



**Section 48 Inspection Report
St Cuthbert's RC Primary School,
Hartlepool**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School:	St Cuthbert's RC Primary School
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School URN:	111692
Headteacher:	Miss Mary Frain
Chair of Governors:	Mr Vincent Magee
Inspector:	Denise Kendall
Date of Inspection:	20 and 21 September 2011

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 Cuthbert's is an average sized primary school. Pupils live in more than 10 different wards in Hartlepool; more than 50% live in the wards with low socio-economic status. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language, the majority of these speaking Polish. As a result of large variations in year group numbers and in view of the local demographics and Parish baptisms, the school reduced its admission number from 44 to 30 from September 2010. Due to surplus places in some of the older age groups, there has been an increase in inward mobility and this has had a detrimental effect, in some cases, on standards, due to a number of these pupils arriving with significant family problems, and often no previous experience of life in a Catholic school.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 246

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 80%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 6%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 14%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 8%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 21%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 10

Number of part time teachers: 2

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 80%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 54%

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%		

Parishes served by the school:

St Cuthbert's, Hartlepool.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Cuthbert's is a good school with some outstanding features. It is a welcoming school with a caring ethos. The staff work hard together to ensure that their pupils have the best possible care. There is a clear vision which is shared by all. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are supportive of each other, work well together and speak proudly of their school. From starting school they learn how important it is to treat everyone with respect and understand what is right and wrong and the importance of forgiveness. From low starting points pupils make at least satisfactory and in some cases good progress and outcomes for pupils are satisfactory overall. The evidence available at inspection shows that standards are improving quickly. The quality of collective worship is good and pupils respond to prayer with reverence and respect. The promotion of spiritual and moral development is good. The school is very much at the heart of the community and has excellent relationships with the parish, parents and the local community. Pupils benefit immensely from the range of opportunities which enables them to contribute to the Catholic life of the school.

The provision for Catholic education and collective worship is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The recent introduction of new tracking and assessment systems are already impacting positively on standards but are not yet firmly embedded across the school. As yet, the information gained from these is not being used consistently to challenge effectively the higher attaining pupils. In addition, due to inconsistencies in marking, pupils do not always know exactly what they have to do to improve their work. The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good. The pupils act with reverence and respect and join in confidently in singing. Collective worship meets the spiritual needs of all pupils well.

Leadership and management is outstanding. The leadership team which includes the Religious Education co-ordinator have a strong sense of purpose and a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is a well structured improvement plan in place which identifies the actions that need to be taken to ensure continued improvement in Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. The governing body is very supportive and demonstrates an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school has developed a very good range of partnerships to promote Catholic learning and well-being and community cohesion is outstanding. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good in all areas. The school's own self-evaluation is accurate thus ensuring that strengths are celebrated and areas for improvement identified and addressed.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils, especially the more able, attain higher levels of attainment in Religious Education by making sure that differentiated and challenging activities are planned for consistently throughout the school.
- Ensure that marking is more consistent and that it clearly identifies to pupils the next steps in their learning so that they know their targets in Religious Education and that these provide a greater level of challenge for more able pupils.

PUPILS

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

2

Outcomes for pupils at St Cuthbert's are good overall. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons, engage positively and want to do their very best. Older pupils are able to talk confidently about their learning in Religious Education thus showing that their knowledge and skills are developing well. Pupils enter school with a limited knowledge of religion and as a result their starting points are well below average. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Although attainment is currently satisfactory overall, standards, at present in Key Stage 2 are lower than Key Stage 1. The further development of tracking and assessment systems, as well as good moderation of work and standards, is showing good impact. The evidence available during inspection indicates that, given their starting points, all pupils are making good progress and strategies are in place to ensure higher attainment for all pupils. There are no notable differences between groups of learners. Teaching assistants ensure that whenever necessary, pupils are supported in order to make progress according to their needs and capabilities. In some classes the more able pupils are being challenged at the highest level. However, evidence during inspection indicates that this is inconsistent throughout the school and there are some classes where the more able pupils are not being challenged sufficiently in order to attain higher levels of attainment.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from the community spirit which permeates it. They take full advantage of the many opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development and are proud of their school. They understand what it means to live by Gospel values and belong to a Catholic school. The Statements to Live By Programme is used within the school. Pupils are very clear about how the 'statements' are used each week and how they help them live in a good way. It is clear that they care for one another and demonstrate this in the way they speak to one another and play together. They understand the need for forgiveness and have a good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils value the strong links they have with the parish community and are able to talk very confidently about planning and preparing for prayer opportunities with the youth co-ordinator and parishioners. They show excellent awareness and understanding of key events and celebrations. They appreciate their learning about other faiths and know that religion is important to many people whose beliefs are different from their own.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. They are reverent and respectful and enjoy singing during collective worship and at other times during the school day. There is a range and variety of prayer opportunities provided in which pupils, staff, parents and parishioners are able to participate. They have a good understanding of religious seasons and festivals. They speak highly of the work they do in preparing for prayer opportunities with the youth co-ordinator. Collective worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

