



St Cuthbert's RC First School

Prince Edward Road, Tweedmouth, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, TD15 2EX

School Unique Reference Number: **122309**

Inspection date:	15 June 2015
Lead inspector:	Mr Martin Humble

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2

St Cuthbert's RC First School is a good Catholic school because:

- It is very clear as soon as you enter the school that the prime purpose is Catholic education, helping children to develop their faith to understand that God loves them.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. The areas for improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed and the school is continuing to ensure that all pupils make good progress because of good teaching.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. Governors, senior leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils make valuable contributions to the Catholic Life and take a leading role in activities which promote the school's ethos within the school and wider community.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good. Prayer is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The quality of Religious Education is inconsistent across the school. Some lessons are not sufficiently planned and differentiated to meet the needs and interest of all children, particularly the more able.
- In Collective Worship there are limited opportunities for pupils to plan and prepare worship independently.
- Marking is inconsistent across the school and does not provide specific guidance for children to help them to improve their work in Religious Education.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Cuthbert's is a smaller than average first school in Berwick and the school is organised into three classes; class one early years (nursery and reception), class two (years one and two) and class three (years three and four).
- The governing body has recently appointed a headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school has been supported by the deputy headteacher from St Paul's in Alnwick for the period leading up to these senior appointments.
- The percentage of pupils with special needs is above average.
- The percentage of pupils from ethnic groups is above average.
- The percentage of pupils baptised Roman Catholic is below average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - Ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to plan challenging, differentiated activities which consistently build on and extend pupils' learning, especially the more able, to achieve higher levels.
 - Ensure that marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Offering more opportunities for pupil involvement in planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship independently throughout the school.

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

- Pupils appreciate the community to which they belong. They understand school promotes positive behaviour and can clearly articulate how they are encouraged to be 'good friends with everyone'. Behaviour is good and pupils are caring and considerate towards each other. This view is endorsed by pupils themselves as well as parents, staff and governors.
- Children demonstrate a good understanding of right and wrong and are able to clearly explain the importance of reconciliation in building positive relationships. The spiritual councillors take a lead role in thinking about ways to enhance the Catholic Life of their school.
- Pupils talk with maturity of the need not only to look after each other in school, but to respond to wider, global issues. They demonstrate a sense of pride when discussing their fundraising efforts, in particular, their efforts to support CAFOD.
- They appreciate that they have a voice in school, helping shape their mission, 'In God's family, we love, we grow, we learn'. As a result, they enter wholeheartedly into a range of activities which promote and support the school's ethos.
- Pupils have a good understanding of key liturgical celebrations throughout the year and have some involvement with parish and diocesan activities and celebrations.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good.

- The mission statement is a living document and can be evidenced in the high expectations demonstrated by staff and governors. St Cuthbert's is a calm, cohesive school with a shared vision and great desire to foster positive relationships with the parish and the wider community. The formation of the Mini Vinnies has provided further links with the parish.
- The learning environment clearly reflects the Catholic identity. The wide range of displays and focal points remind children of the school's mission and the focus for the current themes.
- The school provides high levels of pastoral care to pupils and there is a commitment to the most vulnerable in both policy and practice.
- The school is also mindful of the pastoral needs of staff and works hard to meet the needs of all.

- A number of policies have recently been reviewed and are being implemented to good effect. The school's own self-evaluation has identified an opportunity to re-visit the 'Mission Statement' for the school and will work with all stakeholders to explore and develop this in the light of the recent leadership appointments. .

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

- Leaders and managers, including governors, are clearly committed to the mission of the Church. A forthcoming review of the mission statement will look to ensure that everyone becomes immersed in the school's vision. On-going commitment to the development and sustenance of this ethos is evident in the planning of further collaborative working, such as the involvement with St Paul's RC First School in Alnwick.
- The governors and parents hope that the parish priest and newly appointed headteacher will establish a strong working relationship to aid the growth of the school within the Catholic community.
- A range of systematic monitoring activities are now underway relating to provision and outcomes for the Catholic Life of the school. This analysis provides an accurate view of the school's strengths. Identified areas for development are highlighted in a detailed school improvement plan.
- Governors are influential in determining the direction of the school and are fully involved in evaluating Catholic Life. Consequently, they discharge their duties effectively and appreciate the need to offer challenge, as well as support.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

