

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

Address: Ropery Lane
Chester le Street
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School URN: 114242

Headteacher: Mrs Clare Swales

Chair of Governors: Mr Brian Quigley

Lead Inspector: Miss Mary Tate

Date of Inspection 4 - 5 December 2012

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Cuthbert's is a smaller than average sized primary school serving the families of St Cuthbert's parish, Chester-le-Street and a number of outlying districts in northeast County Durham.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is low compared with the national average.
- A much lower than average proportion of pupils is from a range of minority ethnic groups with none who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school extends its services by providing a breakfast club facility.

Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	194
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	94%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	2%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	4%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	4%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	12%

Staffing

Full time teachers:	6
Part time teachers:	4
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	90%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	40%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education

FS	10%
Year 1	10%
Year 2	10%
Year 3	10%
Year 4	10%
Year 5	10%
Year 6	10%

Parishes served by the school
St Cuthbert's, Chester-le-Street

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

CATHOLIC LIFE

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

KEY FINDINGS

- St Cuthbert's is an outstanding Catholic school which makes outstanding provision for Catholic Education. The school is a very inclusive and welcoming community. Priorities since the last inspection have been met and there is a continuous drive for improvement for the good of the whole school community.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The governors, school leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. 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 spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding.
- The quality of Collective Worship in the school is outstanding. Pupils are at ease in the planning and leadership of worship, staff are skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead worship and the spiritual and liturgical formation of staff is given a high priority by leaders.
- The quality of Religious Education in the school is outstanding. All teaching and assessment is at least good and much of it is outstanding. As a consequence, pupil outcomes are outstanding in every respect: pupils enjoy Religious Education and all pupils make excellent progress.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

To improve further the school needs to:

- Ensure a high quality of assessment, marking and feedback is adhered to in all year groups by:
 - reviewing policy and sharing good practice;
 - sharing the language of levels with pupils, in an age appropriate way, so that marking consistently provides information to pupils about how well they are doing in Religious Education and what they still need to do to improve;
 - consistently and frequently allow pupils the opportunity to

- respond to feedback given.
- Further develop pupil tracking and monitoring systems to ensure pupils' progress in curriculum Religious Education is given high profile.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take advantage of the many opportunities offered to them and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people. Pupils say they feel valued and are able to confidently express their own views and feelings. Pupils are proud of their religious backgrounds and beliefs; they are reflective, can discuss their own faith and spirituality with confidence and are respectful of those with beliefs different to their own. They are well aware of the needs of others and seek to support others through awareness raising assemblies and fundraising. An effective programme for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) allows pupils to develop and foster excellent understanding, appropriate to their age and understanding. Pupil behaviour is exemplary at St Cuthbert's and this is underpinned by outstanding moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. St Cuthbert's is a welcoming, friendly community with a strong family ethos, there is a strong sense of belonging where all are respected and pupils flourish. Governors, managers and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos. All staff are involved in nurturing and living out the school's mission statement and 'statements to live by' and are fully committed to implementing it across the whole curriculum. There is a tangible sense of family and community in all aspects of school life which is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between all stakeholders. The school is a prayerful community that provides a stimulating learning environment to reflect the school's mission and Catholic character. Catholic principles and values underpin behaviour and relationship policies resulting in a strong shared vision for the Catholic Life of the school. Effective training supports staff commitment. The physical resources of the school are used very well to help achieve priorities set.

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school are outstanding. All leaders and managers, including the governing body, have high expectations for the promotion and continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school. Leaders provide a clear direction for the Catholic Life of the school which is a priority, along with the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the Catholic Life of the school which are clearly linked to school improvement and subsequently outcomes for pupils. The school's self-evaluation has a clear focus on the Catholic Life of the school leading to ~~well~~ targeted improvements. The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers; they have a clear understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school, they are involved in self-evaluation and are prepared to challenge where necessary as well as support.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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St Cuthbert's is a prayerful community where pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding. Pupils have a good grasp of what worship is about and are at ease when praying with their school community in large and small gatherings. Pupils take part in, lead and prepare prayer and liturgy with enthusiasm and increasing ease and confidence. They know what constitutes the various elements of worship and are skilled in using a variety of ways of praying. Class liturgy files are used to record and evaluate pupil led worship well. Parents and families are invited to join their children fortnightly for 'family worship' and say how impressed they are with the children's skills and confidence. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the ethos statements and are able to reflect with reverence and a good understanding upon these and how they impact on their own lives. They have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical celebrations and are able to prepare for these celebrations, in line with their age and ability, with developing levels of liturgical expertise. A prayer corner in each classroom impacts positively on the quality of prayer and provides pupils with stimuli for thought and reflection. It is here that the weekly 'statement to live by' is displayed as a reminder and focus for children. Pupils participate actively and with great enthusiasm in the school and parish linked sacramental preparation programme which has a very positive impact upon their on-going spiritual development. Collective Worship contributes extremely positively to the spiritual, moral and personal development of pupils.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding and ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are well met. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and the school uses a good range of strategies to ensure that Collective Worship is inclusive. The prayer life of the school is an important and central aspect of community life for staff and pupils. Parents, parishioners and governors are invited to share in 'Family Liturgy' on a fortnightly basis. They appreciate the opportunity to attend and comment with enthusiasm. Staff are skilled in planning worship and pupils lead with increasing confidence, skill and enthusiasm. They have the confidence to plan, prepare and lead good quality Collective Worship and evaluate liturgies in their individual class liturgy files. Acts of worship are appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils with themes based upon the scheme of work topic and the liturgical calendar and are responsive to the diversity of the pupils. Appropriate planning that encompasses the religious beliefs and backgrounds of all pupils, shows progression as pupils journey from foundation stage to year six. Sacramental preparation is well embedded and staff work effectively with the parish to deliver the school's half of the programme.

