a Catholic school community. Pupils are proud of their school. They understand and can articulate Gospel values expressing the view that this is what Jesus asks of us. They are extremely articulate when expressing their own beliefs and respectful of those with beliefs different to their own. Pupils have a strong sense of social justice and show consideration to those in need, they initiate fundraising for numerous charities. The visit of St Patrick's teaching staff to the Peru Mission enables pupils to speak knowledgeably about their commitment to this charity.

Pupils' response to and participation in the school's collective worship is good. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in liturgies and worship; they sing enthusiastically, reflect silently and join in prayers with confidence. They know what constitutes good worship. Using the format provided for them they are able to plan, choose readings from Scripture, choose hymns and write their own prayers. Pupils have an awareness of a variety of styles and forms of prayer and their liturgical formation is developing well. Collective worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

2

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall with some outstanding features. Lessons are well planned and a variety of teaching strategies are employed to engage pupils' interest. Assessment for learning strategies are well embedded. Learning intentions are clear and success criteria are shared with pupils. Strong subject knowledge, clear explanations, good questioning techniques and well paced lessons ensure that pupils are interested in and enjoy their learning. Good quality resources are deployed throughout the school and foster a stimulating learning environment for Religious Education. Support staff are effectively deployed and less able pupils are supported well in their learning.

The school has detailed and accurate assessment information which is generally used well to inform learning and teaching. It provides teachers with a clear picture of how well pupils are achieving and what progress they are making. Tracking systems are used effectively to identify vulnerable groups thus enabling further provision to be made and move learning on. Challenging targets are set, pupils know what their targets are and are involved in self-assessment which ensures they know how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. Progress towards achieving these targets is monitored and moderated regularly and systematically. A sharp focus on personalised learning and the use of assessment has made a significant contribution to raising standards and continuous improvement. Marking is helpful and regular, however, teachers do not always explicitly 'sign-post' precise 'next-steps' in learning through their marking and discussion with pupils.

The Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well. Appropriate and relevant use of resources promotes a high level of motivation and engagement of pupils. ICT is used well to further enhance the pupils' learning experiences. Provision for less able and vulnerable pupils is outstanding, the Rainbows programme delivered by highly skilled teaching assistants impacts greatly on these pupils, as does their delivery of 'Statements to Live By' circle time activities. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good; this is evidenced in the opportunities for reflection.

The quality of collective worship is good. A regular rhythm of prayer is built into the daily life of the school and an established pattern of opportunities are offered for the school community to gather for prayer. A voluntary Rosary prayer group is well attended and a reflection area for pupils' personal prayer is well used by the children to pray for their personal intentions. A very comprehensive plan for whole school, Key Stage and class worship is in place and regular opportunities are well planned for pupils and parishioners to worship together. Within the school and class worship, effective use is made of Scripture, traditional prayers, hymns, quiet reflection, music and spontaneous prayer. The leadership team regularly review and plan improvements and ensure that pupils are skilled in preparing and leading acts of worship. Formal monitoring systems for collective worship are in place to ensure quality of provision.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. The headteacher has a very strong sense of purpose and commitment to the Catholic Mission of the school and provides excellent direction for improvement. There are thorough and effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school clearly linked to the school improvement plan leading to improvement. A very strong emphasis on pastoral care and guidance is at the school's heart. Staff know pupils well; they work effectively as a team who are committed to promoting the spiritual development of pupils and ensure they receive the best possible care and education.

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education by leaders and managers is outstanding. The commitment and leadership of the headteacher, who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator, has a significant impact on the raising of standards in Religious Education. There is a focus on promoting high standards and a high quality of teaching and learning. Well embedded, rigorous monitoring, assessment and tracking systems impact positively on pupils' learning, progress and standards. Clear steps for ongoing improvement are identified in the School Improvement Plan, this leads to well targeted actions carried out by the school, and as a result, outcomes in Religious Education for the overwhelming majority of pupils are high.

The work of governors is outstanding. Governors discharge their responsibilities well and work hard to carry out their role effectively. They are highly involved in the Catholic life of the school, are knowledgeable and are kept extremely well informed by the headteacher. Monthly meetings ensure that they are involved in the review process and provide strong and effective support and challenge. The chair of governors is very knowledgeable about the school's performance in Religious Education and the steps the school has taken to bring about continuous improvement. The excellent links which exist between the school, parish and home have resulted in everyone connected to the school feeling that their contributions are valued.

The school is outstanding at developing partnerships with others to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being. The headteacher is actively committed to partnerships with other local Catholic primary schools and staff training on improvement is often shared. Pupils are able to discuss these many partnerships and the impact it has on them as individuals. The headteacher actively plans with these and other groups to offer varied and purposeful opportunities for the pupils which the school alone could not provide. Leaders ensure that strong partnerships exist with the parish. The parish and school community collaborate well together in a range of activities; the headteacher is a member of the Parish Pastoral Council and has been involved in the delivery of a course for parents on the Mass. Both communities benefit positively from the effective partnership.

St Patrick's is a school that reaches out to, and well beyond, its own community. There is a strong commitment to working with those who are on the margins of society. Pupils are encouraged to think of themselves as part of the wider global family. The breadth of provision offers pupils many different contexts in which to reinforce their commitment to the common good, and many practical opportunities, in which to demonstrate it. Pupils are very good at

initiating ways of doing this, supporting a range of charities including a local hostel for the homeless and the Peru Mission. Leaders promote respect for difference and value diversity. Pupil participation in a Diversity Day has enabled them to develop a strong appreciation of community cohesion. Other faiths are taught well and opportunities are provided to visit places of worship of other faiths. A variety of opportunities are offered for parents to support their children and participate in school life and worship.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

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

Overall effectiveness	1
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	1
• how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education	1
• 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	2
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	2
• the quality of collective worship provided by the school	2
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.	1