



St Michael's RC Primary School

Clumber Street, Newcastle, NE4 7RE

School Unique Reference Number: **108511**

Inspection dates:	2-3 December 2013
Lead inspector:	Elaine White

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	PREVIOUS INSPECTION:	Good	2
	THIS INSPECTION:	Good	2
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	CATHOLIC LIFE:	Outstanding	1
	COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:	Good	2
	RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:	Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Michael's Primary School is a good school with many outstanding features.

- St Michael's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. Whilst it is very clear as soon as you enter the school that the prime purpose is Catholic education, helping children to develop their faith to understand that God loves them, it is also a very inclusive school, welcoming children of many different faith backgrounds and cultures.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. The areas for improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed and the school is continuing to ensure that all pupils make good progress because of good teaching.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. Governors, senior leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development and as a result are confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual and emotional growth.
- Collective Worship is good with many outstanding features. Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff. Themes chosen for worship are responsive to the religious diversity among pupils.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Michael's is smaller than the average sized primary school and serves the parish of St Michael's.
- The proportions of pupils from a multi-ethnic background and those for whom English is an additional language are both higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is much higher than the national average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is similar to the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

■ **Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:**

- Ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to plan challenging, differentiated activities which consistently build on and extend pupils' learning, especially focussing on helping the more able to achieve higher levels.
- Ensure that marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.

■ **Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:**

- Offering more opportunities for pupil involvement in planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship independently throughout the school.

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 and gain considerable benefit from it. They take full advantage of the many opportunities offered to them and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people.
- They are able to express their own beliefs and have a good understanding of how their faith impacts on their own lives and those of others. They show interest in the religious life of others and demonstrate care and respect for religious artefacts in the school.
- Relationships within the school are very positive and pupils value the many opportunities they are given. Pupils are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and ethos and are actively involved in it, taking on responsibilities very enthusiastically, such as becoming school councillors.
- They respond fully to the needs of those beyond school and can articulate their views with confidence, explaining the purpose of fundraising for charities such as CAFOD, the De Paul Charity, Little Sisters of the Poor as well as troubled areas in the world such as Syria.
- Pupils work well together, demonstrating positive and enthusiastic attitudes to all aspects of school life. Children are confident in using Circle Time to talk about their feelings, to share their experiences and to discuss challenging and emotional issues such as bereavement. Behaviour management is very effective: pupils are polite and considerate of others. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a very good understanding of the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year.

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

- Provision for the Catholic Life of the school has the highest priority with the school's mission statement permeating throughout school, ensuring that Christ is truly at the centre of all that takes place at St Michael's.
- Pupils have many opportunities to participate fully in a number of key events and celebrations throughout the liturgical year. Thoughtful liturgies and assemblies provide time for pupils to reflect and share thoughts linked to Gospel values. Themed worship provides good opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual and moral development.

- The school places a very high value on pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. It provides many opportunities to develop this, such as the annual pilgrimage to Holy Island where pupils are able to reflect on their school life, their friendships and their personal and spiritual development. Pastoral care for all pupils throughout the school is outstanding with a commitment to the most vulnerable and needy in both policy and practice.
- The behaviour of pupils throughout the school is extremely good.
- There is a very strong team spirit amongst all staff and sharing knowledge and good practice is commonplace. They are all fully committed to the mission and ethos at St Michael's.

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

- The headteacher and senior leadership team have a very clear understanding of Catholic education and the role of the Catholic school. Together they very effectively promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The headteacher has a very clear vision for securing continuous improvement and inspires the whole school community to work together to bring the mission statement into all aspects of school life.
- The school's rigorous self-evaluation is a coherent reflection of regular monitoring and self-challenge and leads to well-targeted planned improvements.
- Governors involve themselves wholeheartedly and make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They work very effectively with the staff and headteacher, committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists throughout. Together with the headteacher they have a clear vision and high aspirations for future developments. Their strong promotion of Catholic values is clearly shared by the whole community who demonstrate great pride in their school.
- The school engages very well with parents/carers and they are encouraged to work as partners in their children's learning.
- The school's mission statement is truly a living document which underpins all policies throughout the school and has a very high profile.

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

1

Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good.

