

DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

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



School: St. Hedda's R.C. Primary School

Address: Egton Bridge
Whitby
YO21 1UX

URN: 121651

Headteacher: Mrs. Mari Palmer

Chair: Mr. Vin McLaughlan

Date: 17th-18th March 2014

Inspector: Mrs. M. Cobbold

Date & Grade of Last Inspection: 12th October 2010 - Good

Overall Grade for this Inspection: Good

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 Advisers and Inspectors.

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. |

© 2009 copyright – Diocese of Middlesbrough. This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated. Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Hedda's RC Primary School is a very small village school serving pupils and their families in the outlying villages and farms north west of Whitby. The school building is over 200 years old and is adjacent to St. Hedda's Parish Church. It has been well maintained and recently benefited from an additional attractive building to accommodate the kitchen, dining area and an upstairs teaching space. The children are taught in three mixed age classes in the morning and two in the afternoon. The proportion of pupils eligible for Free School Meals is below the national average. The proportion of those pupils with identified special educational need is average. About 60% of the pupils are baptised Catholics. The school staff team is well established, with varied teaching experience. There are two full time teachers including the Head Teacher, who has a teaching commitment in Class1, and two part time teachers. Of the four teachers, one, the head, is a Catholic. One of the part time teachers has responsibility for teaching Religious Education in Key Stage 2.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspector observed 3 Religious Education lessons and a whole school assembly.
- Meetings were held with pupils from Year 2 and Year 6. The inspector also held meetings with a small group of parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Parish Priest and the Head Teacher who is the Religious Education Co-ordinator
- A range of documentation was carefully considered including:
pupils' workbooks, assessment data, school policies, school self-evaluation, school improvement planning, sample reports on pupil achievement, school newsletters and minutes of Governing Body Meetings.
- The everyday work of the school was observed and members of staff consulted informally.

Pupil Catchment:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of pupils on roll: | 41 |
| Planned Admission Number of Pupils: | 7 |
| Percentage of pupils baptised RC: | 59% |
| Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: | 15% |
| Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: | 0% |
| Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: | 26% |
| Percentage of pupils with special needs: | 10% |

Teaching Staff:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Full-time Teachers: | 2 |
| Part-time Teachers: | 2 |
| Percentage of Catholic Teachers: | 25% |

Support Staff:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Full-time Classroom Support Staff: | 0 |
| Part-time Classroom Support Staff: | 5 |
| Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: | 20% |
| Percentage of Teachers with CCRS: | 0% |

Percentage of learning time given to R.E: **10% in all classes**

Parishes served by the School:

St. Hedda's, Egton Bridge, St. Anne's, Ugthorpe, Our Lady's, Lealholm

1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

MAIN FINDINGS

St. Hedda's is a good Roman Catholic primary school where pupils are exceptionally well cared for and show respect and love for one another. Good relationships are a hallmark of this school. Parents view the school highly for both the standards of education and the nurturing family environment. Most of the issues identified for improvement at the last inspection have been addressed: there are now closer parish links and the pupils in Key Stage 2 are now taught in two groups to enable better challenge for Year 5 and Year 6. However the leadership skills of pupils in planning and leading collective worship have not been developed and this must continue to be an area for improvement. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good because the leadership team and governors are committed to working in partnership to strive for continual improvement.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about their 'school family' and are very happy to come to School. This results in them having a very positive attitude to learning and they achieve well. In Religious Education all pupils make good progress. From below average starting points attainment is average and above average by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. They respond to worship with respect and reverence; however their level of participation and skills in preparing and leading prayer and worship has not yet been fully developed. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is effectively developed in this caring and inclusive school.

The school provides a good Catholic education. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers of Religious Education have strong subject knowledge and plan activities to enthuse and engage. This is not yet outstanding as teaching is not always accurately matched to the needs of the mixed aged pupils. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Marking is good and pupils in Key Stage 2 are involved in self-assessment. Teacher assessment is ongoing and attainment is tracked across the school but is not yet secure.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The very effective leadership of the enthusiastic Head Teacher is a strength of the school. She has a clear vision which is shared by all members of the small staff team. She is passionate about the value of this small village school and keen to work in partnership with others through the Teaching School initiative. She is supported and challenged by an able and equally committed governing body. The teaching of Religious Education and the Catholic Life of the school are evaluated regularly and are an intrinsic part of annual improvement planning.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- work with the Diocesan Education Service and other Roman Catholic schools to ensure the accuracy of assessment through shared moderation of levels of attainment.
- ensure teaching is closely matched to the needs of all learners enabling pupils to be fully involved throughout thus ensuring even better rates of progress.
- fully involve pupils in the preparation for and leadership of Collective Worship both in class and across the school.

2. PUPILS

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

Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils have a strong sense of identity in this family school. They are proud of their backgrounds and know one another and their teachers very well. They are thoughtful, reflective and inquiring. In a KS2 lesson, linked to the hardship of Jesus in the desert, two children showed genuine insight into the needs of others when matching up pictures of people in need with possible solutions to their problems. Whilst there is little cultural diversity within the school community, there is strong evidence of an understanding of and an interest in the cultural and religious life of others. This was most evident in the cross curricular work on Africa and the recent, whole school, visit to the Abu Bakr Mosque in Middlesbrough. The pupils are considerate and caring of one another and celebrate each other's achievements. This consideration extends to those beyond their school. They speak confidently of their involvement in school charities including Cafod and Mission Together. They described parish links through their involvement in Mass in church and Pentecostal celebrations. They also described local community links through the work of the choir and sporting links with local schools.

