



**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

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School URN: 111692

Headteacher: Miss Mary Frain

Chair of Governors: Mr Vincent Magee

Inspector: Mr Nick Conway

Date of Inspection: 4th and 5th June 2009

This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham, Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, (c.f. Code Canon Law, 804, 806), and for the Governing Body of the school (Education Act 2005, Section 48). The inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

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

Characteristics of the school and views of the stakeholders.

St. Cuthbert's RC Primary School is a larger than average primary school which serves the parish of St. Cuthbert's, Hartlepool. The school catchment area includes an area of social deprivation. The vast majority of pupils are from white UK heritage backgrounds and 80% are baptised Catholics. Attainment on entry is generally below average. The proportion of children claiming free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average. The school population is stable and attendance is high. The school has served the community of Hartlepool for over ninety five years. The parish and parents are very proud of the school. It is held in very high regard as a "welcoming, supportive school."

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 306
Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 81%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 8%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 1%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 10%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 5%
Percentage of pupils with special needs: 18%

Staffing:

Number of full time teachers: 10
Number of part time teachers: 3
Percentage of Catholic teachers: 85%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 50%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

FS	10%				
Yr 1	10%	Yr 3	10%	Yr 5	10%
Yr 2	10%	Yr 4	10%	Yr 6	10%

Parishes served by the school:

St. Cuthbert's, Hartlepool

Overall Effectiveness

Grade: 2

St. Cuthbert's Primary School is a good school with some outstanding aspects. The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school very well with clear vision and the staff share their strong commitment to the pupils and the Catholic life of the school. The staff are very good role models. The school is very well rooted in the local community and parish and its promotion of community cohesion within the school and beyond is outstanding. Whole school and planned Collective Worship is good and varied. Recent staff training on prayer has impacted positively upon the greater involvement by pupils in daily prayer and greater consistency in this approach is starting to positively impact upon the quality of Collective Worship in all classes. Standards in Religious Education are good and generally pupils progress well. However, the setting of more challenging targets is necessary to ensure expectations in all year groups are consistently high in Religious Education. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Overall, the curriculum has been adapted to pupils' needs and interests. It enables pupils to acquire and develop knowledge and skills which have a positive impact upon their spiritual and moral development. Inclusion of all pupils has a very high priority. The quality of care and guidance is good. Religious Education is well led and staff are well supported.

Improvements since last inspection

Good progress has been made on all issues raised in the last inspection.

School's capacity to improve further

Grade: 2

The capacity of the school to improve further is good. The school is improving. It is ambitious and is clear as to what is needed to improve further.

In order to raise standards further the governors should seek to:

- set more challenging targets for Religious Education to ensure the level of challenge for all pupils is consistently high;
- continue to refine systems for monitoring and evaluating Religious Education to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in all year groups.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Leaders and managers set clear direction leading to improvement and work together with all staff, teachers and teaching assistants, to ensure that pupils receive good care and education. The headteacher, deputy head and Religious Education co-ordinator are excellent role models in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school. All staff know the pupils well and provide personalised support and as a result, pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. The Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated well and the leadership team know the areas for improvement and successfully tackle them. The governing body is kept extremely well informed by the headteacher, and as a result provides strong and highly effective support and challenge in the development of the Catholic life. The leadership positively promotes and facilitates the work of chaplaincy which has a considerable impact on the ethos of the school, liturgical formation and the spirituality of the school. Leaders at all levels promote outstanding partnerships with the parish and wider community. The school has close links with the parish. The impact of this is that parents feel welcome in the school and part of the parish.

Collective Worship

Grade: 2

Collective Worship in the school is good. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for staff, pupils, parents and parish to participate in prayer and Collective Worship. Through a well planned programme of class masses, end of topic liturgies and assemblies pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities to engage in good quality worship and prayer. Pupils respond to these opportunities with respect and enthusiasm. They are involved and take an active part, for example, in the setting up of school prayer areas. Whole school gatherings of worship are well structured. The school is developing daily acts of worship which more consistently involve the children. Recent staff training on developing the prayer life within school is starting to impact upon consistent approaches for Collective Worship. The contribution Collective Worship makes to pupils' spiritual and moral development is positive.

