

DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education
Collective Worship
And
The Catholic Life of the School



School: St Alphonsus RC Primary
(Part of St Hilda's Multi Academy Trust)

Address: Cadogan Street
North Ormesby
Middlesbrough
TS3 6PX

URN: 142367
Head of School: Miss Angela McCann

Chair: Mrs Jane Wordsworth

Date: 23rd & 24th April 2018
Inspector: Mrs Michelle Ryan
Mrs Karen Siedle
Trainee Inspector: Mrs Lucy Collins - Younger

Date & Grade of Last Inspection: 8/9th November 2012
Grade: Good

Overall Grade for this Inspection: Good

A Report from:
The Diocese of Middlesbrough Schools' Service
Section 48 Inspection Team
50a The Avenue
Linthorpe
Middlesbrough TS5 6QT

INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. 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 Religious Inspectors and Advisers.

What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Requires Improvement	These features, though of adequate quality, require improvement to be good.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Alphonsus Roman Catholic Primary School has 220 children on roll. The school serves the parish of St Alphonsus and St Pius and is situated in North Ormesby in East Middlesbrough; an area of high deprivation and complex social issues.

50% of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals compared to 24.3% nationally. Pupil mobility is such that although the school loses few pupils to other local schools there is a growing trend to admit pupils to classes throughout the year.

The school has been challenged, since the last RE inspection, by the growth of families in need of support from school due to deprivation, unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse and other related difficulties.

Both the Head Teacher and RE Lead are well established in the school and within St Hilda's Multi Academy Trust (MAT) and are provided support from the MAT in many forms.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

The following evidence was used during the inspection:

- The inspectors observed eight lessons
- Meetings were held with the parish priest, chair of governors, several foundation governors.
- A group of parents
- RE subject leader
- Scrutiny of work and discussions with the Year Six, Year Four and Year Two teachers
- The inspectors spoke to the Eco Team members, school council members, Mini Vinnies
- Observation of rosary group
- Observation of Key Stage Two Collective Worship
- Observation of whole school Collective Worship
- Meeting with the head teacher
- Scrutiny of a range of documentation including the school's plan for improvement documents, monitoring information, previous inspection reports, pupil progress and tracking data
- RE subject leader files including data tracking, variety of planning and many other sources of information.

Further discussions took place with pupils throughout the day

- The inspectors observed displays and sacred spaces.

School Data:**Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 220 (incl. Nursery) 197 (R-Y6)

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 210

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 41%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 24%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 14%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 21%

Percentage of pupil's special needs: 16%

Teaching Staff:

Full-time Teachers: 11

Part-time Teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 42%

Support Staff:

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 12

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 0

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 58.3%

Percentage of learning time given to RE – 10% across all Key Stages

Parishes served by the School

Saint Alphonsus

1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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MAIN FINDINGS

Saint Alphonsus is a good school and is a beacon in the community. St Alphonsus embraces, nurtures and cares for all pupils of different backgrounds and abilities. It offers high levels of pastoral care to all concerned within the school family.

Outcomes for pupils are good. This is due to good and some outstanding teaching which overall enables the children to make good progress. The pupils concentrate well in lessons and visibly enjoy RE.

The provision for Catholic Life is outstanding because it is of the highest quality and very good relationships exist with all members of the school community. The well-being and personal development of the pupils and staff is at the heart of the faith community. The quality of Collective Worship is good because it is central to the life of the school and forms the heart of the daily practise of the school. The school has a well-structured programme of liturgies, Acts of Worship, and Masses. The pupils respond respectfully, articulately and thoughtfully when participating in Collective Worship.

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school and RE are good. The governing body is extremely supportive of the school; they fully appreciate the passion and commitment of the Headteacher who is ably supported by a team of dedicated and hardworking staff, striving to enable the pupils in their school to be the best that they can be.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Ensure all leaders, governors and managers developing incisive and rigorous monitoring, and assessment procedures to identify precise areas of improvement achieve the highest outcomes.
- Develop succession planning in RE with the implementation of a team to support the able RE leader.
- To support and up-skill children to evaluate Collective Worship with a purpose to further improve their practise.

2. PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account variations between groups.

The pupils have a deep sense of belonging and are proud to be part of the St. Alphonsus family. This is nurtured from the pupils' beginning of their school journey and continuously supported and embedded throughout each year group. The school mission statement is alive from the first footing into the school, and the sense of faith is palpable throughout the buildings and community. The mission 'learning, serving, loving with Christ' is lived out daily in the school and evident in all parts of the school starting with the pupils' promises in the school entrance. The governors describe the school as a haven where the pupils flourish in an atmosphere where everyone is valued. The pupils clearly value and respect the Catholic traditions of the school and have highly effective and positive links with the parish, for example: a washing of the feet service; a resurrection liturgy; weekly year group Masses; and, early years' celebration topics with the parish priest. All of this is clearly evidenced on the school's twitter page, which is accessed and used by parents regularly. Moreover, the children in the 'Mini Vinnies' lead and support many charities and events, which include: CAUSE hampers, which support families in Middlesbrough to have food at Christmas. singing for patients in the James Cook hospital; Macmillan coffee mornings; giving knitted poppies to patients in the therapeutic ward of the James Cook Hospital; collecting for the air ambulance; 'Yellow Day' to raise funds for the Little Liver Transplant unit. In this respect, the pupils have a strong sense of justice and celebrate each other's achievements. The school's Catholic character is evident in the learning environments where all involved in the schools 'vision to strive to live out the mission and values. Pastoral care of pupils is of a very high standard; there is a commitment to the most vulnerable in both policy and practice. The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of the staff that benefit greatly from high quality relationships and the support of other colleagues.

