



St Augustine's RC Primary School

Beechwood Ave, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7HP

School Unique Reference Number: **139531**

Inspection dates:	26 – 27 September 2019
Lead inspector:	Mary Frain

2Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Outstanding	1

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- St Augustine's is a very welcoming family community. Staff, governors, pupils and parents have a deep sense of being part of a Catholic community.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the well-being, spiritual and personal development of pupils and staff underpin all that the school does. Pupils enthusiastically embrace the many opportunities to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from them.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Staff know their pupils well and teach lessons that engage and enthuse all pupils, ensuring that good progress is evident in most lessons. Outcomes at the end of each phase continue to be well above diocesan averages.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. Worship is central to the life of the school for all pupils and is at the heart of every school celebration.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Augustine's is a primary Catholic academy. It is part of the Carmel Education Trust.
- The school serves the parish of St Augustine's, Darlington.
- It is a single form entry school with 204 pupils, 96% of whom are baptised Catholics.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium is very low.
- The proportion of pupils with a special educational need is below the national average.
- 15% of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- In year mobility is very low.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop the provision for Catholic Life by:
 - developing the prayer and well-being space that is being created in the centre of the school.
- Further develop the teaching and assessment of Religious Education by:
 - ensuring best practice in assessment is consistent across the school.
 - continuing to refine the new assessment framework in line with the standards framework recently introduced by the Diocese.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- 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 the school, from their time in reception through to year 6. They appreciate and value the outstanding personal support and care shown by the staff and are given a superb foundation of knowing who they are in Christ.
- Pupils contribute in a planned and systematic way to the school's evaluation of its Catholic Life and mission. They take a lead in planning school improvements and benefit greatly from it, embracing the demands that membership of a community entails.
- Relationships within the school are very positive and are a strength of the school. Pupils are willing and eager to take on positions of responsibility and leadership within the school and the wider community, such as the year 4 pupils serving in the MacMillan coffee morning and the Mini Vinnies.
- Pupils value the Catholic tradition of their school and links with the parish community. As a result, they are often involved with parish celebrations taking on roles of responsibility. Many parishioners and others feel valued as part of the school community and have a deep sense of belonging to their school family.
- Communication between home, school and parish is exemplary.
- Pupils show a deep respect for themselves and for each other. The behaviour of pupils is exemplary and there is much respect for the adults who work with them. Older pupils are excellent role models for the younger pupils. The whole child is considered in every aspect of the school life, and there is a clear vision for developing the pupils as citizens of the future.

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

- The school mission is lived out and cherished by all staff, governors, pupils and parents.
- The school is a prayerful community which provides a stimulating environment to reflect the school's mission and character. Focal points within classrooms are reflective of the liturgical season, used well by pupils, and resourced with artefacts of a high quality.
- Prayer with pupils and staff is given a high priority. Staff pray together daily and clearly value and appreciate this time, which strengthens the already strong team spirit, allowing

new staff to very quickly be welcomed and nurtured into St. Augustine's school.

- The school is very attentive to the pastoral needs of staff to ensure that the needs of all are understood and catered for. Staff morale is high.
- Governors, along with the priest in charge, are very much a part of the cohesive unit and give regular and dedicated support to all staff and pupils.
- Pastoral care overall is outstanding. A counsellor on the staff is released from other duties two afternoons each week to support pupils, parents and staff. Parents appreciate the care from teachers and support staff whenever help is needed. There have been significant changes in the teaching staff in the past term. Pupils and parents felt that the support they have received from staff has contributed towards consistency in the level of care and stability across the school.
- The Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is fully embedded in school life, and pupils are very familiar with the rights included with the programme.
- Clear policies and structures are in place for the teaching of personal, social and health education and for the teaching of relationships and sex education.

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

- The school's leadership is a source of inspiration for the whole community. The headteacher is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and works tirelessly to give it the utmost priority in school. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the newly created Religious Education team. The leadership are highly visible, exemplary role models both in the school and parish and deeply respected by the staff, pupils and parents.
- The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, resulting in well-targeted and planned improvements. The knowledgeable and skilful governors take a full part in this process, and the priest in charge is a frequent visitor to school; he is central to the connection between school and parish.
- Governors have a high profile within the school and make a significant contribution, taking a very active part in the recruitment process and ensuring that Catholic Life is emphasised within that. They are confident in holding the leadership team to account, whilst being actively involved in providing support and challenge.
- The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and parishioners. Recent parent feedback shows that parents appreciate the links and events, and comment on how useful the weekly Wednesday Word bulletin is.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- 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 good.

- Almost all pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in each key stage with some achieving outstanding progress and outcomes. Outcomes throughout the school have been well above diocesan averages for the past three years.
- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education. They are articulate and confident when talking about their learning. They take great pride in their work and they see Religious Education as a lesson where they can discuss ideas and are free to express their opinions. They enjoy debate, participating in role play, music, art and creative activities to support their learning. Pupils enjoy gaining new knowledge and making links between scriptures.
- More able pupils are achieving high standards across the school due to high expectations, good questioning and development of specialist vocabulary.
- Scrutiny of pupil's books and discussions with staff and pupils demonstrate that learning is deep, with some pupils in upper keystage 2 developing and changing their ideas and attitudes as a result of the Religious Education curriculum.
- Almost all pupils concentrate exceptionally well. They have a clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The embedded use of talk partners ensures that all pupils are active learners.