School's contribution to the promotion of Community Cohesion Grade: 1

The effectiveness of the school in promoting community cohesion is outstanding. St. Cuthbert's is a school where inclusion is central, where staff and pupils have clearly understood and shared goals, and where the contributions of all members of the community are recognised and valued. Staff provide many opportunities for pupils to work together and develop skills in collaboration and teamwork. The

quality of the provision for engagement and collaboration with groups and individuals within the school through, for example, a highly effective peer support programme. 'Rainbows' positively impacts upon the self esteem of some of the most vulnerable children in the school. Opportunities are taken for informed dialogue with the parish, with parents and with neighbouring schools, to share and develop good practice. Pupils' awareness of global citizenship is outstanding. The breadth of St. Cuthbert's provision offers pupils many different contexts in which to reinforce their commitment to the common good, such as fund raising for local, national and international charities. In Religious Education pupils are given the opportunity to visit places of worship such as those from other Christian denominations and visitors from other faiths are regularly welcomed into school. This enables pupils to encounter people who have different beliefs and values and to develop respect for them. The contribution Religious Education makes in promoting community cohesion is good. Collective Worship is inclusive and makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of themselves as part of a world-wide community.

Curriculum Religious Education

Achievements and standards in Religious Education

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good overall. Pupils enter Foundation Stage with skills broadly below those typical for their age. From this starting point, pupils progress well and achieve to a good level. Throughout KS1 pupils make good progress and by the end of the key stage standards are slightly below those expected as the majority are attaining Level 2. Progress is generally good in KS2 and by the end of year 6 standards are average. The school's current tracking data and the work of current cohorts indicate that standards have recently improved. The trend of improvement includes those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils are gaining a knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) at a good rate across all key stages, particularly in upper Key Stage 2.

Quality of Provision for Religious Education, Teaching and Learning

Grade: 2

Overall, the effectiveness of teaching and learning is good, in some year groups it is outstanding. It is consistent with curriculum guidance. Teachers have good subject knowledge and secure understanding of the Religious Education curriculum. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies, such as 'hot seating' and 'conscience alley' to ensure pupils make appropriate progress. Cross-curricular links to other subjects such as drama are also used successfully. Planning is good and teachers' expectations are mostly high. In the most successful lessons, well paced, interactive teaching, positive reinforcement and challenging activities ensure there is a good match to pupils' needs. The identification of pupils with learning needs is good. Highly competent teaching assistants are well deployed to ensure that the needs of pupils with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities are effectively met. Relationships between staff and pupils are very strong and based on mutual respect. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are being developed to ensure there is consistency in approaches to teaching and learning. Strong links exist with parents and carers who are kept well informed about their children's progress through good relationships.

Effectiveness of Meeting Learners' needs and interests

Grade: 2

The Religious Education curriculum is good at meeting the needs and interests of the pupils. The curriculum offered meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and 10% of teaching time is allocated to Religious Education. In many classes the school is starting to creatively adapt the Religious Education curriculum where skills and knowledge learned in other subjects are being applied in Religious Education. Good cross-curricular opportunities have been exploited to ensure high quality skills, especially in writing and speaking and listening, are applied in Religious Education. This is not yet consistent in every class. Pupils enjoy the subject and they speak with pride about their work. They find the lessons 'fun and interesting.' This is demonstrated by the way Religious Education has a positive impact upon their spiritual and moral development and their good attitudes towards each other in lessons and around the school.

