

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 114273

Headteachers: Mrs Angela Boyle
Mrs Catherine Craig

Chair of Governors: Mrs Pat Conway

Inspector: Miss Maria Elliott

Date of Inspection: 21 and 22 September 2010

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 Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school situated in Gilesgate, a residential area in the east of Durham. The leadership responsibilities are shared between two headteachers who job-share. A large majority of the pupils are baptised Catholics, and come from mainly white UK heritage backgrounds. A large majority of pupils transfer to St Leonard's Catholic Comprehensive School, Durham. The number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 111

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 75%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 22%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 1%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 2%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 10%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 20%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 5

Number of part time teachers: 3

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 88%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 63%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

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 Joseph's Gilesgate

St Cuthbert's, Durham

St Joseph's, Coxhoe

St Michael's, Houghton

St Joseph's, Ushaw Moor

Overall Effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Joseph's is an outstanding, fully inclusive Catholic school where faith and practice are central and everyone is welcome. The mission of Catholic education not only underpins all that the school does but is lived out by staff and pupils alike. The school is held in high regard by the pupils, parents and the local community and has an important place in the life of the parish. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding due to the co-headteachers excellent understanding of their roles, clear and strategic approach to self-evaluation and their drive and determination to continue to raise standards. They are ably supported by the deputy, staff and governors to ensure the pupils reach their full potential. All areas from the last inspection have been addressed.

Pupils are delighted to come to school and have positive attitudes to learning. Religious Education is at the heart of the curriculum, it is well planned, monitored and evaluated resulting in good outcomes for all pupils, with no significant variation between any major groups. All groups of pupils make good progress, attainment is high and the religious literacy of pupils is well developed. Pupils are well supported in their learning by the effective use of additional adults. Pupils' contribution to the Catholic life of the school is excellent as is the benefit they receive from it. Their response to and participation in collective worship is good.

The school's provision for Catholic education is outstanding. Through focused staff development, teachers have excellent subject knowledge in Religious Education resulting in good and in some cases, outstanding teaching. Pupil's learning is good as highly effective assessment systems are an integral part of the learning journey. Some are becoming more confident in using self-assessment tools for individual targets, but practice is not always consistent across the school. 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 Religious Education curriculum captures pupils' interests. The quality of collective worship offered to pupils is outstanding.

The Catholic life of the school is promoted highly effectively through the outstanding leadership of the co-headteachers. Leaders have a clear sense of direction and purpose with regard to curriculum Religious Education which is recognised as the core subject of the curriculum. Coordination of the subject is extremely efficient and central to the continuing development of Religious Education. Professional development is tailored to the whole school and individual needs resulting in competent staff who are committed to ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential. Governors demonstrate a strong sense of commitment and as a result are very well informed and make an outstanding contribution to the school. The school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Develop further the effectiveness of the learning process by:
 - ensuring that teacher feedback enables pupils to know what they need to do in order to move their learning forward.

- Ensuring that 'best practice' for the use of individual targets by the pupils is followed and is consistent throughout the school.

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 Religious Education and have positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils' religious literacy as well as their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing extremely well as they move through the school. They are clear as to what is expected of a Catholic community. Pupils enter St Joseph's with below average starting points and make progress quickly. This progress accelerates further throughout key stages 1 and 2 resulting in good progress overall. Attainment is above average with a very large majority of pupils achieving the standards expected by the end of key stage 2 and a small minority exceeding 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.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They are reflective and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important to many people and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people. They are extremely articulate when expressing their own beliefs and respectful of those with beliefs different to their own. They understand the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and benefit greatly from the chaplaincy offered to them through the support given by the priest. They respond to the needs of people beyond the school and show a well developed awareness of compassion.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. From an early age the pupils have a strong sense of what worship is about. They are at ease when praying with their school community and understand there are different types of prayer. They join in community prayers well, reflect silently and sing joyfully. They have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year and a well developed understanding of scripture by the end of key stage 2. They act with reverence and are keen to participate and lead prayer and worship. 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

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

1

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good with outstanding features. Teachers are highly effective in enthusing pupils by ensuring that they are interested and engaged in their learning. Teachers plan effectively and have an in depth knowledge of their pupils' capabilities and their prior learning. They have very strong subject knowledge which inspires and challenges pupils and contributes to their good progress, especially in upper Key Stage 2. High quality resources, including technology and multi-media are used imaginatively and extremely effectively. Excellent support is provided by other adults ensuring learning is maximised. Consequently, pupils are motivated, sustain their concentration and enjoy their work. Feedback between pupil and teacher is developing, but inconsistencies in practice do not always inform pupils of the next steps in their learning.

