

# DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

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



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

**Address:** Trimdon Avenue  
Acklam  
Middlesbrough  
TS5 8RZ

**URN:** 142370  
**Head of School:** Mrs Elizabeth Eddies

**Chair:** Canon John Loughlin

**Date:** 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018  
**Inspector:** Anne Parr Michelle Ryan

**Date & Grade of Last Inspection:** May 2013 **Grade:** 1 - Outstanding

**Overall Grade for this Inspection:** Grade 1 - Outstanding

## 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 Clare's RC Primary is an average size primary school which draws its pupils from Catholic families from a wide area within St. Clare's and St. Francis' parish as well as accepting a small number of pupils from other denominations and faiths from the local community.

Pupils are predominantly white British and the school has below national averages for Special Educational Needs pupils (6%) and Pupil Premium pupils (also 6%). The catchment area is a mix of private housing, private rentals and social housing.

Almost all pupils speak English as their home language with 2% of pupils with English as an additional language

The school has been part of St. Hilda's Catholic Academy Trust since November 2015.

Governors appointed a new head teacher and deputy head teacher in September 2017 and two new teachers.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- Inspectors observed 9 lessons
- Meetings were held with the senior leadership team; chair of governors/parish priest, governor with responsibility for Religious Education (RE); the RE subject leaders; a group of parents; the head from one of the Multi Academy Trust's schools; the Standards Adviser of the Multi Academy Trust
- Scrutiny of work from all year groups including discussions with year two, year four and year six (Y2, Y4 and Y6) teachers
- Observation of four class-based Acts of Collective Worship, key stage two (KS2) Collective Worship, whole-school Collective Worship, year one 'Godly Play'
- Pupil meetings with 'Mini Vinnies', school council, liturgy Council, head boy and head girl.
- Scrutiny of a range of documentation including: plans for improvement, school's Diocesan School Self-Evaluation Document (DSED), monitoring records, records of Collective Worship, RE leaders' files, progress and tracking data, photographic records of events and activities, head teacher's reports
- Discussions with pupils during lessons throughout the inspection
- Observations of displays and sacred spaces

**Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 253 (including Nursery)

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 30

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 97%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 1%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 1%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 1%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 3%

**Teaching Staff:**

Full-time Teachers: 9

Part-time Teachers: 0

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 77%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 22%

**Support Staff:**

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 7

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 2

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 66%

**Percentage of learning time given to R.E:**

**10% in all key stages**

**Parishes served by the School:**

Parish of St. Francis (includes St. Francis church and St. Clare's church)

# 1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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## MAIN FINDINGS

St Clare's is an outstanding Catholic school with a strong identity as a Catholic community.

The senior leadership team, led by the head teacher, has a strong sense of mission to improve outcomes for pupils through the outstanding Catholic character of the school, the education it provides and the care it gives to its families. Outcomes for pupils are outstanding. Pupils enjoy and understand the importance of Religious Education (RE). Their faith is important to them. Progress and attainment for pupils in RE is outstanding. Pupils respond well to a variety of Collective Worship and participate respectfully in presiding, praying and singing. The outstanding Catholic Life of the school is very apparent in well-established parish links and the activities which reflect the Catholic character of the school. Pupils are very involved and active in the Catholic Life of the school.

The teaching of RE is outstanding. It is effective in engaging children and enabling them to make rapid progress. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and they benefit from the support of the subject leaders; especially appreciative are those classroom teachers from backgrounds other than Catholic. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding and well-organised by those who are responsible for chaplaincy provision. The pupils benefit from a range of spiritual and liturgical experiences. The school excels in providing a rich learning environment which enhances the formal RE curriculum through a range of enrichment opportunities and curriculum links.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The senior leadership team is ambitious for their school and its pupils. Since her appointment in September 2017 the head teacher, ably supported by the deputy head teacher and other members of the senior management team, have planned and worked with dedication and enthusiasm to improve provision and outcomes for the pupils of St Clare's. They are supported by a loyal and involved governing body.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further:**

Improve Collective Worship by:

- developing pupils' expertise and confidence in leading their independently planned classroom Collective Worship

Improve Religious Education by:

- ensuring that teachers do not rely on too much teacher-talk
- developing imaginative teaching strategies in all classes

