



DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**

## DIOCESAN INSPECTION REPORT

# St Mary's RC Primary School

Hustledown, South Moor, Stanley, DH9 6PH

School Unique Reference Number: **114247**

<b>Inspection dates:</b>	19 – 20 September 2016
<b>Lead inspector:</b>	Mary Tate

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Catholic Life:</b>		Outstanding	1
<b>Collective Worship:</b>		Outstanding	1
<b>Religious Education:</b>		Good	2

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- Catholic Life is outstanding. Governors, leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. The well-being and personal development of each child is at the heart of this welcoming community.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school. Staff and pupils plan and lead high quality acts of worship where all pupils act with deep reverence and respect.
- Religious Education is good. Good teaching and subject knowledge ensure most pupils make good progress over time. Pupils enjoy their learning and concentrate well.

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school serving the parish of St Joseph's, Stanley.
- Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- A much higher than average number of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual time.
- The proportion of pupils at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is higher than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children who are looked after by the local authority and children from service families.
- The school provides a breakfast club each morning.

### WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
  - Developing marking and feedback to ensure pupils receive high quality feedback to enhance their learning and promote good progress.
  - Further developing staff confidence with levelling pupil's work accurately.
- Further develop the leadership of curriculum RE by:
  - Evaluating provision for curriculum RE to promote good outcomes for pupils.
  - Identifying areas for development within curriculum RE with measurable milestones to evaluate progress against objectives.
- Continue to develop the Catholic Life of the school by:
  - Continuing with the recent developments for monitoring the Catholic Life of the school and using these to measure impact.

## 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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#### **The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- The mission statement; 'Growing Together in the Friendship of Faith', is central to the life of the school and is understood and fully embraced by all pupils in their daily school life. Pupils feel valued and confidently express their views. Their behaviour is exemplary.
- Pupils, staff, parents and governors are rightly proud of their school. Pupils are taught a sense of responsibility and benefit greatly from the experiences offered.
- Pupils have a deep sense of 'belonging' to the 'school family' and staff, parents and governors speak about the importance of this nurturing environment, where pupils make a contribution to the Catholic Life of the school from a very early age.
- The school is inclusive and has embraced all of its families as part of the school community. All pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how they live their lives and how they treat others and are very aware that respect is earned through actions and is to be valued.
- High quality pastoral care supports pupils throughout their time at school. All staff play their part and everyone is valued for their contribution. Pastoral groups provide opportunities for pupils of all ages to come together, reflect on Gospel themes and share concerns.

#### **The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.**

- The school's mission statement is embraced and lived out by all. The learning environment reflects and celebrates the school's Catholic character with welcoming displays and opportunities for prayer.
- Excellent relationships exist within the school community with all stakeholders fully committed to making the school the best that it can be. Staff, governors, parents and pupils are all encouraged to be involved in school life and communication is seen as a strength of the school.
- The school is a very prayerful community where all members of the community feel welcomed.
- Clear policies and procedures are in place which are carefully planned to reflect the Catholic Life of the school for both pupils and staff. They provide high levels of support for pupils, staff and the wider community.

- Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) is taught throughout the school at age appropriate levels and it is in line with the teachings of the Catholic faith.
- The behaviour of pupils in and around the school is exemplary: personal responsibility is encouraged through a culture of respect, praise, rewards and choices, whilst encouraging reconciliation.

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

- The headteacher and senior leaders are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They have a clear understanding of the vision of Catholic education and are highly respected in the school community.
- All leaders and managers, including the governing body, have high expectations for the continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school. Together, they have a clear picture of the school's role in the promotion of Catholic values throughout the community.
- Governors and the parish priest make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are highly visible in the school community and passionate about the school's mission. They consistently communicate high expectations, providing appropriate challenge and support.
- The school has very successful strategies for engaging parents and carers and they have a clear understanding of the school's mission. Parents feel that the Catholic ethos is strong and they are very supportive of it. The school gets positive feedback via parental questionnaires.
- Leaders, including governors, know their school well and work together to conduct monitoring activities, including questionnaires. However, monitoring is not rigorous enough and has not yet had time to have an impact.

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

- St Mary's is a prayerful community where worship is a regular and meaningful part of the day. All pupils are enthusiastic in their response to Collective Worship. This is evident in their keen participation in liturgies, particularly their gathering and prayerful reflection.
- Pupils take an increasing lead in planning, preparing and leading liturgies in class and larger groups throughout the school. They are very confident in using resources and are developing a wide variety of prayer and liturgical styles which they use appropriately.
- From the earliest ages pupils recognise the special nature of liturgical symbols and show respect. They are aware that religious beliefs are important, demonstrating respect for their own faith and the faith of others.
- Pupils express their thoughts and feelings when worshipping within their school community, which has a positive impact on their spiritual and moral development. They are comfortable sharing personal prayer needs and asking others to pray for them.
- Adults provide excellent role models for pupils in their response and participation in liturgy and this is evident when pupils lead their own liturgies.
- There is a great sense of community at all levels which is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between everyone, staff, governors, pupils and parents.

#### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.**

- Collective Worship is central to school life. From their earliest days pupils are taught how to create an atmosphere for prayer, and praying together is a key part of the daily experience for staff and pupils.
- Older pupils regularly choose their own themes, each having strong views on what they would like to base their Collective Worship, reflecting their personal spiritual aspirations
- Staff are skilled at creating quality worship experiences for the school community.
- Pupils, parents and staff speak positively about and embrace the experiences offered.
- There is a palpable sense that this is a Christ centred, praying community and there are many and varied opportunities for its pupils to develop their spirituality.

- The Collective Worship policy provides a clear structure for staff to ensure there are a variety of opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together regularly.
- School leaders have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical heritage, its rites and seasons and they are passionate about ensuring the pupil's experience is of the highest quality. As a result, provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

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

- Leaders have a well-developed knowledge of Collective Worship and set a high standard in school with well-planned liturgical experiences. They ensure that their expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver worship is shared with staff.
- They lead by example ensuring that pupils and staff develop a thorough appreciation of the rites, symbols, traditions and seasons of the Church's year.
- Throughout school there is a strong sense of the traditions of the Church and that the school journeys through the Liturgical Year. It has embraced the themes of the Jubilee of Mercy this year.
- The school actively seeks the views of pupils, staff and parents and responds readily to feedback in a systematic and thorough way. Leaders have accurately identified the need to encourage pupils to further develop leadership roles.
- Interviews with governors, headteacher and the parish priest, along with pupil and parent questionnaires reflects the importance of true partnership, evaluation and a mission to ensure the best for pupils.
- Parents appreciate the welcoming community the school offers when they are invited to join in acts of worship in school and in church.
- Sacramental preparation follows diocesan guidelines and the school works closely with the parish to give pupils all the support they can.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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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 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.**

- Almost all pupils enjoy Religious Education and can explain its value. They understand that it is a core subject and are keen to do well. They work hard during lessons and behaviour for learning is excellent.
- Pupils make good progress across a range of skills and are developing well in their knowledge and understanding. They demonstrate good prior knowledge and are able to use this well in their new learning.
- Behaviour for learning is outstanding. As a result the vast majority of learners make good progress over time. Data analysis and work scrutiny indicate standards of attainment are at least in line with diocesan averages.
- Inspection findings and evidence provided by the school shows no notable differences between groups of learners. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress because of the quality of targeted support from staff.
- Pupils have an understanding of how well they have done and how to improve, although most are not aware of the levels of attainment achieved in pieces of work.
- As a result of effective support staff, pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are well supported and achieve well according to their age and capacity.

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

- The quality of teaching is good or better, enthusing pupils and ensuring good progress over sequences of lessons and over time. Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Teachers have high expectations and are enthusiastic about Religious Education and this is clearly communicated to pupils. As a result, pupils concentrate well and the majority take great pride in their work.
- In the best lessons pupils are set challenging tasks which are well matched to their learning needs and which successfully engage all pupils.
- The standard of marking and feedback varies. There are some excellent examples of focussed marking, however written comments by teachers on steps to improve learning are not used consistently throughout the school. Where they do exist, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to respond to teacher comments in order to enhance learning.
- Teachers demonstrate high expectations of behaviour and engagement and, as a result,

pupils concentrate well.

- Effective assessment procedures are embedded into Religious Education which inform the teacher of the level at which pupils are working. These are not always accurate and staff need a more secure idea of attainment at each level.
- Additional adult support is used well, ensuring good progress for most pupils. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.

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

- Leaders have a good knowledge of the Religious Education curriculum and standards of attainment. They have high expectations and there is a shared common purpose amongst all teaching staff. Religious Education has a prominent profile in the school and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development.
- The curriculum, based on 'Come and See' enables pupils to gain first hand quality experiences of the liturgical life of the Catholic Church.
- Recent improvements to assessment include the introduction of more consistent tracking across classes and groups. However, the school does not yet have a programme of regular in house moderation of assessments.
- Strategies to monitor teaching and learning are developing but are not rigorous and embedded into practice. This is recognised by governors and leaders and, and for the most part due to the current transitional nature of the leadership.
- Sacramental preparation is delivered well and in accordance with diocesan policy. There are strong links with the parish and catechists speak very proudly and positively about their work with the pupils.
- Provision for Religious Education is comparable with other core subjects in terms of staffing, curriculum resourcing, finance and curriculum time. It meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.



## 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.

2

**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.

2

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

2

## SCHOOL DETAILS

<b>School name</b>	St Mary's RC Primary School
<b>Unique reference number</b>	114247
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
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<b>Head teacher</b>	Miss Joanne Sands
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	May 2012
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