



# St Benet's RC Primary School

Fulwell Road, Fulwell, Sunderland, SR6 9QU

School Unique Reference Number: **108837**

<b>Inspection dates:</b>	23 – 24 October 2019
<b>Lead inspector:</b>	Maria Elliott
<b>Team inspector:</b>	Shaun Dillon

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

## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- St Benet's is a very warm, welcoming and extremely caring school with a Catholic ethos that underpins all the school strives to achieve. Excellent relationships are a great strength within school and a true sense of family is nurtured at every level. The school is a living witness to its mission.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because pupils are encouraged to have a voice, and as a result they value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and the mission of the school.
- Religious Education is good because pupils enjoy their learning. They are engaged in lessons and talk enthusiastically about their work and spiritual and ethical understanding. Behaviour for learning is good.
- Collective Worship is outstanding because prayer and worship are central to the life of the school. It provides many creative opportunities for the pupils and provides the rhythm for daily life. The areas from the last inspection have all been addressed.

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Benet's is a larger than average sized primary school, part of the Monkwearmouth partnership in Sunderland serving the parish of St Benet's.
- Almost all pupils are baptised Roman Catholics.
- Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds and a very small minority are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is lower than the national average, but school identifies many of their families as 'working poor'.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is in line with the national average.

### WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop Curriculum Religious Education by:
  - using feedback effectively to enable pupils to reflect on and articulate their progress.

## 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.**

- The pupils of St Benet's are fully involved in the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They feel they have a voice and value the contribution they can make to their school. They embrace the demands that membership of St Benet's community entails with joy and enthusiasm, and speak with passion about the many opportunities offered to promote the school ethos and mission.
- There is a tangible sense of belonging to a family which is expressed by all. This sense of family is cherished in the youngest children and nurtured as they journey through school. This was summed up by one parent who stated, 'The Catholic ethos continues throughout the school years, embedding qualities that the children take forward into adulthood'.
- Pupils at St Benet's are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of physical, emotional and spiritual growth. A legacy message, created by the outgoing year 6, is passed on to the current year 6 who wear this motto on a hooded top with great pride. The result of this is that children have a profound understanding of what it means to have a vocation and they joyfully offer their gifts in the service of others. The motto for year 6 2019 is, 'Grow in God's love with actions and words'.
- Pupils are very sensitive to the needs of others within the school, local and global communities.
- They deeply value and respect the Catholic traditions of the school and its links with the parish, partnership and diocese.

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

- St Benet's is a very calm and prayerful place where the school mission statement is a very clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the Church and is extensively displayed and interwoven into all key documentation. It is the heart of all that the school offers, forming the cornerstones for the new curriculum and is understood and lived out daily by all.
- Very effective relationships are a strength of the school and there is a strong sense of community; staff are very proud of their school and pupils and have a deep sense of being an integral part of the school family. As a result, they are fully committed to the implementation of the school ethos and mission and work very closely as a team.

- The school environment is vibrant and colourful with many thought provoking and beautifully created focal areas and displays reflecting the mission and identity of a Catholic school. The consistent use of prayer pegs displayed on class and school focal areas enhance and reinforce the school's Catholic character.
- The highest level of support is offered to pupils through effective policies and procedures; pastoral programmes, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationship and sex education (RSE) are very well planned and encourage the pupils to develop a sense of personal responsibility and build positive relationships.
- The school is equally attentive to the needs of the staff resulting in high morale, very positive relationships and a deep sense of belonging.

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

- Leaders are passionately committed to the mission of the Church. They have a very strong sense of the mission of the church and the school's role in expressing it. They provide very focused leadership and are highly visible within school as role models for the staff, pupils and parents.
- The promotion of an authentic Catholic ethos is seen as a fundamental and central role of the leadership team. This is shared by the whole community who demonstrate great pride in their school.
- The headteacher and the Religious Education coordinators are the driving force within the school and seen as a source of inspiration for the whole community.
- The school self-evaluation is aspirational and a reflection of rigorous monitoring and self-challenge which leads to a tightly focused plan for improvement.
- The school engages exceedingly well with parents and carers to the great benefit of all its pupils and families. Parents have a very good understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it. They are very proud of the school. One parent spoke about how she was supported so well by the school and said that the headteacher and staff were like family and would always do whatever they could to support anyone in need. She also said that she was very proud that her children attended St Benet's and that the success of her older children was due to the foundations that had been built with St Benet's.
- Governors make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school; they are passionate about the school's mission, ambitious for its future developments and ensure it has the highest priority.
- Governors are actively involved in the evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school and provide very effective challenge and support. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties extremely well and are committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists in school.

## 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 good.**

- The vast majority of pupils enjoy their learning. They are settled for work and show good listening skills and behaviours for learning. Teachers are caring and attentive and there are positive relationships between pupils, staff and families. Pupils are keen to do their best and enjoy extended writing opportunities in their Religious Education books.
- Behaviour throughout the school day, including during lessons is a strength. Pupils show respect for each other and teachers, and there is structure and purpose to lessons. In some lessons, differentiation is well matched to pupil abilities. However, in some lessons the pace and challenge within the lesson limits progress and learning.
- Teacher assessment is becoming more embedded and as a result, pupil attainment has improved over recent years so that it is now good. Pupils are not yet fully involved in the improvement process and as a result, they are not yet able to fully articulate how they have made progress or how Religious Education impacts on their spiritual development.
- Pupils arrive at St Benet's from supportive families who are keen to reinforce religious literacy. Yearly cohorts receive strong spiritual guidance from foundation stage onwards. Prayer forms a central part of each day and each lesson for every child.