PROVISION

2

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

The majority of teaching and learning is generally good in all Key Stages. A range of teaching styles are used, lessons are well paced, good use is made of ICT, drama and role play. Good questioning techniques are employed to extend pupils' learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge which is demonstrated in both the planning and teaching in all Key Stages. Differentiation by task is not sufficiently developed across the school to enable the more able pupils to be challenged at the higher levels.

Good assessment and monitoring procedures are in place and the school has an accurate picture of pupils' progress and attainment in Religious Education. The school is using the 'I Can statements' to support learning and assessment and these, together with the introduction of new systems to track pupils' progress, are already having an impact on learning and progress particularly in Key Stage 2. However, at present marking is inconsistent and does not always use religious language or identify for pupils the next steps in their learning. Not all pupils are aware of their targets in Religious Education or how to improve their work.

The Religious Education curriculum is good at meeting the needs and interests of all pupils and fulfils all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The curriculum is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well planned strategies and takes into account the learning styles and interests of the pupils. However, there is insufficient differentiation in order to provide greater challenge for the more able pupils. The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development and helps to prepare them for the next stage of their education. Through the Religious Education curriculum pupils are given many opportunities to learn about religion and how they can use the knowledge and skills they have learnt and apply them in their everyday lives.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of all are well met. The pupils act with reverence and respect, join in confidently with prayer and sing enthusiastically. They are able to pray silently and reflect on the message that is shared with them. Parents and parishioners regularly join the pupils in prayer during the school day and this supports them in appreciating what is taking place. The pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the seasons of the Church's year and are becoming more skilled at contributing to a range of opportunities for prayer and worship. Collective worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

The school's leadership and management team are outstanding. Leaders and managers are very effective in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school. They support Catholic values and principles well and the Catholic ethos underpins all aspects of the life of the school. The school mission statement is clearly at the heart of all school life. The deep commitment of the headteacher is an inspiration to the whole school community. The school leadership team and governors have a very clear understanding of the school's role in the mission of the Church. Together they ensure that Catholic values are given high priority and that pupils experience a rich, broad and balanced curriculum. Self-evaluation reflects effective and well structured monitoring. This results in targeted planning for continuous improvement in outcomes for pupils and in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education is good. The Leadership team ensures that good moderation and tracking systems are in place and these, together with a well written action plan, clearly identify planned improvements in outcomes for pupils. There is some evidence of pupils being challenged to achieve at the highest level. However, this is not consistent throughout the school.

The governing body knows the school well and are valued members of the school and parish community. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of the leadership team and all the staff. They are knowledgeable and well informed about the school, particularly in relation to matters relating to Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school and know what needs to be done in order for the school to develop further. They challenge the school leadership appropriately and play an active part in supporting the leadership team in planning for improvement.

Through the inspirational work of the dedicated headteacher there are excellent partnerships with parents, parish and the wider community. This, results in a variety of activities which improve the school's provision including a retreat at the Youth Village shared with another local Catholic school and members of the parish community. These activities also impact significantly on pupils' well-being and notably promote Catholic learning. The school makes excellent use of the Parent Support Adviser in nurturing pupils with particular social and emotional difficulties as well as supporting parents. Excellent partnerships exist not only with the Parish community but also other Catholic schools, the Diocese, the Local Authority and the local community and opportunities are taken with all partners to enrich the lives of the pupils in the school.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The school is an inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each other and with the parish community. The school takes part in a range of fundraising activities supporting the Shoe Box appeal (convoy aid Romania), CAFOD and HCPT (The Pilgrimage Trust). Many projects are child initiated and this enables pupils to develop an understanding of working for the common good. Collective worship is inclusive and Religious Education promotes attitudes of respect and tolerance for all faiths.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

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

Overall effectiveness	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
• how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education	3
• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
• how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship	2
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	2
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	2
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
• the quality of collective worship provided by the school	2
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	1
• 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	1
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
• 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	2
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being	1
• how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	1