

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



## **S48 INSPECTION REPORT**

**St John Boste RC Primary School,  
Washington**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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<b>School:</b>	St John Boste
<b>Address:</b>	Castle Road Oxclose Washington NE38 0HL
<b>Telephone Number:</b>	0191 2193800
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<b>School URN:</b>	108853
<b>Headteacher:</b>	Mr Geoff Laidler
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	Rev Mark Millward
<b>Inspector:</b>	Miss Maria Elliott
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	6 & 7 March 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 John Boste Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school situated in a residential area of Washington, serving the parish of the same name. The catchment area of the school has a varied social and economic background. However, most pupils come from homes that are not socially disadvantaged. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals, pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities, pupils who have English as an additional language or pupils from a minority ethnic background is below the national average. There are very few pupils with statements of special educational need. The majority of children have attended nursery before starting school.

## **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: 192

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 77%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 20%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 1%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 2%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 4%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 11%

### **Staffing**

Number of full time teachers: 8

Number of part time teachers: 0

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 100

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 25%

### **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%		

### **Parish served by the school:**

St John Boste, Washington

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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

2

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

2

### MAIN FINDINGS

St John Boste is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It is a fully inclusive school where everyone is welcomed, valued and affirmed with prayer at the heart of the life of the school. The school motto of *'Always try to treat others as you would like them to treat you'* underpins all that the school does and is instrumental in ensuring that the mission and ethos of Catholic education is lived out daily by staff and pupils alike. The headteacher, supported by a very dedicated chair of governors (parish priest), staff and governing body ensure that the pupils reach their full potential. The school is held in high regard by the pupils, parents and the local community and there are excellent links with the local parish where it has an important place in parish life. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good due to the governors' drive to ensure that the forthcoming appointment of a new headteacher sustains and builds upon the good and outstanding practice that already exists within school. All areas from the last inspection have been addressed.

Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils are eager to come to school, engage well in lessons and have positive attitudes to learning. From average starting points, pupils make steady progress in key stage one (KS1); this accelerates in key stage two (KS2) resulting in pupils attaining standards that are above average. They benefit greatly from the range of opportunities offered to them and make a significant contribution to the Catholic life of the school which has a profound impact on their lives. Pupils respond with respect and reverence to the collective worship opportunities offered. The level of pupil participation in the liturgical life of the school is good. Pupils are supported in their understanding of the different forms of prayer, but most significantly in the development of meditation. The promotion of spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

The school's provision for Catholic education is good. Religious Education is given high priority and in recent years the school has seen a rapid improvement in both progress and standards in (KS2). Through focused staff development, teachers generally have a well - developed subject knowledge. This results in good and in some cases, outstanding, teaching where pupils are motivated, interested and engaged in their learning. However, inconsistencies in adaptations made to tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils, does not enable all pupils to reach their full potential. Effective assessment systems are becoming an integral part of the learning journey. Feedback given to pupils is beginning to impact on their awareness of their current learning but is not consistently used to enable the pupils to improve their work further. An enriching RE curriculum captures pupils' interests. The quality of collective worship offered to pupils is outstanding.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher ensures that all pupils are exceptionally well cared for, known and respected as individuals and are motivated to make good progress. As a result of the headteacher's passion to continually promote and develop the Catholic life of the school, the pupils are able to articulate the distinctive mission of the school, share its

purpose and be actively involved in shaping it. There is a clear sense of direction regarding curriculum RE and all are committed to raising standards. Professional development of all staff is a high priority. Coordination for curriculum RE is highly effective and central to the continuing development of RE. Governors demonstrate a strong sense of commitment to the life of the school and as a result are very well informed, act as a critical friend and make an outstanding contribution to the school. The development of partnerships in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being is outstanding. The promotion of community cohesion, which is outstanding, enables pupils to have positive attitudes of tolerance and respect.

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

- Improve outcomes for pupils in Religious Education by:
  - ensuring the accelerated progress in KS2 is echoed in KS1 to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential; especially the more able.
  
- Improve provision of Religious Education by:
  - ensuring lessons are consistently well planned, tailored to meet the needs of all pupils, and offers challenge
  
  - ensuring teachers' marking and feedback enables pupils to become more involved in the assessment process, enabling them to have an understanding of how to improve their work further
  
  - further developing the religious education curriculum so that it enables pupils to have a more developed knowledge, understanding and appreciation for other faiths to reflect the religious diversity of the school and wider community.

## PUPILS

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

2

Pupils' achievement in Religious Education is good. All age groups and abilities are interested, enthusiastic and enjoy RE and have positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils are keen to do well and, due to focused teaching, generally apply themselves well in lessons and work at a good pace. Pupils enter school with average starting points and make steady progress throughout KS1, this progress then accelerates throughout KS2 resulting in good progress overall. A very large majority of pupils attain standards which are above average and a very small minority exceed them. There are no significant differences between groups of learners and all are supported extremely well to ensure they make progress according to their capabilities. Their knowledge, understanding, and skills are developing well as they move through the school.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take responsibility for shaping activities with a religious character and take full advantage of the many opportunities offered to them. They understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and benefit greatly from the chaplaincy offered to them. The school motto is instrumental in enabling the pupils to be considerate to others and show a well-developed awareness of compassion, forgiveness, justice and display mature and positive attitudes to school life. They are eager to respond to the needs of people beyond the school and they are clear as to what is expected of a Catholic community.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. Prayer is an integral part of school life and as a result pupils have a good understanding that there are different types of prayer, including meditation. Even from an early age the pupils are at ease when praying in their class or with their school community. They act with reverence and are keen to participate in collective worship, joining in community prayers well, reflecting silently, singing joyfully and expressing awe and wonder. They have a good understanding of the religious feasts and seasons. Upper KS2 pupils have a developing sense of what constitutes a good liturgy. Collective worship has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils. They show respect for everyone in their school community and understand that some people have different beliefs and attitudes to spirituality.