- St Cuthbert's is a prayerful community. There is a calm and peaceful ethos which pervades the school and is reflected in the pupils' very good behaviour and consideration for others. From the earliest age pupils act reverently and show respect when participating in acts of worship. They listen well and are happy to take part in Collective Worship, liturgies, Masses and assemblies.
- Pupils are keen to participate and are at ease when praying with those of different faiths. They sing joyfully and respond positively to prayer. They participate in voluntary prayer sessions and pray with reverence at the 'Focal Areas' situated around the school and in their prayer garden.
- Pupils prepare and lead worship with increasing confidence and enthusiasm although they are not yet given sufficient opportunities to plan and lead worship independently in a variety of contexts.
- Adults provide good role models for the children and contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupils show respect for different faiths and are aware that religious beliefs are important.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Meaningful prayer opportunities for both staff and pupils are a central component of school life at St Cuthbert's. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and the school uses a good range of strategies to ensure that it is both regular and inclusive. There are many opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together in a variety of forms of worship.
- Staff ensure that Collective Worship is carefully planned and resourced to reflect the liturgical year. Praying together is a daily experience. Families are becoming more involved in the pupils' religious development through the seasonal travelling artefacts such as the Travelling Crib in Advent and the Travelling Cross during Lent.
- Themes for Collective Worship are carefully chosen and are responsive to the religious diversity and ethnic backgrounds of pupils.
- Parents, parishioners and governors are invited to share in various acts of Collective Worship which are timetabled throughout the year.

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

- The headteacher is highly focused and is committed to promoting greater pupil independence in the planning and leading of Collective Worship. In a short time, children have made rapid progress; pupils readily share their views and are willing to take the initiative. This model of good practice is having a positive impact on all staff and pupils. Parents talk appreciatively of the opportunities available to children.
- Throughout school, staff demonstrate a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols which is transferred effectively to pupils.
- Collective Worship is reviewed as part of the on-going self-evaluation process. School has a good understanding of its current position and there is a clear commitment to continue to improve provision in this area.
- Sacramental preparation is based in the parish and led by the parish priest.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- 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 promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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

- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education, demonstrating passion and commitment in their learning. Behaviour in lessons is good with the majority of pupils concentrating well and displaying very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils make good progress across a range of skills and are developing well in their knowledge and understanding. They demonstrate good prior knowledge and are able to use this well in their new learning.
- Outcomes for pupils are good overall. From below average starting points in EYFS pupils make good progress through key stage one. Good progress continues through key stage two. Pupils' books evidence a good standard of work, although there are inconsistencies across age groups and classes.
- Inspection findings and evidence presented by the school shows no notable differences between groups of learners. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress because of the quality of targeted support from skilled staff.
- The majority of pupils attain in line with the diocesan average at the end of key stage one and at the end of year four.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- Teaching is mainly good. In the best lessons pupils are set challenging tasks which are well matched to their learning needs and which successfully engage all pupils. Teachers demonstrate high expectations of behaviour and engagement, as a result, pupils concentrate well.
- In some lessons tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to the learning objective to promote good learning. Activities are not always sufficiently matched to pupils' abilities to engage all groups of learners or to enable them to work independently.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and are a real strength of the school. Support staff are used effectively to reinforce learning and to support and extend pupils of different abilities.
- Assessments are regular and the school has developed a rigorous tracking system. However levelling of pupils' work is not always accurate as teachers are not yet fully confident with levels of attainment in Religious Education.
- Teachers use diocesan plans and guidance to deliver well planned activities through a range of teaching strategies which help pupils to develop and extend their knowledge and foster curiosity and enthusiasm.

- Teachers make good use of time to maximise learning and develop a range of skills interpreting signs and symbols, asking significant questions and engaging with religious ideas.
- The standard of marking and feedback varies. There are some good examples of focused marking, however written comments by teachers on steps to improve learning are not used consistently throughout the school. Where they do exist, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to respond to teacher comments, thereby limiting the opportunities to enhance learning by means of high quality feedback.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.

- The headteacher demonstrates and shares a highly ambitious vision for the school and for what every pupil and teacher can achieve. She inspires and supports the whole school community.
- Leaders use a range of monitoring activities to regularly check on the quality of teaching and, as a result, have a very accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development. Clear steps for improvement are detailed in the school development plan.
- All aspects of Religious Education are evaluated regularly and all staff are kept very well informed about the priorities in Religious Education. Leaders, managers and governors use their findings effectively to promote improvement.
- The Religious Education curriculum is rich and varied providing a range of interesting activities and imaginative teaching to foster engagement and enable all pupils to make good progress in their learning. The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and are routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. They are extremely supportive but also confident in their ability to challenge. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties well.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**2****CATHOLIC LIFE:****2**

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

2

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

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

2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**2**

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

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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

2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

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

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

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

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Cuthbert's RC First School
Unique reference number	122309
Local authority	Northumberland
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese under canon 806 of Canon Law. For voluntary aided schools it also fulfils the responsibility the Governing Body has to inspect the school under s48 of the Education Act 2005.	
Chair of governors	Mr Malcolm Frank
Head teacher	Mrs Clare McGregor
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