Improve governance by:

- monitoring standards in RE more rigorously

## 2. PUPILS

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

Pupils have a strong sense of belonging to the vibrant Catholic community of St Clare's. Recent lessons to begin the summer term have enhanced the pupils' sense of what it means to 'Walk in the Light'. They understand that their actions and behaviour towards others, especially those in need, must be a reflection of their faith and of the school's Gospel values. The outstanding Catholic character of the school means that pupils have a strong sense of personal worth and learn the importance of their relationship with God at an age-appropriate level. Pupils can express their own beliefs and feelings about their faith. They know how to praise, how to celebrate and they understand the importance of forgiveness. Pupils are able to take on responsibilities; for example, as 'Mini Vinnies', school council members, liturgy council members, 'Global Champions', classroom monitors and playground buddies. This enables them to develop a strong sense of responsibility for those around them. They take their roles and responsibilities in school very seriously. Pupils look after each other and look after the local, national and global community through a wide range of charity work. They are able to contribute to decisions about choices of charitable activities through the school council or within their own classroom activities. For example, each class discuss and choose their own Lenten charity; this develops their interest in moral issues. What pupils learn and do in RE is clearly linked to the Catholic character of the school: in a year six lesson about the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, pupils took pride in making prayerful booklets to be given to sick parishioners.

Baseline assessment shows that most pupils enter the school at an expected level of development for their age. Progress accelerates for all groups, including Special Educational Needs (SEN), as pupils move through the school so that by the end of key stage two (KS2), levels of attainment are high. There are some indications of a gap in achievement between girls and boys in some classes; leaders have identified boys' writing skills as the barrier. Targeted support for individual pupils has reduced the gap. Observations, talking with pupils and looking at their work confirms the quality and accuracy of the school's assessment data. The vast majority of pupils' work in RE is of a high standard; good coverage and a variety of tasks are very clear to see. High standards of attainment and presentation are achieved in all key stages so that pupils are proud of their work. This reflects pupils' abilities to work hard when challenged; they enjoy the work they do, show knowledge and understanding and often work with enthusiasm. There are instances in some isolated KS2 lessons where pupils have not always achieved as highly as they could; this is because too much teacher talk slows pupils' progress in lessons. Parents commented on 'the high level of enthusiasm for RE' on the part of their children, leading pupils to question and discuss at home, for example, the meaning of conscience and the value of praying the Rosary.

Themes for Collective Worship follow the liturgical year, 'Come and See' themes and current events; as a result, Collective Worship contributes to pupils' spiritual and moral development and understanding. Pupils experience and benefit from a range of prayer and liturgy both informal and formal: from large gatherings including parents, to smaller well-attended voluntary groups in the school chapel. They therefore know and understand that prayer can take many forms. Pupils show immense reverence and respect during Collective Worship: they join in responses, listen to scripture, sing joyfully and engage well. Classroom Collective Worship in particular contributes to pupils' spiritual development because they can make a voluntary personal response and have more time to reflect and contribute. Pupils regularly plan and lead Collective Worship in their classrooms. The 'Mini Vinnies' and head boy and

head girl also regularly and independently lead prayers in school. Pupils use suitable and well-chosen materials for the Collective Worship they plan. Consequently the class can make relevant and thoughtful responses. Pupils have acquired skills in planning and leading Collective Worship and prayer; however, their expertise and confidence in leading is variable.

<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>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>

### 3. PROVISION

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#### How effective the provision is for Catholic education

