

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**  
— DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION —



## **S48 Report**

**St James RC Primary School  
Solway Road  
Hebburn  
NE31 2BP**

**URN 108723**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

**on**

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

**School:** St James' RC Primary School

**Address:** Solway Road  
Hebburn  
NE31 2BP

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**School URN:** 108723

**Headteacher:** Mr Martin Clephane

**Chair of Governors:** Mrs Sharon Grewcock

**LeadInspector:** Mrs Nora Moffatt

**Date of Inspection** 16-17 January 2013

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St James' is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding (which is provided to support the learning of pupils who are entitled to free school meals, in the care of the local authority or the children of members of the armed forces) is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils whose learning needs receive the level of support known as school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.

Most pupils are White British. A significantly lower than average proportion of pupils is from minority ethnic groups. None are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The headteacher was initially appointed as acting headteacher in September 2010. He was confirmed as a permanent appointment in September 2011, when the deputy headteacher was also appointed. This followed a period of unsettled leadership.

### Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	193
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	66%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	8%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	26%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	2.07
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	18.65

### Staffing

Full time teachers:	6
Part time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	87.5
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	50

### Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education

FS	10
Year 1	10
Year 2	10
Year 3	10
Year 4	10
Year 5	10
Year 6	10

**Parishes served by the school**  
St James, Hebburn

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

**1**

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

**1**

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

**1**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**2**

## KEY FINDINGS

St James' is an outstanding Catholic school. There is a shared vision which promotes the highest expectations for all members of the school community. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, governors, pupils and parents have a total commitment to the ethos and mission of Catholic education. All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the school is continuously striving to improve the high standards it is achieving. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is outstanding because of rigorous and accurate self-evaluation leading to clear challenging targets and appropriate priorities. Excellent relationships exist within this community and a strong 'team' ethic are key strengths of the school. The school is held in very high regard by the parents, the parish community and the governors.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school community and are very happy to come to school which results in them having a very positive attitude to learning and they achieve high standards. In Religious Education (RE) all pupils make very good progress. From below average starting points attainment is high by the time pupils reach the end of key stage two (KS2). Pupils benefit from an excellent range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic Life of their school. They plan, lead and respond to worship with respect, reverence and joy. The promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

The school provides an outstanding Catholic education. Teaching and learning in RE is very good which enables pupils to make excellent progress. Parents and carers are kept well informed. The RE curriculum provided is rich and varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and raising standards. Assessment, monitoring and tracking systems, which are continually reviewed and developed, impact positively on pupil progress. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. It is timetabled within the school day and pupils have the skills and confidence to prepare and lead stimulating class, key stage and whole school worship.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher ensures that all pupils are well cared for, valued as individuals and are well motivated to make excellent progress. The senior management team demonstrate a commitment to strive for continuous school improvement. Leaders have a clear sense of direction and purpose in curriculum RE which is recognised as the core subject of the curriculum and key to driving whole school improvement. Professional development of all staff is a high priority. This is tailored to both whole school and individual needs resulting in extremely competent staff who are committed to ensuring that all pupils make very good progress. Effective RE co-ordination is central to the continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school and the RE provided throughout the school.



### **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.

# CATHOLIC LIFE

## THE QUALITY OF 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.
- 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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Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. The very evident Catholic ethos enables them to participate in shaping activities with a religious character both in the school and their wider community. Pupils are increasingly able to take on responsibility for themselves and others. They take full advantage of the many and varied opportunities the school provides for their personal support and spiritual development. The pupils from foundation stage (FS) onwards are enquiring, imaginative, intuitive and have a strong sense of their own identity within their school community. Pupils are able to articulate their own faith and spirituality with confidence. They know people in the community have different beliefs and they talk enthusiastically about learning to understand these faiths alongside their own. They constantly refer to the teachings of Jesus when talking about how to treat others and how to behave. Pupils are conscious of the needs of others and have a strong sense of justice and concern for others evidenced through the varied events to raise funds for local and global charities.

Written by the school council, the school has an extremely effective mission statement which clearly defines the wider mission of the Church in education, in child friendly language. Everyone in the school community shares in the desire to live out this mission statement and is fully committed to its implementation across the whole curriculum, resulting in outstanding practice. All stakeholders are supportive and respectful of each other, resulting in quality relationships and an amazingly positive team spirit. The school is a prayerful and joyful community. The school's mission and Catholic character is evident throughout the school both in displays and in the way in which everyone interacts with each other. Clear policies and structures are in place, which provide the highest levels of pastoral care to all pupils, including the most vulnerable and needy. Pastoral programmes, Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) are thoughtfully designed, carefully planned, consistently well taught and refer to Catholic teachings and principles. All staff play an active part in the delivery of the school's pastoral programme, acting as 'nominated adults' to offer support to pupils and are committed to ensuring the highest possible outcomes for students. The school is supportive of its staff and ensures that every member's needs are understood and catered for. The school chaplain plays a key role in fostering and developing a culture of vocations within the school. The highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour are promoted through the schools expectations. Behaviour policies and procedures are rooted in Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church. These policies embody the importance of personal responsibility and the need for justice but also facilitate healing and reconciliation.

