

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



**St Peter's RC Primary School  
Lowfell, Gateshead**

DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)

on

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE  
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION

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School:	St Peter's RC Primary School
Address:	Dryden Road Low Fell Gateshead NE9 5TU
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School URN:	108385
Headteacher:	Mrs Lisa Stokoe
Chairs of Governors:	Mr J Quinn
Inspector:	Mrs Maureen Galbraith
Date of Inspection:	6 & 7 December 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 Peter's is a slightly smaller than average primary school situated in a residential area of Low Fell, Gateshead. It serves the parishes of St Peter's, Low Fell and Our Lady of the Annunciation and approximately 93% of pupils are baptised Catholics. The school serves a broad social mix of families and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well below the national average. Most pupils are of white British origin with a small percentage from other ethnic groups.

## **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 209

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 92.8%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 2.9%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 1.9%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 2.4%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 5.7%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 9.6%

### **Staffing**

Number of full time teachers: 8

Number of part time teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 88%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 82%

### **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 Peter's, Low Fell

Our Lady of the Annunciation, Gateshead

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

**How effective the school is in providing Catholic education**

1

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

1

### MAIN FINDINGS

St Peter's is an outstanding school which makes outstanding provision for Catholic education. Governors, leaders and managers and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. The school is a very inclusive and welcoming community where the Gospel message of caring and sharing is seen in action. There is a drive for continuous improvement for the good of the whole school community. Staff set good examples and pupils are very proud of their school and work well together. Excellent relationships and communication are key strengths of the school. Parents have a high opinion of the school and are keen to express it. All areas for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils are delighted to come to school, are highly motivated and display positive attitudes. From slightly below average starting points, they attain good standards and make excellent progress across the school. Less able pupils are well supported and the school is increasingly challenging more able pupils in Religious Education. Pupils are very keen to participate in the varied opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from them. The level of pupil participation and engagement in the prayer and liturgical life of the school is very high and many are developing independent skills in preparing prayer and worship. The spiritual and moral development of pupils is outstanding.

The provision for Catholic education is outstanding. Teaching and learning is outstanding overall and promote very good progress. Assessments are accurate and as a result of target setting and self-assessment, pupils are aware of how to improve their work. They are not, however, always given time to do so. The Religious Education curriculum is rich, varied, focused on raising standards and meets the needs of all pupils. The quality of collective worship is outstanding and there is evidence of evangelisation. Personal development and care of pupils is exceptionally good.

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school and of curriculum Religious Education are outstanding. The headteacher and her highly skilled and confident Religious Education team work extremely well together and ensure that the school's shared mission, vision and aims are driven forward. This results in continuing improvement to outcomes for pupils. Performance in Religious Education is evaluated effectively and implemented in order to bring about improvement. This is supported through successful succession planning for the coordination of Religious Education and high quality professional development which benefits all pupils. The governing body provides both challenge and support. Both the development of partnerships and the promotion of community cohesion are outstanding.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Raise standards in Religious Education by:
  - ensuring a continued focus on planning for higher attainers;
  - further embedding the tracking and targeting systems and maintain close monitoring of the progress of all groups to ensure strategies are in place to accelerate learning;
  - giving pupils time to respond to advice given by teachers after marking their work.

## PUPILS

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

1

Pupils speak enthusiastically about Religious Education; have very positive attitudes and show high levels of enjoyment. Pupils are becoming increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge, skills and understanding are developing well according to their age and capacity. From slightly below average starting points on entry to school, the large majority of pupils make excellent progress in Religious Education through foundation stage and key stage one (KS1) and this rapid progress continues in key stage two (KS2). Inspection findings show that girls slightly outperform boys, though their attainment is still high. There is little difference between the outcomes of Catholic pupils and those other than Catholic. Pupils with special educational need are well supported and make at least good progress given their capabilities and starting points. Current work indicates an improving progress trend for more able pupils with greater acceleration in KS2. Evidence also indicates little difference between learning about religion (Attainment Target one) and learning from religion (Attainment Target two). Standards overall are good, though improving rapidly and close to outstanding. By the end of KS1, the large majority of pupils attain level two, which is the standard expected of them. By the end of KS2, the very large majority attain level four and a varying percentage level five, though current work indicates a rising trend.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take responsibility seriously and see their role as buddies, school councillors and in pastoral groups as important because it is about looking after people as Jesus asked us to do. They confidently express their own views and feelings, demonstrate a deep understanding of how important it is to forgive and be forgiven and are aware of the needs of others. Pupils respect the beliefs of others and build relationships with people from all walks of life. They take responsibility for their actions and show a keen interest in spiritual, moral and ethical issues.