Teaching over time is highly effective in making sure that all pupils enjoy RE and that they make rapid progress and reach high standards. Teachers use their accurate knowledge of pupils' current learning to plan next steps in teaching and learning for their class. They can explain precisely progress and attainment for their pupils. The school has adapted its tracking system to track RE with the same accuracy and detail as English and Maths. Pupil progress meetings make good use of the tracking information. Teachers use it to plan lessons and extra support so that no pupil falls significantly behind what is expected. Teachers make consistent and effective use of marking so that pupils know how well they are doing and what to do to improve. In particular, pupils in upper key stage two are motivated by the amount of 'pink' for progress in their work and the chance to improve their work. Tasks are differentiated and effective use is made of support staff and resources. For example, in a year one lesson about forgiveness and saying sorry, the teacher planned for a skilled teaching assistant to use carefully structured questioning and colourful images from everyday life so that a targeted group of pupils were engaged in an enjoyable discussion about the choices we make. In a year four lesson, levels of enjoyment, enthusiasm and independent learning were high: a range of choices, tasks and resources, including iPads were used so that pupils could work independently to create a presentation on their House saint and how his beliefs affected his life. Pupils were challenged to make links to a reading from St Paul which they had read or to a film about Saint John Paul II. Teachers make effective use of time so that the quantity and quality of pupils' work is outstanding. In the best classrooms, progress in lessons does not falter; in rare instances progress falters where there is too much teacher-talk. Teachers from backgrounds other than Catholic or less experienced teachers are well supported to develop their subject knowledge; they ask for help when necessary and research the background to whatever they are teaching.

The RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. Additionally, the school provides a range of enrichment opportunities and curriculum links. For example, to the Rights Respecting work the school does and its work concerning 'Global Goals'. This cohesive approach helps pupils to have a strong sense of justice, of right and of wrong so pupils experience Catholic social teaching. Behaviour is outstanding both in and out of the classroom. There is a rich variety of experiences to help pupils to grow in faith and spiritual and moral development. This includes participation in parish and diocesan celebrations, visitors such as 'More than Dance' and a local link to the John Paul centre. Visits to the local mosque and synagogue mean that pupils are respectful of and learn from other faiths yet remain strongly loyal to their Catholic values and to their faith.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. Central to this provision is a chaplaincy team who provide, and also help pupils to provide, a range of opportunities to pray individually and in groups of varying sizes. The parish priest is a regular visitor in school; he makes a significant contribution to the liturgical life of the school. All staff ensure that Collective Worship reflects the Catholic character of the school and the seasons and feasts of the liturgical year. Considerable time, resources and commitment are devoted to major whole-school celebrations. Equally, class celebrations frequently take place. Parents and parishioners spoke warmly of their pleasure at being invited to join a wide range of celebrations. The school also engages the parish community well in its provision through regular family and class masses. Records of Collective Worship show a range of prayer styles and responses to the Word which pupils' experience. Classroom sacred spaces and focal points are well-respected and beautifully cared for by pupils. Pupils are given

opportunities to pray in the chapel and prayer garden which are always available and designed to attract them. 'Godly Play' is a strong feature in developing pupils' spirituality; it is hugely popular amongst all ages. It offers pupils sufficient time to contemplate and express their thoughts and responses in creative ways.

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

## 4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

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

The school's senior leadership team lead by example and are very committed to maintaining an outstanding Catholic school with the spiritual and moral development of pupils a priority.

Very devoted Governors have a strong sense of responsibility for the Catholic Life of the school and take an active part in it; they are influential in its direction. Therefore the Catholic Life of the school has the highest priority. Parents and governors appreciate the high profile it is given in the head teachers' newsletters. Leaders, managers and governors ensure high-quality chaplaincy provision to promote the Catholic Life of the school. The Catholic character of the school is immediately apparent because of the many beautiful displays reflecting its importance and impact on the school's activities. Pupils are surrounded by it. Effective induction of new staff is in place and provided by the subject leaders. Use is also made of diocesan continued professional development. Staff receive one to one support to develop their skills in leading Collective Worship. As very regular visitors to the school, governors are part of the monitoring process for the Catholic Life of the school including Collective Worship; they receive the head teacher's termly reports relating to the progress of planned improvements and ask questions about the plans. Ongoing improvement plans from September 2017 are being effectively implemented and their impact evaluated.

Extremely effective subject lead in RE is provided jointly by the head teacher and deputy head teacher which has given RE the highest priority in school improvement plans and the highest profile amongst the rest of the school community. Parents appreciate good communication about RE through 'Come and See' newsletters and the high profile it has. Staff feel well-supported in its delivery. The deputy head as assessment leader uses data and moderation of pupils' work very well to track the school's performance. Lesson observations and work scrutinies complement the precise data tracking. The school has also challenged itself to strive for a more imaginative and creative approach to teaching RE which is still being developed. Governors ask school leaders about RE generally but do not question precisely about standards in RE so it is difficult for them to monitor improvements.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders, managers and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>