The school's leadership and management promote the Catholic Life of the school very well. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision. The deep commitment, drive and energy of the headteacher, is an inspiration to the whole school community. -Self evaluation at all levels within the school is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, thorough analysis and

self-challenge. This results in targeted and coherent planning and actions to ensure continuous improvement in all aspects of the Catholic Life of the school. High quality induction and staff training have ensured an awareness, understanding and commitment to the very strong Catholic ethos. Parents commented very positively on the whole school family atmosphere that permeates their community. Governors offer appropriate support and challenge. The very effective Chair is outward looking and offers support to new governors throughout Hexham and Newcastle on behalf of the Diocese.

# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

## THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- 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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Pupils' response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship is outstanding. The pupils are comfortable and joyful in their worship and in times of reflection and prayer. Acts of worship engage pupils and inspire them to respond thoughtfully, reverently and respectfully. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship, evidenced by the quality of the liturgy observed during the inspection which was prepared and led with confidence by year six pupils. The pupils in school sing joyfully and express their thoughts and feelings openly when worshipping within their community. The quality of Collective Worship has a very positive impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development and has been commented upon very favourably by parents, governors and parish priest as well as in the recent Ofsted inspection.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are met. Prayer is central to the life of the school, is fully inclusive, reflective and well planned enabling pupils to take an active part. Pupils confidently plan, prepare and lead acts of Collective Worship. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for prayer, reflection and liturgy and pupils confidently share different forms of prayer in class, school liturgies and school masses. They are very public demonstrations of the ethos of the school. Acts of Collective Worship have a positive impact on pupils, parents and parishioners. The school works effectively with the parish to deliver the First Holy Communion programme.

Leaders and managers have expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship. They have a thorough understanding of the Church's Liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols and are able to lead the school in a deepening appreciation of these traditions through their use of the Sunday Gospel as the focus of the daily worship. As a consequence, pupil response to this provision is outstanding. Due to inspirational leadership, response to Collective Worship from the staff is wholehearted and enthusiastic. Leaders and managers frequently lead high quality Collective Worship experiences for staff and pupils. As leaders of Collective Worship they are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. Leaders and managers place the highest priority on the development of quality experiences of Collective Worship in their School Development plan and review this regularly. They regularly seek the views of pupils, staff and parents regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school and are quick to respond to these findings in a systematic and thorough way.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2
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- 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 monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

2
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Pupils have a very positive attitude to their learning in Religious Education and work well together on shared tasks. The majority of pupils enter the school with skills below those expected from pupils their age. By the end of key stage one (KS1) and key stage two (KS2), the very large majority of pupils are achieving above average standards. A small minority of pupils are attaining the higher levels in each key stage. In lessons, teachers now use observations effectively to record pupils' spoken responses as evidence of higher levels of knowledge and understanding. Standards are rising rapidly, particularly in KS2. Progress is good for most pupils and there is little variation in the progress of different groups, including boys and girls, and those identified as having special educational needs. Most pupils are achieving well.

The quality of teaching in Religious Education is never less than good overall, often with outstanding features; in some classes it is outstanding. Teachers plan thoroughly for Religious Education lessons; there is clear differentiation, with tasks built on prior learning. Lessons are stimulating, with activities that are imaginative and challenging, like carrying out archeological digs and interpreting religious artefacts. Pupils exhibit exemplary attitudes to Religious Education because lessons are made stimulating to engage them. The expectation for pupils is that, 'Only the best is good enough' as a result standards have risen rapidly and dramatically. All pupils are clear about targets, and most teachers use marking well to provide pupils with clear steps for improving their work. Pupils now need to be encouraged consistently to revisit each piece of work to improve it as a matter of course.

The self-evaluation of Religious Education by leaders and managers reflects rigorous monitoring, analysis by the headteacher and subject leader. This results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which lead to very good outcomes in Religious Education. Leadership of Religious Education is informed by a high level of expertise and vision which focuses relentlessly on improving teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in teaching that is sometimes outstanding and never less than consistently good. The headteacher and subject leader provide leadership of Religious Education which is inspirational and has resulted in whole-hearted commitment from pupils and colleagues. As a consequence, Religious Education has a very high profile in the life of the school and is actively involved in initiatives within the school, having a profound impact on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and on their ability to discern their own unique vocations. The imaginative and stimulating Religious Education curriculum is skilfully designed to match the full range of pupils' needs and to ensure highly effective continuity and progression in their learning. 'They don't just learn about RE, they absorb it and live it,' was a comment from a member of staff and this was evident in all lesson observations carried out during this inspection. Excellent links are forged with the wider community and local parishes to provide a good range of enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and engagement. The curriculum enables pupils to gain first hand experiences of the liturgical life of the Catholic Church and of a wide diversity of religious and belief communities, through their visits to a

mosque and a synagogue when studying world faiths. Religious Education is extremely well resourced in terms of staffing, physical resources, capitation and curriculum time when compared with other core curriculum subjects within the school. It meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference fully.

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION.**

**1**

### **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**

**1**

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

**1**

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship**

**1**

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

**1**

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**2**

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

**2**

**The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education**

**1**

**How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

**1**

	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Collective Worship	1	1	1	1
Catholic Life	1	1	1	1
Religious Education	2	1	1	2
	1	1	1	1