



St Mary's RC Primary School

Duckpool Lane, Whickham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE16 4HB

School Unique Reference Number: **108396**

Inspection dates: 05 – 06 June 2019

Lead inspector: Angela Boyle

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Mary's is a warm and welcoming school where the clear vision of the headteacher is shared by all. Faith, prayer and spirituality are at the heart of the school community, helping pupils to develop their understanding of God's love for them.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the well-being and spiritual development of all pupils and staff is at the heart of the school's mission and vision. Excellent relationships at all levels are a strength of the school.
- The quality of Religious Education is outstanding because staff know their pupils well and consistently teach lessons that engage and enthuse pupils. This, combined with very good subject knowledge, ensures that most pupils make good progress over time.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school. Pupils, guided by skilled staff, plan and lead quality acts of worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Mary's is an average sized primary school serving the former parishes of St Mary's Whickham and The Immaculate Heart of Mary, Lobley Hill, within the Parish of Our Lady and St Philip Neri.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is below average.
- Almost all pupils are from a White British background

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - further developing the monitoring process so that all parents and pupils are involved in the regular formal monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship.

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 outstanding.

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of St Mary's; they take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal well-being and development. They have a deep sense of belonging to their school family and know that everyone is respected and cared for.
- Pupils eagerly take on positions of responsibility and leadership within the school and the wider community, including Mini Vinnies, School Council, Rights Ambassadors and Buddies.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary; they demonstrate care and compassion and have a very strong sense of justice. They speak confidently about how they deal with issues that may arise in the playground and describe how they are supported by adults to make the right choices. As one pupil said, 'We are helped to become a better person, we can show our potential, and strive to do the best we can'.
- Pupils are alert to the needs of others both locally and globally and respond passionately to issues of social justice through prayer, fundraising activities and service to others. They very generously support many fundraising appeals, including St Cuthbert's Care, The Cystic Fibrosis Trust and Worswick Welcome at St Andrew's Church. Pupils in year 5 undertake a four-day challenge completing the Coast to Coast cycle ride whilst raising funds for a cause that is close to the heart of the group.
- This year, pupils in year 6 are being well supported to achieve the Faith in Action Award with numerous opportunities to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school. Pupils are regularly involved in parish and diocesan celebrations.

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

- Catholic values are given the highest priority and are firmly embedded in the life of the school. People are at the heart of this nurturing family community where all are valued. Staff are excellent role models for pupils and sincerely and honestly live out their role as members of this faith community.
- Excellent relationships exist within the school and in the wider school and parish community, with all stakeholders fully committed to making St Mary's the best it can be. Staff, governors, parents and pupils are all encouraged to be involved in school life and communication is a strength of the school, including the highly effective use of technology.

- The school is a prayerful community. The learning environment reflects the school's mission and celebrates its Catholic character with creative displays and sacred spaces prominently featured around the school.
- Parents are fully supportive of the school and the opportunities it presents to their children. A parent commented, 'Educational, emotional and spiritual development are well provided for, my child is really nurtured at St Mary's. They are loved, supported and part of a happy community'.
- The relationships and sex education (RSE) programme refers to Catholic teaching and principles and is delivered at an age appropriate level following the diocesan model.

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

- The headteacher, leaders and governors have a very clear understanding of the vision of Catholic education and the role of the Catholic school in the mission of the church. Together they communicate a very strong sense of purpose and deep commitment to the Catholic Life of the school.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for the school and for all its pupils. They are excellent role models, are motivated and work hard to encourage staff and pupils to be the best they can be.
- Staff are very well supported and feel valued. Rigorous performance management, alongside well-matched continuing professional development opportunities, are provided to all staff and appreciated by them.
- School self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate with information gathered from a range of sources. It has clear links to the school development plan which targets improvement.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They have an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are passionate about the school, highly visible and actively involved.
- School successfully engages parents and carers who feel that the Catholic ethos is strong; they have a clear understanding of the school's mission.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- 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 outstanding.

- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education; they speak with great enthusiasm about their learning and have very positive attitudes to their lessons. They concentrate well and apply themselves with enthusiasm to the challenges set by their teachers.
- Children are proud of their work and always aim to do their best. They are religiously literate and reflective. Behaviour for learning is outstanding.
- Outcomes for pupils are very good overall. From average starting points in early years, foundation stage pupils make good or better progress through key stage one. This continues throughout key stage two. Pupils' books show evidence of a very high standard of work across all year groups.
- Data indicates that over time pupil attainment is at least in line with diocesan averages at all key stages. In year data demonstrates that pupils across the school are on track to attain strongly compared to most recent diocesan averages.
- Systems are in place to evaluate the progress of different groups of learners. Evidence provided by the school shows some differences between boys and girls. However, over two thirds of the pupils on the school roll are boys, therefore differences are cohort specific and are being addressed.
- Pupils identified as having special educational needs make very good progress because of the high levels of additional targeted support they receive from skilled staff.

