

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
SPIRITUALITY, FORMATION & EDUCATION SERVICE



S48 Inspection Report

**St Mary's RC Primary School
South Moor, Stanley**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School:	St Mary's RC Primary School
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School URN:	114247
Headteacher:	Miss Joanne Sands
Chair of Governors:	Mr Brian Docherty
Inspector:	Elaine White
Date of Inspection:	9 and 10 May 2012

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 Mary's is a smaller than average primary school which serves the former parish boundaries of St Mary's, South Moor and is now part of the newly developed parish of St Joseph's, Stanley. Levels of social and economic deprivation are high in the area and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school community is primarily English speaking and mainly of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 106

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 53%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 25%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 4%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 18%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 1%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 40%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 4

Number of part time teachers: 2

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 83%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 17%

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 Joseph's, Stanley

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

Whilst attainment and progress in Religious Education are only satisfactory, in other respects St Mary's is a good Catholic school. The school is a welcoming, friendly community with a strong family ethos. The school is held in high regard by pupils, parents and parishioners. All members of the school community share the headteacher's clear vision for the school and work hard as a team to provide a caring community with Christ at its centre. The dedicated staff are working well together as a team, committed to raising pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher and leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and areas identified for development are included in the school improvement plan. Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed and developments are on-going. Given the pace and effectiveness of developments, which are beginning to improve pupils' progress, the school demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement.

Most pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They respond well to collective worship showing reverence and respect and the promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. Standards attained in Religious Education (RE) and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, the pupil's religious literacy is increasing as too is their knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported to develop their learning skills. The effective adult support ensures that pupils succeed in their learning, and is having a positive effect on their self-esteem and confidence to tackle challenges independently. The more able pupils however are not given sufficient opportunities to achieve their full potential.

The provision for Catholic education is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the classes where teachers have high expectations of pupils and set the right level of challenge for their work, pupils learning and progress is better. Monitoring and assessment procedures are in place throughout the school and pupils are given individual targets. However these are not yet fully impacting on pupil outcomes. Marking guidance from teachers giving pupils information on how to improve their work is still in the early stages and needs to be embedded to ensure further progress. The RE curriculum is satisfactory but improving. The quality of collective worship is good and is very well embedded within the school day with a variety of opportunities for worship. Parents and carers are kept well informed about their child's learning, progress and achievement.

Leadership and management is good, communicating high expectations to staff about securing improvement in standards. They effectively monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school and have a clear direction and understanding of what is required to bring about improvement. Their dedication and commitment are instrumental in the drive to improve teaching and learning. Challenging but realistic plans are in place and are well detailed in the School Improvement Plan. The governing body discharge their responsibilities well and ensure all statutory and canonical responsibilities are met. Partnerships are well

developed and promote Catholic learning and well-being and the promotion of community cohesion is good.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Raise attainment and improve achievement in RE by ensuring:
 - all teachers use assessment information to plan challenging, differentiated activities which consistently build on and extend pupils’ learning, especially the more able, to achieve higher levels.
 - marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.
 - all pupils make at least the expected progress by the end of year two (YR2).

- Improve the quality of teaching in RE so that it is at least consistently good.

- Provide opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they need to plan, prepare and lead collective worship.

PUPILS

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

2

The quality of pupils' learning and progress in RE is satisfactory. Pupils enter Reception at starting points in RE well below that which is typical for their age. Progress is good in Early Years (EYS). However it slows down in key stage one (KS1) as pupils do not reach high enough standards by the end of YR2. By the end of year six (YR6), attainment is satisfactory with rapid progress being made in upper key stage two (KS2). Those pupils identified as having a special educational need make satisfactory progress as they are well supported by effective teaching assistants.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. In those classes where systems for assessment and supporting pupils' learning are embedded, progress is good. Pupil tracking and moderation of work indicate that these strategies are beginning to have a positive impact on progress and standards. The majority of pupils enjoy learning. Where teachers' expectations are high they concentrate extremely well as evidenced in a lesson about UNICEF. However the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged and could achieve more. Nevertheless, across the school there is an increasing sense of purpose about learning in RE and pupils respond well to the praise and rewards they receive for good effort.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school which has high priority across the school. Pupils are actively involved and take on responsibilities very enthusiastically such as the school councillors. They respond willingly to the needs of those beyond the school and can articulate their views with confidence explaining the purpose of fundraising for various charities such as Operation Christmas Child, St Cuthbert's Care and Willow Burn Hospice. The school is very much engaged in caring for the needs of children elsewhere in the world, especially through CAFOD fundraising activities. The next step is to further develop these global links in Venezuela and Africa so that new learning opportunities can be forged. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year both in school and the parish community and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. Prayer is integral to the everyday life of the school and pupils are keen to participate and are at ease when praying with their school community. They listen and sing with enthusiasm and respond to acts of worship with reverence and respect. The 'Nurturing Human Wholeness' programme is integrated into the prayer life of the school and contributes significantly to the strong ethos that pervades the school. A prayer corner in each classroom impacts positively on the quality of prayer and provides pupils with a stimulus for thought and reflection. Pupils write their own prayers and are beginning to be more involved in leading, planning and preparing collective worship in their own classes.