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

- Teaching in Religious Education is consistently good with some examples of outstanding teaching observed. Lessons are very well planned and resourced with tasks that are engaging, creative and challenging, especially for the more able pupils.
- Teachers show skill at consolidating and extending pupils' knowledge, particularly through recalling previous learning, and in careful use of music and scripture in Collective Worship or in meditation sessions which is used to very good effect.
- Marking and feedback are frequent and generally of a high quality. Opportunities for children to respond to feedback have not always been consistent across the school. There are some good examples of focused marking with accurate steps to improve learning, however this is not consistent across the school.
- Moderation across the Multi Academy Trust has a high profile and contributes significantly to staff becoming more confident and accurate in their assessments. The school has an

effective assessment and tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and achievement in Religious Education. Samples of work are kept to support new staff and aid accurate assessment.

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

- The school's self-evaluation is accurate, clear and informed by an effective monitoring cycle. Leaders have developed an effective action plan which is targeted appropriately on the next steps for the school's development. These actions contribute to outcomes that are regularly well above diocesan averages.
- The leadership of Religious Education is good overall. A very experienced teacher has recently taken responsibility to coordinate Religious Education due to a maternity leave. Two members of teaching staff, new to the school, who have previously led Religious Education have formed a very effective and committed team. This newly formed team have the professional drive and religious conviction to ensure that religious Education continues to improve.
- The Religious Education coordinator and team benefit from dedicated leadership time each week. This ensures that strengths are recognised and actions for further development are quickly identified.
- Professional development is given a high priority. The headteacher ensures that there is monthly staff meeting time for the Religious Education leads to disseminate key messages and support staff in planning and assessment.
- Leaders ensure that pupils have access to sacramental preparation which is fully embedded in the Religious Education curriculum. Diocesan guidelines are followed closely.
- The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Governors give the same importance to outcomes in Religious Education as they do for English and Maths. They are kept informed of the priorities identified to bring about further improvement and offer good support and challenge in their questioning during school visits and in governing body meetings.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- 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.

- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship reflected in the prayerful silence, the quality of responses to prayer and joyous singing.
- Appropriate to their age, all pupils regularly plan and lead their own class Collective Worship linked to the liturgical cycle or the Sunday Gospel reading found in the Wednesday Word. Pupils also prepare liturgies to share with parents, governors and the whole school community, using a range of quality resources and using music, images, song and liturgical dance. There is encouragement to participate in ways that celebrate talents. Pupils and parents appreciate the inclusive approach to all liturgies and celebrations; pupils participate in ways that they are comfortable.
- There are opportunities for voluntary prayer in key stage 2 with the weekly lunchtime prayer group which is led by a member of the support staff. This is very well attended by pupils of all ages, with outdoor sessions scheduled in the summer months.
- From a very young age, evidenced in the welcome liturgy for reception age pupils and their parents, pupils are encouraged to pray both spontaneously and formally. Prayer cards issued at the welcome liturgy immediately became part of home routines.
- Many pupils are increasingly confident in planning, leading and participating in worship. Year 6 pupils are moving towards becoming much less reliant on prompt cards and staff support, and there is a clear development of progression across the year groups.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school. Prayer opportunities are built into the school day for both staff and pupils, starting with the daily briefing for staff. Prayer opportunities are well planned by the leadership team to ensure that the liturgical year or current world and local events as appropriate are reflected.
- A range of regular opportunities are provided for families and members of the parish community. This is through class liturgies, Masses and celebrations at key parts of the Church's year. Parishioners are warmly welcomed into school, and many appreciate the opportunities offered.

- Resourcing Collective Worship with high quality artefacts is a priority of the school. Each classroom has age appropriate resources to create high quality focal points and displays.
- Staff have a very good understanding of how to plan and lead acts of worship and are skilled in supporting the pupils. All teaching staff have opportunities to lead acts of worship, and so can observe each other's practice and share ideas and resources to very good effect.

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

- School leaders have expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality experiences of Collective Worship. They lead the school in a deepening appreciation of the Church's liturgical year in a way that is relevant to pupils in a contemporary context. As a result, pupil response to this provision is outstanding.
- Quality time is devoted to liturgical and spiritual development for the senior leaders. Leaders also ensure that all staff in the school receive formation to develop their spiritual and liturgical understanding. Leaders are highly visible as leaders of Collective Worship and are models of outstanding practice.
- Leaders and governors regularly review Collective Worship as part of their self-evaluation process. This identifies training needs and opportunities, which they swiftly act upon.
- Leaders and governors seek the views of parents and visitors regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school, by asking for feedback and through the completion of questionnaires. The responses show a deep appreciation of the quality of worship that creates a strong feeling of a welcoming and inclusive community.

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.

1

The quality of provision for 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.

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**2**

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

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

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

2

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.

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Augustine's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	139531
Local authority	Darlington
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 M Dimelow
Headteacher	Mrs M McCollom
Date of previous school inspection	September 2014
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