The way leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding. Leaders have a very clear vision for its development, which is shared with and understood by the whole school community. They provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon the Church's liturgical year, seasons, rites and symbols through the provision of quality worship experiences. Leaders model high quality worship in school. They provide opportunities for staff and governors to worship together and ensure staff training in liturgical formation and spiritual development is a priority. Leaders ensure that the pupils have the best possible sacramental preparation in accordance with diocesan policy. The monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship is a priority in the regular review of school performance and is informed by feedback from pupils, staff, parents and governors.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education
- How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding. Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education and are keen to do well. They work well in lessons, applying themselves to the tasks and work at a good pace. They have very positive attitudes and speak enthusiastically about their learning. Attainment is high with a very large majority of pupils meeting age related expectations at the end of key stage two (KS2). There continues to be an upward trend in attainment and the current year six are on target to achieve 100% level four in 2013. Progress is consistent and sustained across all key stages. Systems are in place to evaluate the progress of different groups of learners. Inspection findings show there are no specific differences in the progress made by specific pupil groups. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well according to their age and capacity. Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are secure in their understanding. They are developing and applying a range of skills including independence, imagination, the ability to interpret sources and symbol, the ability to reflect and evaluate, the ability to engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good. The majority of teaching is at least good and some of it is outstanding. This was evident both in the lessons observed during inspection and the school's own records of lesson observations. Varied teaching styles, good questioning, high quality resources, the use of ICT and adult support are all highly effective in moving learning forward and raising standards. Teachers differentiate well and use assessment to inform the planning of future learning. As a result, pupils are engaged in their learning and are committed to achieving their very best in every lesson. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and positively embrace the current changes to the Religious Education programme. Relationships between children, teachers and support staff are warm and constructive and contribute successfully to their obvious keenness to learn. Time is managed well to ensure the coverage of the Religious Education programme and that pupils forge links between their study of religion and belief and their exploration of more personal reflections on issues of meaning and purpose. In year six the pupils were confidently able to make links about the second coming of Christ within Advent. The thoughtful use of periods of reflection and meditation were strengths of the lessons observed and impacted positively on teaching and learning. Assessments are regular and systematic and both internal and external moderation shows levelling is mostly accurate. Pupils are involved in selfassessment and can speak confidently

about using the 'I Can' statements as targets to improve their work. At its best, assessment is robust and makes exceptionally good use of the levels of attainment to enable pupils to understand where they are in their learning and what they still need to do to improve. Similarly, at its best marking and feedback refer to key Religious Education skills and allow pupils the opportunity to respond to advice given in order to help them take the next steps in their learning. This excellent practice is not yet consistent across all year groups and the school recognises this as an area where development is still on-going.

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is outstanding. Outcomes for pupils are improving and for most are at least good and in some cases exemplary. Leaders are well informed by current developments in Religious Education and continue to monitor and evaluate to further improve and support teaching. They ensure priority status is given to Religious Education. Through a strong and shared vision for the subject, it remains at the heart of the school. All staff are kept informed about priorities identified from a range of monitoring activities undertaken to evaluate the provision and outcomes for pupils. The Religious Education curriculum is thoughtfully adapted to meet pupils' needs and fulfils the requirements of the Bishop's Conference well. It makes a significant contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils which enables them to become reflective learners. Governors make regular visits to the school. They are involved in monitoring and evaluation activities, are extremely supportive but also confident and questioning in their approach.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION.

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CATHOLIC LIFE

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

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The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

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How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship

1

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

1

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

1

	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Catholic Life	1	1	1	1
Collective Worship	1	1	1	1
Religious Education	1	2	1	1
	1	1	1	1