

REPORT (Section 48)

on

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

School:	St Matthew's RC Primary School
Address:	Alnwick Grove Jarrow NE32 5YT
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School URN:	108721
Headteacher:	Martin Humble
Chair of Governors:	Felicity Tolfrey
Inspector:	Michael Ewing
Date of Inspection:	25-26 September 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 Matthew's RC Primary School is an average sized primary school which draws pupils from mixed socio-economic backgrounds with the majority of pupils from a white British background. Very few are from minority ethnic groups. The school serves mainly the parish of St Matthew's with some pupils coming from neighbouring parishes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	213
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	87%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	12.5%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0.5%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	0%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	0.5%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	12%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers:	8
Number of part time teachers:	0
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	100
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	50

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:

FS	11%	Yr 4	10%
Yr 1	11%	Yr 5	10%
Yr 2	11%	Yr 6	10%
Yr 3	11%		

Parishes served by the school: St Matthew's, Jarrow

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Matthew's is an outstanding school which makes outstanding provision for Catholic Education. Governors, school leaders 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 messages of caring and sharing are seen in action. There is a drive for continuous improvement for the good of the whole school community. Staff set good examples, 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 participate fully in school life. The pursuit of excellence in Catholic Education means that the school has built on previously outstanding performance and has outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

Pupils are very proud to belong to St Matthew's, are highly motivated and display extremely positive attitudes. From 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 promotes outstanding progress. Assessments are accurate and as a result of challenging target setting and self-assessment, most pupils are aware of how to improve their work. They are not, however, always given time to reflect and respond to written comments from teachers. 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 is a strong feature of school life.

The leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school and of curriculum Religious Education are outstanding. The school's leadership is deeply committed to the church's mission in education. The headteacher is highly skilled and held in the highest regard by all sections of the school community. His leadership of Religious Education ensures 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 rigorously and plans for improvement are implemented effectively to bring about improvement. This is supported through 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

To further raise standards in Religious Education by:

- giving pupils time to respond to questions and advice given by teachers after their work is marked

PUPILS

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

1

Outcomes for all pupils at St Matthew's in Religious Education are outstanding. Pupils' attainment is above average. They engage very positively during Religious Education lessons and strive continually to do their very best. They are able to talk very confidently about their learning in Religious Education thus showing that their knowledge and skills are developing according to their age and ability. There are no notable differences between groups of learners. Staff ensure that, whenever necessary, pupils are supported in order to make excellent progress according to their needs and capabilities. Pupils enter the school with skills that are below those that are expected for their age. From these starting points they make outstanding progress in Religious Education. Assessment data over recent years indicates that the majority of pupils have achieved the expected level at the end of key stage one (KS1). Due to appropriate differentiation more pupils are now achieving higher levels within key stage two (KS2).

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take responsibility very seriously and see their role as buddies, school councillors and fundraisers as vitally important in living out the school's mission. Pupils have a strong sense of personal worth. They confidently express their own views and feelings, demonstrate a deep understanding of how important it is to forgive and be forgiven and are highly aware of the needs of others. Pupils respect the beliefs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community. They take responsibility for their actions and show a very 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 the various elements of worship and are highly skilled in using a variety of ways of praying. 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 extremely 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 majority of teaching in Religious Education is outstanding resulting in high quality learning and pupils' enjoyment and commitment to Religious Education. A variety of teaching styles along with imaginative use of high quality resources, including technology, have a significant impact on raising standards. Activities such as role-play, drama and use of art make learning exciting and lessons engage, challenge and motivate pupils. Carefully planned lessons build on prior learning and pupils' capabilities. Teachers demonstrate excellent subject knowledge and support staff are very effectively deployed. Staff have high expectations of pupils.

The school's systematic monitoring and evaluation procedures in Religious Education are outstanding and a key feature of the continuing rise in standards. The rigorous, robust systems give a clear, accurate, up to date picture of how pupils are achieving and the progress they are making. Leaders and teachers use this information to very good effect to further raise standards and bring about continuous improvement. Marking is evaluative, celebratory and informative and is most effective when giving pupils feedback on their next steps in learning. Opportunities for pupils to demonstrate higher levels of understanding in response to marked work are not always consistently provided. Tracking systems are detailed and focused on ensuring different groups of pupils achieve equally well. This information is monitored rigorously and used effectively by teachers in setting challenging targets for improvement.

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding at meeting pupils' needs. It fulfills all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The curriculum offered is coherent, relevant and planned imaginatively taking into account the learning styles and interests of the pupils. It is enriched by a range of exciting artefacts and activities and provides many excellent opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development helping them to prepare for the next stage of their education. Through the Religious Education curriculum the pupils are given many innovative opportunities to learn about religion and how to use the knowledge and skills they have learnt and apply them in their everyday lives.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding. It is fully inclusive and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are met. Prayer is central to the life of the school; planned and unplanned opportunities are taken to ensure that pupils are able to participate in prayer in a number of ways. Different styles of worship are offered and through this the pupils are being given the opportunity to lead prayer and worship within their classes and with the whole school community. A variety of very high quality liturgical opportunities provided by the school enable parents and the parish community to join the pupils in worship and prayer. Prayer opportunities for staff and adults associated with the school are planned in a manner that attracts and facilitates excellent attendance by parents.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

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

Leaders and managers are outstanding at promoting the Catholic life of the school. The Catholic mission of the school is given the highest priority and underpins all aspects of school life. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision. The dedication, drive and energy of the headteacher and senior leaders are an inspiration to the whole school community. Accurate and regular self-evaluation at all levels within the school is a reflection of comprehensive, rigorous monitoring, 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. Pupils have a secure understanding of the school's mission and are actively involved in determining and supporting it.

The leadership and management of Religious Education is outstanding. The headteacher has a clear sense of direction and purpose, ensuring that Religious Education is regularly and rigorously monitored. Professional development for all staff is a high priority and performance management is used well to develop the school's priorities for improvement. School leaders are aware of strengths and areas for development and the school improvement plan clearly informs the way forward. Well-targeted improvements are having a significant impact on pupils' learning, progress and standards.

Governors are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school and make a highly significant contribution to the work of the school. They carry out their duties efficiently, are well-organised and thorough, ensuring that they are both supportive and challenging. Through information gathered through the governor link programme and regular visits they are knowledgeable and well informed and know what needs to be done in order for the school to develop further. Governors know the views of stakeholders and use these views to shape the strategic direction of the school.

Partnerships with other providers to promote Catholic learning are outstanding. Leaders seek out opportunities, both local and international, 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 the parish. 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 a strong sense of belonging. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and cooperate with each other. They are also offered an excellent range of collaborative opportunities to engage with those from different backgrounds locally, nationally and globally. As a result pupils recognise, respect and celebrate differences and have a strong sense of the common good. They demonstrate an excellent awareness and understanding of their global responsibilities.

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship 	1
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of collective worship provided by the school 	1
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion. 	1