Pupils response to and participation in collective worship is outstanding. They take part in, lead and prepare prayer and liturgy with enthusiasm and increasing ease and confidence. Pupils know what constitutes good worship and also know and value a variety of ways of praying including action and breathing prayers, litany and meditation. Many are acquiring a range of skills which allow them to lead worship such as a 'Reconciliation Service'. In large and small gatherings, pupils are respectful, reverent and prayerful. They demonstrate a wide knowledge of religious seasons, feast days, traditional prayers and other faiths. Their liturgical formation is developing well. Collective worship contributes extremely positively to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

## PROVISION

1

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

The quality of teaching in Religious Education is outstanding overall. Varied teaching styles, good questioning, high quality resources including technology and the use of additional adult support are all highly effective in moving learning forward and raising standards. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge, carefully plan lessons to build on prior learning and pupils' capabilities and increasingly differentiate activities well. They have high expectations of pupils and as a result of sharing targets and success criteria, pupils are beginning to understand how well they are doing and what is expected of them. Creative activities engage and motivate pupils and facilitate high levels of enjoyment.

Assessment is outstanding. The school's rigorous systems provide accurate and up to date information about both achievement and progress for all groups of learners. Assessments are regular and systematic across the school and both internal and externally moderated assessments show levelling is accurate. Pupils are involved in self-assessment and can confidently speak about using the 'I Can Statements' as targets to improve their work. Teachers' marking is focused and often gives advice to pupils about how to improve their work; they are not, however, always given time to act on this. The school sets challenging targets for pupils and is carefully monitoring progress towards them.

The Religious Education curriculum meets the pupils' needs exceptionally well. Rich in creativity, it is sensitively and appropriately adapted to meet pupils' varying needs. Many opportunities for visits, visitors and first hand experiences along with enrichment activities such as the 'Wonder Wall' and debating groups result in high levels of enjoyment and achievement. In upper KS2, pupils' response to scenarios in debate shows they are mature and well developed spiritually and morally. A high number of pupils take part in extended school activities and the curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding. Prayer is central to the life of the school; it is given a high priority and a wide variety of prayer styles, music and dance are used to engage pupils. The development of prayer and liturgical experiences are ably supported by the school chaplain whose role is highly valued by pupils and staff alike. Collective worship is vibrant, reflective and extremely well planned enabling pupils to take a very active part. They are becoming increasingly skilled at preparing and leading worship confidently and independently in upper KS2. A wide range of opportunities are planned for pupils, staff and the wider community to pray and worship together.

# LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

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

Leadership and management teams are outstanding in promoting provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school. Catholic values and principles are given the highest priority and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school vision. The headteacher demonstrates drive and commitment and is ably supported by active chaplaincy, which is developing well. Highly effective school self-evaluation, both formal and informal, ensures that all aspects of the Catholic life are continuously improving. As a result of high quality staff training and induction, there is a shared understanding and commitment to the school's Catholic ethos. Pupils articulate a good understanding of this and are actively involved in shaping it. Very strong links exist between the school and parish.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education is outstanding. Outcomes for pupils are highly efficient and improving assessment strategies are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, progress and standards. The skills of the Religious Education team complement each other well and all staff are kept informed about priorities identified from a range of systematic monitoring activities undertaken to evaluate the provision and outcomes for pupils. Leaders have well targeted plans in place which are under constant review to ensure maximum impact for pupils.

Governors are very highly committed to the Catholic ethos of the school. They discharge their canonical duties extremely effectively. They make regular visits to the school and are involved in Religious Education evaluation activities. They monitor the school's data and information, review the school's work and act upon their findings. They are very well informed; place the well-being and all round development of pupils at the heart of their work. They are extremely supportive of leaders and staff but are also confident in questioning in their approach. They have a good understanding of stakeholder views and know what needs to be done to raise standards further.

Partnerships with other providers to promote Catholic learning are outstanding. Leaders and managers seek out opportunities, both local and national, to develop a range of partnerships that provide rich and varied experiences for the pupils which the school alone would not be able to provide. Pupils benefit immensely from strong links with local primary and secondary schools as well as being involved with several local old people's homes. Joint staff training with other local Catholic schools ensures that pupil opportunities are extended and visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. The parish community has close links with the school and joins in celebrations with them.

Leaders and managers promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The school is a highly inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and strong sense of belonging. In this predominantly white British community, leaders ensure that the pupils have a global awareness and this is promoted well. The school has earned a British Council International Award and is linked with schools in China, Cameroon and Spain. As a result the school is developing pupils who recognise, respect and celebrate difference, have a strong sense of the common good and show a heightened awareness of those on the margins. The Religious Education curriculum promotes attitudes of respect, tolerance and justice for all. Acts of worship are inclusive and each one's spiritual identity respected.



## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	1
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</li> </ul>	1
<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>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education</li> </ul>	2
<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>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship</li> </ul>	1
<b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education</b>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the quality of collective worship provided by the school</li> </ul>	1
<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School</b>	1
<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>	1
<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>	1
<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>	1
<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>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.</li> </ul>	1