From low entry points and with little or no experience of Church or religion, poor communication and language skills and low levels of personal, social and emotional development, pupils' progress in RE is at least good, with pupils making progress across all key stages. The pupils are keen to do well; they apply themselves diligently in lessons and demonstrate high levels of behaviour for learning throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are well supported by effective support staff and achieve well according to their age and ability.

The pupils are enthusiastic in leading aspects of Acts of Worship, reading and offering their thoughts reverently and with respect. This was observed in year 4 pupil - led Worship where good use was made of Scripture from John Chapter 15, 1-8. Pupils confidentially participated in the reflection and response to the Word by giving 'fruit' to the best answers to show they represented the fruit of the vine. Each class left the Worship with a mission to go forth, which was to write a prayer on a template of a bunch of grapes, which showed how they could live out their faith. One pupil remarked that: 'if we stay close to God, all our dead or damaged roots will be pruned or go away' which shows engagement and understanding in their liturgy.

• The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
• How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
• How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

3. PROVISION

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How effective the provision is for Catholic education

Teaching is never less than good with a number of lessons observed having outstanding features. Teaching was most effective where the learning was handed over to the pupils, for example in year 3 whilst exploring the Pentecost theme the children took Scriptural concepts and then transferred them into kites which showed how the power and energy of the Holy Spirit could be used directly in the pupils' own lives. Teachers use a good range of resources, which are of a high quality and support the school's drive of creativity in RE. This is apparent in reception and year 2 where pupils were motivated and enthusiastic about their learning and the range of tasks set. Teachers have strong subject knowledge which is supported ably by the RE leader who in the year 6 lesson clearly articulated her depth of knowledge about St. Stephen and St. Alphonsus. Pupils in this lesson had the opportunity to be challenged and show understanding of how St. Alphonsus' beliefs shaped his life before applying it to another saint and then their own lives. In year 1, the development of creativity was central to the lesson where children confidently recognised emotions that were important in the Pentecost story.

The school is developing a creative approach to the curriculum and in the teaching of RE which motivates and supports the pupils in all aspects of their learning. 'Godly Play' is a central part in the schools curriculum and it has a dedicated room and resources, which are used daily by different pupils and adults. The sessions in 'Godly Play' promote curiosity and pupils readily share beliefs and opinions, with confidence, recognising, respecting and celebrating that all members of St. Alphonsus are special. The RE curriculum meets the external requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The pupils displayed an excellent attitude to learning and a child in year 3 who said 'I love school' confidently articulated this.

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and forms the heart of the daily practise. The school's high quality provision ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are met extremely well. Collective Worship opportunities include a variety of prayer styles and the use of the sacred space along with artefacts and music to engage the pupils in their spiritual development. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship with a structured timetable and rolling programme for liturgies, Worship, Masses and 'Godly Play'. St. Alphonsus parish church plays a central part in school Worship and the parish priest is core in bringing the faith alive in the lives of the children. Pupil-led Acts of Worship is well developed although evaluation is in its infancy. Pupils have the opportunity to explore other faiths in the topics on world religious. Those pupils and their parents, who belong to different faith backgrounds, provide an excellent resource, which enables the other pupils to understand and respect other faiths and cultures.

• The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education	2
• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning	1
• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

How effective leaders, managers and governors are in developing the Catholic life of the school

Governors are very supportive and challenging, and have a good understanding of where the school is at in their Catholic Life and Collective Worship journey. The chair of the local management board is also a director of St. Hilda's multi academy trust, and along with the RE governor has a strategic role in developing the school through informal monitoring and evaluation. The school ensures that all staff receive effective induction and in-service training to enable them to further understand the Church's mission in education. An ongoing formation plan is being formalised by the senior leaders.

Leadership is well informed by current developments in RE. The RE leader in school is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and she is passionate about working with other colleagues to moderate and share good practice. Leaders conduct a range of monitoring activities relating to the provision and outcomes of RE. Their analysis identifies some school strengths. However, the monitoring systems, which are currently in place, are not effective enough in allowing leaders to identify precise areas for developments and hold staff to account to ensure that the highest outcomes and progress are achieved.

All leaders and managers of St Alphonsus are committed to the mission of the Church and the pupils' spiritual and moral development is of the highest priority. The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of the school. The parish priest plays a central part in the school and is supportive of all the school is offering to the pupils.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders, managers and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including collective worship, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils 	2