## PROVISION

2

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

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. A large majority of teaching is good resulting in quality learning. Teachers generally have strong subject knowledge which, along with excellent questioning techniques, inspires and challenges most pupils and contributes to their good progress especially in upper KS2. High quality resources, including technology and multi-media, are used in an imaginative and thought provoking way. In addition the excellent support provided by other adults ensures learning is maximised. Consequently, pupils are motivated, sustain their concentration and enjoy their work.

The school's assessment procedures in Religious Education are good. Effective tracking systems provide a clear and up to date picture of current attainment and individual and cohort progress, as well as enabling the school to predict accurate targets for end of key stage. Teachers generally apply assessment procedures although not always consistently across the school. The use of 'I Can Statements' for each topic is beginning to enable pupils to become more aware of the assessment process, but, as yet, they are not fully involved in the process. The focus of teachers' marking is mainly on what pupils can do. As a result, teacher feedback does not always give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work.

The Religious Education curriculum is good at meeting pupils' needs and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well. All staff enrich the curriculum with role-play, drama, ICT, art and music, but the greatest effect is achieved by the imaginative ways some teachers 'hook' the children into their learning resulting in learning that is stimulating and memorable. For example, following the washing of a pupil's feet by their teacher, a year five pupil was able to relate the message behind the school motto to that of the gospel text. However, there are inconsistencies in the way the curriculum is adapted and differentiated to meet the needs of groups and individuals within the school. Opportunities for learning about others' faiths are at present limited. Pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities to enrich their spiritual and moral development.

The quality of collective worship is outstanding. Prayer is central to the life of the school and is given the highest priority. Acts of worship are fully inclusive, well planned and reflect the rhythm of the Liturgical year. 'Statements to live by' underpin the themes for collective worship and are interwoven with scripture, reflection, and active participation by pupils. ICT is used to great effect in whole school worship to focus pupils, develop their ability to reflect on meaning, ponder on what they have heard and allow space for awe and wonder, resulting in the pupils having a sound understanding of the Church's mission and liturgy. Attendance by parents and others associated with the school is facilitated and encouraged resulting in a profound impact on parents.

## LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. School leaders have a very strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and the role of the school in expressing it and they provide very clear direction for the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher's deep commitment, energy and drive is a source of inspiration for staff, parents and governors alike, and he is seen as a role model by all. There is unmistakable evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is a priority along with the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Focused staff training has developed awareness, understanding and commitment to the school's strong Catholic ethos. Consequently pupils are able to articulate the distinctive mission of the school well. Excellent links exist with parents, the parish and other agencies to reinforce the high standard of care, guidance and support the school provides to ensure its pupils' safety and general well-being. The result is that the pupils flourish and commit themselves to the school's mission.

Leaders and managers monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is outstanding. Leadership within Religious Education is focused on promoting high standards and quality Religious Education as well as the faith development of the pupils. The headteacher, who is also the subject leader, conducts a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to the provision and outcomes and his analysis provides a firm basis for accurate identification of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provides a firm basis for the upward trend in school improvement. This leads on to well targeted actions carried out by the school, and as a result, outcomes in Religious Education for most pupils are above average.

The work of governors is outstanding. They are highly involved in the Catholic life of the school and make a very significant contribution to the school's work. Foundation governor appointments have focused on their skills and areas of expertise being well matched to the needs of the school enabling them to discharge their responsibilities very well, as well as being a challenging voice in the review process. They are extremely supportive of leaders and staff and are confident and questioning in their approach. They are very knowledgeable about the steps the school has taken to bring about continuous improvement, are very well informed and understand exceptionally well the school's performance in Religious Education and know what needs to be done to raise standards even further.

The school is outstanding at developing partnerships with other providers and organisations. The headteacher ensures that a wide range of impressive partnership activities occur through excellent links within the local Catholic cluster, CAFOD, the Youth Ministry Team and the parish community, which make a superb contribution to pupils' all round development and to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils are able to articulate clearly the impact these many partnerships has on them as individuals. The headteacher is actively planning with these and other groups to offer varied and purposeful opportunities for the pupils which the school alone could not provide. As a result pupils achieve and cultivate relationships that will broaden their experience and enable them to develop exceptionally well.

Community cohesion is excellent. The school is very welcoming and fosters a strong sense of belonging. Inclusion of all is a central goal and a shared vision. School practices ensure equality of opportunity and strive to seek justice and fairness. Leaders promote respect for

difference and value diversity. Pupils are encouraged to show concern for the weak and vulnerable within and beyond their own community through fund raising for a range of charities including CAFOD. There are special links with schools in Harbin- China and Manzini - Swaziland. The school has a very active ECO club which enables the whole community to learn about living as responsible members of the local and global community. Parents are encouraged to participate in the life of the school through the 'Friends of School'; they value these opportunities to support their children. Partnership with the parish is excellent.

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**Key for inspection grades:**

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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</b>	<b>2</b>
• how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	<b>2</b>
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	<b>2</b>
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	<b>1</b>
• how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship	<b>2</b>
<b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education</b>	<b>2</b>
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	<b>2</b>
• the quality of collective worship provided by the school	<b>1</b>
<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School</b>	<b>1</b>
• 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	<b>1</b>
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	<b>1</b>
• 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	<b>1</b>
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being	<b>1</b>
• how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	<b>1</b>