

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

**on**

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

**School:** St Oswald's RC Primary School

**Address:** Nash Avenue  
South Shields  
Tyne & Wear  
NE34 8NS

**Telephone Number:** 0191 5367922

**Email address:** [info@st-oswaldsrc.s-tyneside.sch.uk](mailto:info@st-oswaldsrc.s-tyneside.sch.uk)

**School URN:** 108718

**Headteacher:** Mrs Mary Lightfoot

**Chair of Governors:** Mr Michael Frazer

**Lead Inspector:** Elaine White

**Team Inspector:**

**Date of Inspection** 20 – 21 November 2012

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Oswald's is an average sized primary school which serves the parishes of St Oswald's and Sacred Heart in South Shields. The school community is primarily English speaking and mainly of white British heritage.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average as is the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.

### Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	232
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	37%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	63%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	0%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	3%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	15.5%

### Staffing

Full time teachers:	7
Part time teachers:	4
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	64%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	36%

### 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 Oswald's, South Shields  
Sacred Heart, Boldon Colliery

## INSPECTION JUDGMENTS

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

**2**

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

**2**

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

**2**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**3**

### KEY FINDINGS

- St Oswald's is a very inclusive and welcoming community with a strong family ethos. Whilst both Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school are good, Religious Education requires improvement. All members of the school community share the headteacher's clear vision for the school and work hard as a team to provide a caring community with Christ at its centre. They are a dedicated staff who are working well together, as a team committed to raising pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and areas identified for development are included in the school improvement plan. Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed and developments are on-going.
- The quality of religious education requires improvement. Teaching across the school is not consistently good and as a result some pupils throughout the school, particularly the more able, are not provided with sufficiently challenging work to enable them to achieve higher standards and so their progress is limited. The headteacher has accurately identified the school's main strengths and put in place action to bring about improvement. The staff who have leadership roles in promoting the teaching and learning of religious education have a strong commitment to improvement.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. Pupils are keen to participate in the varied opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from them. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place and are beginning to have a positive impact.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good and pupils response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. It is not yet outstanding because there are limited opportunities for pupils to plan and prepare worship. Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation are good.

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

To improve further the school needs to:

- Raise standards in Religious Education at the end of key stage two by:
  - Improving the quality of teaching to ensure that it is at least consistently good across the school;
  - Ensuring that target setting allows all pupils to be sufficiently challenged in order for them to make more rapid progress throughout the school.
  - Integrating challenging activities with tasks which are matched appropriately for all pupils ensuring that they maximise their potential.
  
- Continue to ensure that marking and feedback consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.
  
- Provide more opportunities to further develop the role of governors in the monitoring of standards in Religious Education as well as the Catholic Life of the school.

## CATHOLIC LIFE

### THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

2
---

- 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.

2
---

2
---

2
---

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. Pupils are actively involved and take on responsibilities very enthusiastically; for example by being a school councillor. Pupils confidently express their own views and feelings, demonstrate a deep understanding of how important it is to forgive and be forgiven and are aware of the needs of others. They respond willingly to the needs of those beyond the school and can articulate their views with confidence explaining the purpose of fundraising for various charities such as the Christmas Shoebox Appeal and the Hospitality and Hope project. They take full advantage of the many opportunities offered to them and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people. The school is very much engaged in caring for the needs of children elsewhere in the world, especially through CAFOD fundraising activities. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year both in school and the parish community and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people. Good behaviour is underpinned by very good moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good. The school's mission statement 'We walk in the footsteps of Jesus so that we may have life in all its fullness' permeates throughout the school ensuring that Christ is at the centre of all that takes place at St Oswald's. Staff, parents, governors and pupils have all been involved in the reviewing of the mission statement and are all totally committed to its implementation across the whole curriculum. There is a strong sense of community at all levels as evidenced by the quality of relationships and sense of unity that exists both among and between staff and pupils. Effective training, staff commitment and quality resources are used well to support the on-going development of the Catholic Life of the school. The religious artefacts and icons on display around the site mark the school as distinctively Catholic.

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school is good. The headteacher along with the senior leadership team successfully promote a welcoming and caring ethos, which reflects Gospel values and the mission statement of the school. Together they have a clear vision which is supported by the whole school community. The Catholic Life of the school is given a high priority and Catholic values and principles are promoted very well. The headteacher and senior leadership team have a deep commitment to the Church's Mission in education; personal development and high

quality care are paramount. They are very good role models providing very clear direction for improvement. They ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual and

moral development are frequent and these have significant impact. The headteacher has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and the areas for improvement. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place and are beginning to have a positive impact on outcomes for pupils. The school has very successful strategies in place for engaging with parents. The good leadership of the Catholic Life of the school ensures that all pupils are well cared for and nurtured in this happy, caring, safe and supportive environment in which high expectations of behaviour are communicated to all pupils. The governing body fulfils its role well with regard to the Catholic Life of the school and discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities well, but they rely heavily on the guidance from the headteacher to give them direction. They are totally committed to upholding the strong, caring, inclusive ethos that fosters the excellent relationships which exist between the school and the parish family. The governing body is now at the stage where they are becoming more confident in their role to become more fully involved in evaluating the Catholic Life of the school, offering challenge and support.

# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

## THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2
---

- 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.

2
---

2
---

2
---

Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. Prayer is integral to the everyday life of the school and pupils are keen to participate and are at ease when praying with their school community. They listen and sing with enthusiasm and respond to acts of worship with reverence and respect. Pupils write their own prayers and are beginning to be more involved in leading, planning and preparing Collective Worship throughout the school. There is a calm and peaceful ethos throughout the school that is reflected in the pupils' very good behaviour and consideration for others. Collective Worship contributes extremely positively to the spiritual, moral and personal development of pupils.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good and is given a high profile throughout the school and is well resourced. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and the school uses a good range of strategies to ensure that Collective Worship is both regular and inclusive. Through a well-planned programme of Masses, liturgies, assemblies and other liturgical celebrations which are appropriately matched to the pupils' stages of development, pupils are given many opportunities to participate in a range of Acts of Worship including the Friday Prayer Club. A wide variety of forms of prayer, including traditional prayers, scripture, music, symbols and artefacts are modelled extremely well for the pupils. Traditions such as the Rosary and Stations of the Cross are very much part of the school year and families are becoming more involved in the pupils' religious development through the seasonal 'travelling artefacts' such as the 'travelling crib'. There is a focal point in each class with well thought out resources impacting significantly on the quality of prayer and which provides pupils with stimulus for thought and reflection. Sacramental preparation is well embedded and the school works effectively with the parish. The school is now at the stage of seeking ways by which it can make more use of the children's own initiatives in planning, producing and leading prayer and worship independently and consistently.

Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Collective Worship is good. Both the headteacher and the Religious Education coordinator radiate energy and enthusiasm, giving good leadership and are models of good practice. Together they have a clear vision and sense of direction and understanding of what is required to bring about improvement and they share this with staff. They regularly seek the views of pupils, staff and parents regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school and respond to these findings

appropriately. Their dedication and commitment are instrumental in the drive to provide high quality Collective Worship and quality prayer life throughout the school.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

3
---

- 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

3
---

3
---

3
---

The quality of learning and progress for pupils in Religious Education requires improvement. Outcomes for pupils overall require improvement. Pupils demonstrate good levels of enjoyment and enthusiasm for Religious Education and have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils start school with knowledge and skills that vary from broadly typical to below what is expected for their age, however they make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress slows down in key stage one and by the end of year two standards are broadly average. Progress throughout key stage two is satisfactory with the majority of pupils making the expected progress, however some pupils throughout the school, particularly the more able, are not provided with sufficiently challenging work to enable them to achieve higher standards and so their progress is limited. This has already been recognised by the senior leadership team as a whole school issue. Pupils throughout the school are becoming increasingly religiously literate and many are very articulate and reflective in their oral responses. Those pupils identified as having a special educational need make satisfactory progress as they are well supported by effective teaching assistants.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education requires improvement. There are striking examples of good teaching in some classes although this is not consistent throughout the school. In these classes, there is clear evidence in pupils' work of accelerating progress. Pupils' learning is better where teachers have high expectations of pupils, set the right level of challenge for their work and help them move on. In some lessons, however, progress was slow because of lack of challenge and expectations of work were not high enough. The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement in Religious Education. It has developed a rigorous tracking system but this has not yet been in place long enough to have had an impact on standards and progress. Progress has been made in ensuring that assessments are accurate but they are not used precisely enough to consistently inform planning that challenges all pupils appropriately through individual targets, particularly the more able. The recently introduced marking and feedback policy across the school is beginning to impact on standards ensuring that pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

Although the leadership and management of Religious Education is satisfactory, the headteacher has accurately identified the school's main strengths and put in place action to bring about improvement. The staff who have leadership roles in promoting

the teaching and learning of Religious Education have a strong commitment to improvement. As a result, teaching across the school is improving and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. The Religious Education curriculum is becoming more suitably matched to the pupils needs and interests and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The School Improvement Plan provides clear direction for the work and future developments in Religious Education. Monitoring, evaluation and assessment procedures are beginning to have a positive impact providing a firm basis for appropriate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for further development.

## 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

2

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

2

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

3

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

3

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

3

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

3

	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Religious Education	3	3	3	3
Catholic Life	2	2	2	2
Collective Worship	2	2	2	2
	2	2	2	2