The school's assessment procedures in Religious Education are outstanding. The robust and rigorous systems and systematic approach to assessment has significantly impacted on the continuing rise in standards. Sophisticated tracking and analysis of data provides an accurate picture of achievement for all. This is used successfully to sustain improving levels of attainment, promote continued improvement and identify underachievement. Regular assessment and a variety of moderations, ensures that staff have increased confidence and accuracy in levelling pupils' work. The school sets challenging, well monitored targets for the pupils for the end of each academic year. The use of pupil individual targets is emerging so that pupils are involved in the assessment process but they are not used consistently throughout the school.

The school provides an outstanding curriculum which is adapted sensitively and appropriately to meet the needs of pupils' varying needs. It is delivered with imagination and creativity. It meets the needs of pupils and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well. Successful learning is achieved through the use of exciting and stimulating resources which engage and motivate the pupils. Excellent use of ICT, digital photography, visits and visitors are used throughout the school to further enhance the pupils learning experiences. The school is continuously planning for new ways to further enrich the curriculum resulting in a high level of enjoyment and interest for pupils. The Religious Education curriculum has a significant impact on pupils' 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, rooted in scripture, participatory and reflective. Themes and current events, for example Pope Benedict XVI visit to Britain and the beatification of Blessed John Henry Newman, are interwoven with scripture passages from the liturgical year and music to give relevance and meaning, resulting in the pupils having a sound understanding of the Church's mission. Attendance by parents and others associated with the school is facilitated and encouraged and has a profound impact on parents. The school's high quality provision ensures the spiritual needs of the pupils are well met.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

The development of Catholic life in school by leaders is outstanding together with very clear direction provided by the co-headteachers. They have a very strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and the school's role in expressing it. Their deep commitment, energy and drive are a source of inspiration for staff and parents alike. There is explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school and the spiritual and moral development of pupils are priorities. Focused staff training and clear staff induction develop awareness, understanding and commitment to the school's strong Catholic ethos. Consequently pupils are able to articulate the schools distinctive mission effectively and share its purpose. Excellent links exist which reinforce the high standard of care and support for pupils' safety and well-being. The result is that the pupils flourish and commit themselves to the school's mission.

The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education by leaders and managers is outstanding. The subject leader, a co-headteacher, has ensured that a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and the role of the subject in contributing to the school's role in this enables staff to have an excellent understanding of the curriculum, resulting in the pupils continued good progress. Leadership within Religious Education is focused on promoting high standards and a high quality of teaching and learning. Leaders conduct a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes and searching analysis 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 high.

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. They discharge their responsibilities very well and are very knowledgeable about the steps the school has taken to bring about continuous improvement 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 well informed and they 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 co-headteachers ensure that a wide range of impressive partnerships occur through excellent links with another diocesan primary school from a contrasting locality, links with cluster primary schools and CAFOD, which make a superb contribution to pupils' all round development. Pupils are able to discuss these many partnerships and the impact it has on them as individuals. The co-headteachers are 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, as a strong sense of belonging is fostered. Leaders promote respect for difference and value diversity. Other faiths are taught well; visitors are invited into school and opportunities provided to visit places of worship of other faiths. Pupil's involvement with the local community; as well as fund raising activities for a range of charities, enable the pupils to show concern for others within and beyond their own

community. Special links have been established with a school in Venice and with a family in Chile. Pupil participation in a Community Cohesion Conference has enabled them to develop a strong appreciation of community cohesion. A variety of opportunities are offered for parents to support their children and participate in school life. 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**

Overall effectiveness	1
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
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	1
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education	2
• 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 for Catholic Education	1
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	1
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	1
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	1
• 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	1
• 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