- St Michael's is a prayerful community. There is a calm and peaceful ethos which pervades the school and is reflected in the pupils' very good behaviour and consideration for others. From the earliest age pupils act reverently and show respect when participating in acts of worship. They listen well and are happy to take part in Collective Worship, liturgies, Masses and assemblies.
- Pupils are keen to participate and are at ease when praying with those of different faiths. They sing joyfully and respond positively to prayer. They participate in voluntary prayer sessions such as the lunchtime rosary club and pray with reverence at the 'Focal Areas' situated around the school.
- Pupils prepare and lead worship with increasing confidence and enthusiasm although they are not given sufficient opportunities to plan and lead worship independently in a variety of contexts.
- Adults provide very good role models for the children and contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupils show respect for different faiths and are aware that religious beliefs are important.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Meaningful prayer opportunities for both staff and pupils are a central component of school life at St Michael's. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and the school uses a good range of strategies to ensure that it is both regular and inclusive. There are many opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together in a variety of forms of worship.
- Staff ensure that Collective Worship is carefully planned and resourced to reflect the liturgical year. Praying together is a daily experience. Traditions such as the rosary have a high profile in the school. Families are becoming more involved in the pupils' religious development through the seasonal travelling artefacts such as "The Travelling Crib."
- Themes for Collective Worship are carefully chosen and are responsive to the religious diversity among pupils.
- Parents, parishioners and governors are invited to share in various acts of Collective Worship which are timetabled throughout the year.

Leaders and Managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The headteacher and senior leadership team are enthusiastic and display expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality experiences of Collective Worship. They have a very clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year and use this to very good effect in leading the school in its knowledge and understanding of Catholic rites and symbols. Together they have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for further development in Collective Worship through both formal and informal monitoring.
- Liturgical and spiritual development is seen as a priority in ongoing professional development. Staff access training opportunities wholeheartedly.
- Senior leaders ensure that the pupils have the best possible sacramental preparation in accordance with diocesan policy.
- Planning the school's prayer and liturgical life is given high priority each year by school leaders as it is the heart of the school's ethos and character.
- The views of pupils, staff and parents are valued and acted upon to ensure good quality Collective Worship continues to evolve throughout the school and parish community.

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 monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

2

2

1

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

- The quality of learning and progress in Religious Education is good. Almost all pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education, have positive attitudes and work well in lessons. They apply themselves to the tasks, working at a good pace.
- Pupils start school with knowledge and skills well below those expected for their age. They make good progress across the early years stage as their personal needs are very well met as soon as they enter school. They continue to make good progress throughout key stage one and key stage two. They display interest and enthusiasm in their learning and contribute very well to class discussions.
- Those pupils identified as having a special educational need are very well catered for. Good support from skilled support staff along with a differentiated programme of work ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- Due to the state of transition in level expectations across all diocesan schools, the current averages for attainment and progress are not reliable benchmarks. Therefore no judgement will be made in this report against diocesan averages for either attainment or progress.

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

- Teaching and assessment is good. Most teachers have high expectations, plan interesting lessons and set appropriate targets for pupils to achieve in their work, consequently, from their starting points almost all groups of pupils make good and sustained progress.
- Teachers are very effective at meeting the needs of most groups of pupils however work is not always matched well enough to challenge the more able pupils. Where teaching is good or better, it is because teachers have a high level of expertise both in terms of their knowledge and understanding of effective learning in religious education. As a result, they use a range of innovative and imaginative resources and teaching strategies to stimulate pupils' active participation in their learning which in turn secures good progress.
- Teachers intervene where necessary to deal with pupil misconceptions or to provide useful feedback so that learning is good. All pupils are provided with rich experiences that make learning exciting.
- Marking is usually accurate with some prompts for improvements given. However this is not

consistent throughout the school. Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to respond to the advice on improvement. In some classes, pupils are beginning to become more involved in evaluating how well they have done which contributes effectively to their improved achievement.

- The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement in Religious Education and has a tracking system which effectively informs planning.
- Skilled support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and progress.

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

- The headteacher along with the deputy headteacher and Religious Education coordinator provide strong and highly effective leadership in Religious Education that ensures all pupils make good progress and that standards continue to rise. The hard working and deeply committed headteacher along with her senior leadership team, have the professional drive to ensure that Religious Education continually moves forward. They are supported extremely well by a dedicated staff who are all ambitious for the schools continued improvement.
- A range of monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes in Religious Education is well established and this has enabled the headteacher to have an accurate awareness of the areas for development. The analysis of data is grounded in a secure knowledge of each individual pupil.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and is given a high profile throughout the school, contributing very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- The governing body discharge their statutory and canonical duties well. The governors are very well informed and knowledgeable about the school's strengths and further areas for development. They are regular visitors into school and provide appropriate challenge to the headteacher and senior leadership team, setting rigorous targets for improvement.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:**2****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

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.

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

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	108511
Local authority	Newcastle

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 schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

Type of school	Primary
Chair of governors	Mrs Catherine Rowley
Head teacher	Mrs Margaret Kerridge
Date of previous school inspection	22 – 23 June 2010
Telephone number	0191 2739383
Fax number	0191 2734637
Email address	admin@stmichaels.newcastle.sch.uk