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

- Teaching is consistently good with much that is outstanding. Teachers are skilled in planning lessons and are passionate about the subject. Lessons are interesting and imaginative and use a wide range of high quality resources.
- Teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour which are effectively communicated to pupils. They employ a wide range of teaching strategies, including the use of role-play, art and media to enthuse pupils. The use of information technology is innovative and highly effective. Staff and pupils were observed using apps such as Bible Gateway, Padlet and PicCollage contributing to successful learning for all pupils.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and know their pupils well. Lessons have a clear focus and, as a result, pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are secure in their learning. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and efficiently support individual and group learning.
- St Mary's has taken an active role as a pilot school for the new Age Related Standards framework. Key staff have attended diocesan training, teachers have adapted and produced resources, and working collaboratively in phases have all enhanced provision.
- Marking is of a consistently high quality; pupils are given feedback on how well they have done and the next steps for improvement. Pupils are given time to respond to teacher comments.

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

- Leaders and managers are well informed of current developments in Religious Education. They share a highly ambitious vision for the school and for what every teacher and pupil can achieve and are deeply committed to ensuring Religious Education is of the highest quality. Their commitment supports and inspires and they ensure that staff are very well informed of priorities in Religious Education.
- Leaders carry out regular monitoring and analysis of planning, teaching and learning. Clear steps for improvement are identified. School self-evaluation is thorough and robust and, as a result, leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development, evidenced in the school improvement plan.
- Religious Education has a very high profile in the school. School uses its resources very effectively to meet the needs of its pupils and support learning.
- Key governors are frequent visitors to the school and have a high profile. They are extremely supportive but also confident in their ability to appropriately challenge the leadership team. Governors are well informed of standards across the school.
- Sacramental preparation is given a high priority by the school, is fully embedded in the Religious Education curriculum and is highly valued by parents and pupils. It is delivered in line with diocesan policy.

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 outstanding.

- St Mary's is a very prayerful community where worship is a regular and meaningful part of the day. Collective Worship engages the interest of pupils, inspires them to reflect and respond and is a central part of their experience. One pupil said, 'During prayer I'm relieved that God understands and forgives me'.
- From a very young age pupils are deeply reverent and respectful during Collective Worship, they are reflective and focused during prayer times. Pupils are confident in planning and leading worship using a variety of styles reflecting the liturgical year. The school has a wide variety of artefacts and resources which the children use to add to their worship experiences.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and talk knowledgeably about the variety of prayers and liturgies that are celebrated in the school and parish. Pupils enjoy using the Prayer Garden as a quiet place to pray and a sacred space to develop their worship.
- There is a deep sense of respect for faiths other than their own. Pupils are well informed and have an excellent understanding of other world faiths because of the well-designed curriculum that includes the use of visits and visitors of other faith communities. All of which contributes positively to their outstanding spiritual and moral development.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and forms the heart of each day. It is inclusive, reflective and valued by all.
- From the beginning of their school life, pupils are encouraged to have a special relationship with God through prayer and are given many opportunities to develop this. Pupils are supported to develop reflective practices such as 'journaling' as a way of developing their appreciation of prayer and worship. This is modelled and supported by skilled staff.
- There is a well-established programme for weekly and daily worship that has a clear purpose, message and direction based upon Sunday Gospel readings, special feast days, the church's seasons and the spiritual aspirations of pupils. This is further enhanced by the use of 'Let Us Pray', a resource prepared by the headteacher each week and appreciated by

staff and pupils to continue to explore the themes from the Gospel reading.

- Focal points and displays in each classroom and throughout the school are thought provoking, well-resourced and provide very good support for reflection and prayer.
- Staff prayer is an integral part of school activity. Opportunities for retreats and reflection, developing their own faith and sharing and supporting the school ethos are all part of this community.
- Parents and governors comment on how much they value Collective Worship experiences. Families are involved in pupils' religious development through the many special events and celebrations they attend. They praise the varied prayer life of the school highlighting 'Pilgrimage to the Park' and excellent sacramental preparation.

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

- Leaders have excellent knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality worship and ensure this is shared with staff and pupils. They model this in school and their dedication and commitment is instrumental in the drive to provide high quality acts of worship across the school.
- Leaders and managers have a deeply rooted understanding of the church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols. A range of artefacts, symbols and information technology are used to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Therefore, worship is delivered in a way that is relevant to pupils in a contemporary context using a range of skills and high quality resources.
- Leaders ensure staff receive formation in the development of spiritual and liturgical understanding. They have attended diocesan training, further enhanced by in house development and support. This is highly valued by all staff.
- Leaders regularly monitor the quality of Collective Worship and it is under regular review. They constantly seek ways to improve upon the pupils' experience.
- Leaders seek the views of parents and pupils, who comment upon the 'high quality' acts of worship. Their responses are highly valued, however, the school does not have systems in place to formally record and analyse their responses, therefore missing opportunities for further development.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**1****CATHOLIC LIFE:****1**

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

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

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

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**1**

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

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

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

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:**1**

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

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

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SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Mary's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108396
Local authority	Gateshead
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Robert Byrne the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle 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 Michael Currie
Headteacher	Mr Joseph Wheatley
Date of previous school inspection	November 2013
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