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

- Teaching is planned throughout the school with consistency and purpose. The Come and See programme is embedded in the Religious Education curriculum.
- Driver words and Statements to Live By are used throughout the school to good effect assisting pupils in their religious formation. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles and address the needs of all children's learning; as a result, pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Information Communication Technology, and Drama are used effectively in Religious Education lessons.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed and generally have a clear understanding of the outcomes expected by the end of each lesson. They make a positive impact on pupils and are able to support individuals or groups of pupils.
- Teaching is generally good, and at its best it is well planned and creative, fully engaging pupils. Pupils are beginning to become more able to discuss their work and how to improve it but this is not consistent across the school.

- Pupils spoke about the use of stickers as part of the feedback process but viewed this as a celebration of what they had done. They talked enthusiastically about choosing prizes from the treasure chest, rather than as signposts to improve their work.
- Staff moderate samples of work as a school and with their cluster of Catholic schools. They discuss barriers to learning for vulnerable groups, look at intervention to accelerate learning and close gaps.

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

- The headteacher and her senior leadership team have an aspirational vision for further improvement and are the driving force for improvement, working tirelessly to keep the Catholic ethos at the centre of the learning curriculum. The yearly planning and review cycle is firmly embedded and has led to new teaching strategies and approaches to curriculum development following changes to assessment.
- Rigorous monitoring through work scrutiny, skilful observation of lessons and searching evaluation of outcomes result in well targeted planning and strategic next steps for improvement.
- Every child matters at St Benet's. Staffing has been organised to ensure they are able to support and challenge pupils so that they can make the best progress possible. Pupils feel secure and as a result achieve good standards in Religious Education.
- Training is seen as important and attendance at diocesan events is always assured. Staff development needs are accurately identified by the headteacher and Religious Education coordinators and staff feel they are very well mentored, supported and challenged by them.
- Governors oversee the improvement of teaching and learning systems and they are focused in maintaining a strong distributed leadership and high standards. They work closely with the headteacher and Religious Education coordinators monitoring teaching and learning and are keen to challenge staff to achieve high standards. They are very supportive of the professional development of all staff.

## 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 Benet's is a very prayerful community. Acts of worship engage all pupils' interests and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt responses. Pupils demonstrate great enthusiasm for all forms of Collective Worship; they act with reverence, sing joyfully and reflect in silence.
- Through very effective focal areas and class worship, pupils are encouraged to create an atmosphere for prayer and reflection. They readily take the lead in worship with confidence, independence and enthusiasm. Dependent upon their age, pupils have a very well-developed understanding of what constitutes effective worship and pupils spoke with confidence about how, in their worship teams, they used the Statement to Live By as the focus for worship.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and the different demands this makes on worship. They demonstrated respect for, and interest in other faiths.
- The experience of living and working in a praying, worshipping community has a profound effect on the development of all pupils; one pupil stated, 'We always gather together as a family and pray. We look at our Statements to Live By. You learn to be a better person to one another, you also look on the bright side of things just like Jesus did'.

#### **The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.**

- Prayer and worship are central to the life of St Benet's and permeates all aspects of school life. Very effective Acts of Collective Worship play a key role in supporting the spiritual journey of both staff and pupils, as well as that of parents and carers.
- Each day is punctuated by prayer and worship, with staff and pupils praying together as part of the daily routine and in response to the needs of the pupils and their families, as well as local or global events.
- Acts of Collective Worship are very well resourced and are fully inclusive with a clear purpose and message. Themes chosen are linked to the school values, Statements of the Week, topical events and the liturgical year.

- Staff are very effective role models for the pupils. They have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, feasts and seasons, and are passionate about, and highly skilled in supporting the pupils to plan and deliver high quality worship. In whole school worship the headteacher wove together the theme of never give up with the Sunday gospel and used the words of St John Henry Newman, 'A heart that speaks', to illustrate the going forth message.
- Staff are equally skilled at leading prayer for their peers, and weekly staff led prayers are very effective in allowing space for personal prayer and reflection.
- Parents speak very positively about the opportunities offered to them to join their children in worship. They spoke with great enthusiasm about the Family Liturgies they had attended, as well as the travelling crib during Advent and the Wednesday Word that encourages family prayer and worship.

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

- The senior leadership team display expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality experiences of Collective Worship, and model high quality acts of worship. They have a very clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year stemming from their own faith and are deeply committed and passionate about passing this on and nurturing it with the pupils and their families.
- Leaders are very effective in supporting staff to continually develop their skills in leading Collective Worship, and staff greatly appreciate this. Focused whole school professional development is given the highest priority and very well planned to ensure all staff receive appropriate formation and training to enhance their practice.
- Senior leaders, priest and key governors are a very visible presence in school worship, both in school and in church. They have a very clear and comprehensive understanding of the strengths and areas for further development through a variety of effective monitoring activities. They continuously seek ways to further develop the prayer life of the school.
- Leaders seek the views of pupils and parents and these responses are highly valued and lead to further action as part of the schools ongoing self-evaluation. Parents greatly appreciate the voice they are given to respond to and evaluate Collective Worship.

## 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:****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.

1

**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

<b>School name</b>	St Benet's RC Primary School
<b>Unique reference number</b>	108837
<b>Local authority</b>	Sunderland
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.	
<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Denise Willis
<b>Head teacher</b>	Mrs Ann Blakey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	June 2015
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