Leadership and Management of Religious Education

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of Religious Education is good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. The headteacher is highly regarded by all within the school: governors, staff, parents and pupils. This is because she sets clear, purposeful direction and is calm in her approach to improving standards. The school has a strong and stable teaching team and they are supported by an effective and experienced Religious Education co-ordinator. As a result of a whole school professional development initiative, teachers plan in phases and this is improving the range and quality of the work. The staff ensure that pupils generally learn well. Monitoring of the performance in Religious Education is satisfactory but the school has a clear plan to improve this. The school makes good use of the learning resources and accommodation which are used effectively in Religious Education lessons and impact positively on the attitudes to learning. Equality of opportunity is very well promoted and discrimination is swiftly challenged to ensure that pupils achieve their potential. Governors work in close partnership with the leadership team and have a secure understanding of the strengths and areas for development in Religious Education. They are very supportive of the school and developing the ability to challenge the leadership of the school in Religious Education.

SUMMARY INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: Grade 1 - Outstanding Grade 2 - Good Grade 3 – Satisfactory Grade 4 – Unsatisfactory	School Overall	16-19
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The Catholic Life of the School

The effectiveness of leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school	1	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality care and education;	1	
The quality of the leadership of the headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school;	1	
How effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes learners' spiritual and moral development;	2	
How effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated;	2	
How well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation;	1	
How effectively leaders promote and facilitate the work of chaplaincy;	1	
How effectively leadership at all levels and the school promotes partnership with parish community and wider community.	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
The frequency and quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and the liturgical life of the school;	2	
Learners' response to the school's provision;	2	
How well Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners.	2	
How effectively the school/college promotes Community Cohesion	1	
The school as a community with common, inclusive values, where differences and similarities are recognised and valued;	1	
The quality of provision for engagement, dialogue and collaboration with groups and individuals within/beyond the school;	1	
The school's commitment to serving the common good;	1	
The contribution of curriculum Religious Education to promoting Community Cohesion;	2	
The contribution of the school's Collective Worship in promoting Community Cohesion.	2	

Curriculum Religious Education

How well do learners achieve?	2	
The standard of learners' work;	2	
Learners' success in achieving challenging targets, with trends over time and any significant variations between groups of learners;	2	
Learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential, with any significant variations between groups of learners.	2	
The effectiveness of teaching and learning	2	
How well teaching is used to meet learners' needs and curriculum requirements;	2	

The suitability and rigour and assessment in planning, monitoring and informing;	2	
The identification of, and provision for, additional learning needs;	2	
The involvement of parents/carers in their children's learning and development.	2	
The effectiveness of the Religious Education curriculum in meeting the needs and interests of learners	2	
How well the curriculum matches learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience;	2	
How the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference;	2	
How learners enjoy their work;	2	
How the curriculum in Religious Education contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners.	2	
The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education	2	
How well senior and subject leaders in Religious Education lead and support their staff;	2	
How performance in Religious Education is monitored and improved through quality assurance and self-assessment;	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are well taught;	2	
The adequacy and suitability of the learning resources and accommodation, and how effectively and efficiently these are deployed to achieve high standards;	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve their full potential;	1	
How well governors discharge their responsibilities.	2	

Overall Effectiveness

The overall effectiveness of the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners	2	
The overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic life of the school;	1	
The overall effectiveness of the provision for curriculum Religious Education;	2	
The effectiveness of any steps taken to ensure improvement since the last inspection;	2	
The capacity to make further improvements;	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation.	2	

Denominational Inspection Report (Section 48)

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Copies of the full report are available from the school.

Summary of Findings

The Overall Effectiveness of the provision of Catholic Education is good.
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding.
The provision for Collective Worship is good.
The school's contribution towards Community Cohesion is outstanding.
Achievements and standards in Religious Education are good.
Teaching and Learning in Religious Education is good.
The Religious Education curriculum in meeting learners' needs and interests is good.
Leadership and management of Religious Education is good.

The school's capacity to improve further is good

In order to raise standards further the governors should seek to:

- set more challenging targets for Religious Education to ensure the level of challenge for all pupils is consistently high;
- continue to refine systems for monitoring and evaluating Religious Education to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in all year groups.