PROVISION

3

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is satisfactory. There are striking examples of good teaching in some classes although this is not consistent throughout the school. In these classes, there is clear evidence in pupils' work of accelerating progress. Pupils' learning is better where teachers have high expectations of pupils, set the right level of challenge for their work and help them improve by careful marking and advice to help them move on. In some lessons however, progress was slow because of lack of challenge and expectations of work were not high enough.

Assessment and academic guidance are satisfactory. Procedures and strategies for the assessment of RE are in place across the school but are not consistently used to inform pupil improvement. There is evidence of growing security in assessment but there are indications that this is not yet being used as effectively and consistently as it might to develop the next steps in pupils' learning. Marking in some classes is beginning to be used effectively to challenge pupils to improve their work. However, it sometimes lacks specific focus which hinders pupils in the improvement of their work. Individual pupil targets are set but are not yet impacting on pupil improvement. Not all staff use data accurately to inform future planning and further learning. The school recognises the need to embed these systems more thoroughly.

The RE curriculum provided is satisfactory in meeting the needs and interests of the pupils though there are some good features. The school meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference with regard to curriculum time and the process of assessment is in line with diocesan guidelines. The RE curriculum contributes well to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, particularly when pupils are given the opportunity to discuss and relate their learning to their own lives and feelings. The particular needs, abilities and prior knowledge of some pupils are not sufficiently taken into account which hinders further improvement, however the school recognises this. Overall, the RE curriculum offered enables most pupils to enjoy lessons and have positive attitudes to learning.

The provision for collective worship is good. There is a clear policy for collective worship and the school uses a good range of strategies to ensure that collective worship is inclusive. Through well planned programmes of Masses, liturgies, assemblies and other liturgical celebrations, pupils are given many opportunities to participate in a range of acts of worship. A wide variety of forms of prayer, including traditional prayers, scripture, music, symbols and artefacts are modelled well for the pupils. There is a prayer focus in each class room with well thought out resources impacting significantly on the quality of prayer and reflection. The school is now at the stage of seeking ways by which it can make more use of the children's own initiatives in planning, producing and leading prayer and worship independently.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are good. Leaders have a clear vision which is embraced and supported by the whole school community. The Catholic life of the school is given a high priority and Catholic values and principles are promoted very well. The headteacher and leadership team have a deep commitment to the Church's Mission in education; personal development and high quality care are paramount. They are good role models providing very clear direction for improvement. They ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development are frequent and these have significant impact. The headteacher has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and the areas for improvement. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place and beginning to impact but these need to be further embedded. The good leadership of the Catholic life of the school ensures that all pupils are well cared for and nurtured in this happy, caring, safe and supportive environment.

The leadership and management of RE are good. The headteacher who is also the RE co-ordinator exudes energy and enthusiasm, giving strong leadership clearly focused on raising achievement. She has a clear vision and sense of direction and understanding of what is required to bring about improvement and shares this with staff. Her dedication and commitment are instrumental in the drive to provide high quality teaching and learning in RE. The school improvement plan provides clear direction for the work and future developments in RE. Monitoring, evaluation and assessment procedures are beginning to have a positive impact but need to be more consistent and rigorous. Good opportunities are provided for continuing professional development to ensure that all staff are kept abreast of current thinking and developments in RE. There is comprehensive coverage of the 'Here I Am' programme as well as other resources which enrich the curriculum. Work on other faiths and cultures is undertaken throughout the school and links to include visits and visitors to the school are continually being developed. The curriculum contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

The governing body fulfils its role well with regard to the Catholic life of the school and discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities well, but rely heavily on the guidance from the headteacher to give them direction. They are totally committed to upholding the strong, caring, inclusive ethos that fosters the excellent relationships which exist between the school and the parish family. The governing body is now at the stage where they are becoming more confident in their role to become more fully involved in evaluating the Catholic life of the school, offering challenge and support.

Leaders effectively develop partnerships with other providers and organisations. A range of partnership activities with, for example, CAFOD and support for a school in Africa make a good contribution to pupils' well-being and to the Catholic life of the school as well as heightening pupils' awareness and understanding of the common good. They also ensure that links with other Catholic primary schools and high schools are well established.

The school's contribution to promote community cohesion is good. St Mary's school is a caring community in which everyone is included and supported in developing their unique potential within an atmosphere of love and respect and this is clearly evident in the schools' policies, documents and practice. Visitors to the school and visits out of school are used effectively to enable pupils to gain a better understanding of different faiths and cultures.

The schools pastoral group system offers many opportunities for pupils to collaborate and show respect and tolerance to others, encouraging care and forging friendships and the pupils' voice is enabled to be heard through an effective school council. The RE curriculum has a positive impact on community cohesion promoting attitudes of respect and tolerance. Acts of worship are inclusive, having a positive impact on community cohesion.

THE 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 RE	3
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in RE	3
• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	2
• how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship	2
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	3
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE	3
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in RE	2
• the extent to which RE curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
• the quality of collective worship provided by the school	2
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	2
• 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	2
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
• 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	3
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being	2
• how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	2