The standards pupils achieve in Religious Education are improving. When pupils join the school attainment is below average. They settle quickly and make good progress given their starting points. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards pupils achieve are at least average with all groups making good progress. Evidence of assessment does not always provide enough information to make secure judgements of levels of attainment. There are thorough tracking systems in place but teachers' assessment skills against the national Levels of Attainment in Religious Education are not yet accurate enough; they would be further enhanced by moderating pieces of work with the Diocesan Education Service or other Roman Catholic schools. Pupils enjoy their learning and the majority show interest and enjoyment in their lessons. They enjoy active learning through discussion and engagement. Pupils show a pride in their recorded work which is always well presented. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Behaviour in lessons is excellent and pupils interact very well with one another and their teachers.

Pupils readily take part in the prayer life of the school but routine daily prayer involving all pupils was not evident during inspection. They attend Mass in St. Hedda's parish church each week and are involved in readings, prayers of intercession and the offertory procession. They prepare for each Sunday Mass during one of their weekly assemblies. This enables them to have a good understanding of the liturgical cycle of the church including major feasts. They are able to compose prayers but have little opportunity to plan or prepare acts of worship which are currently planned by members of staff.

This is recognised by the school and, as part of school improvement, a prayer area has been created to provide opportunities for independent and private prayer. This should now become a focus for pupil led collective worship. There is a focal area for prayer in each classroom.

| | |
|---|----------|
| • The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school | 2 |
| • 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 | 3 |

3. PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall. Most of the teaching is effective in ensuring the pupils are making good progress. Good assessment procedures ensure teachers know the individual needs of pupils and the teaching of Religious Education benefits from separating the Key Stage 2 class into two smaller classes, grouped according to ability. However the teaching in these small classes is still not closely enough matched to the abilities of the pupils. The teachers observed teaching Religious Education have strong subject knowledge and where other adults are available they support learning well. Questioning was used effectively and well planned to target individual pupils. However, some of the teacher input was overlong and, as a result, some pupils lost concentration. When involved in discussion and activity pupils were keen to learn and showed independence and confidence in their ability to reflect and offer suggestions. Pupils are provided with good feedback through effective marking which includes developmental comments to challenge thinking. Older pupils are involved in self assessment and setting personal targets through the effective use of the 'I Can statements'. After one lesson a pupil commented that she had joined in a good discussion whilst another commented that they felt challenged by commitment.

The national programme 'Come and See' has been introduced and is well used across the school. The Religious Education curriculum is enriched through stimulating and memorable experiences. During inspection Class 1 began their lesson in the Parish Church to consider what they see, hear and feel during the liturgy of the Eucharist when visiting for Mass. The whole school had enjoyed a visit to the Abu Bakr Mosque the previous week during their study of Islam and an attractive display captured their learning well. Planning is thorough and provides good coverage of the Religious Education curriculum but would be further enhanced if group work was more closely matched to pupil ability to ensure appropriate challenge for all groups.

Where there was evidence of class based Acts of Worship this followed a routine structure and pupils have little experience of planning, leading and sharing their own acts of worship with others. There was evidence of a greater variety of prayer in the whole school assembly where pupils acted with reverence and sang joyfully. This was at all times led by teachers and whilst pupils were involved in the delivery of some of the readings they do not have the opportunity to develop skills in leading prayer and collective worship.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school is good. The recent review of the school's Mission Statement gave pupils the opportunity to reflect upon and discuss the value and mission of their school with Teachers, Governors and Parents. The Mission Statement is evident in each classroom.

Work of a religious nature is given high priority and there are attractive displays in the classrooms and the Library. The pupils' response to the Catholic life of the school is very good. They have a strong identity with the school and are immensely proud of it. They appreciate strong bonds of friendship and the comfort and security offered by all members of staff. They understand the need for forgiveness and have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The behaviour in and around school and at playtimes is exemplary; pupils showing care and consideration at work and in play.

| | |
|--|----------|
| • The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education | 2 |
| • The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning | 2 |
| • The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school | 3 |
| • The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school | 2 |

4. LEADERS, MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS

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

The Head Teacher, who is the Religious Education co-ordinator, and governors have a clear understanding of the school's role in the mission of the church and promote the work of the school in the community. The school provides a warm welcome to all. Catholic values are evident and shared across the school as demonstrated by a peaceful and happy environment, a broad and effective curriculum and strong relationships where everyone is valued. The school prides itself on the knowledge and understanding of the needs of every child and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to this. Relationships within the school are very good; this is most evident in the happy and welcoming environment and the dedicated partnership between teachers and support staff across the school.

There are established systems for monitoring and evaluating the school and a comprehensive action plan identifying priorities to support the development of the school's Catholic life. The school's self-evaluation was thorough but did not accurately match the findings of inspection. The governing body has an active involvement in the work of the school and is kept fully informed. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of leaders and the whole staff team. They are actively involved in the school community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff. The Chair of Governors is a regular and welcome visitor engaging effectively with pupils, staff and parents. The Parish Priest is a member of the governing body and is also a regular and welcome visitor to the school. He actively promotes the school in the parishes he serves and welcomes pupils' involvement in liturgy.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a wide variety of partnership activities locally. The staff team work closely with seven primary schools along the Esk Valley and are in the process of applying to become a Teaching School Alliance with these schools. The Head Teacher also works in partnership with a Head Teacher from a neighbouring North Yorkshire Catholic school.

| | |
|---|---|
| <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 |