



# St Aidan's RC Primary School

Moorhouse Lane, Ashington, Northumberland, NE63 9LR

School Unique Reference Number: **122307**

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| <b>Inspection dates:</b> | 07 – 08 February 2019 |
| <b>Lead inspector:</b>   | Mr Martin Humble      |

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| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | Previous inspection: | Good               | 2        |
|                              | 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 Aidan's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- St Aidan's is a very warm and welcoming school where everyone shares the clear vision promoted by the school leaders. The mission and ethos of Catholic education is at the heart of this community.
- The quality of Religious Education is good because pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons, can explain their value and are keen to do well, leading to good progress in most lessons. Behaviour is exemplary.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the wellbeing of all pupils alongside their spiritual and personal development underpins all that the school does. Pupils are actively involved in a range of activities which support their community and beyond, contributing significantly to their moral, social and emotional development.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school. Pupils, guided by skilled staff, demonstrate the skills necessary to deliver high quality acts of worship.

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Aidan's is a larger than average sized primary school having recently changed designation from First School to Primary School.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The percentage of pupils with special needs is average as is the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium.
- Since the last inspection the school has moved site to accommodate the extra classrooms and pupils as a newly formed Primary School.

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

- To develop assessment in Religious Education by:
  - adopting the use of the Age-Related Standards in Religious Education in line with Diocesan guidelines.
- To implement more rigorous assessment procedures in Religious Education by:
  - ensuring all teachers adhere to the marking and assessment procedures outlined in the school's policies.
  - facilitating further in-house opportunities for the moderation of pupils' work and assessment tasks.

## 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 the school and benefit greatly from it. Pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their 'happy family school' and parents comment that, 'St Aidan's offers a very welcoming community for all children to reach their potential'.
- Pupils wholeheartedly appreciate, value and participate in the Catholic Life of the school. The mission statement, 'In the love and truth of Jesus we grow,' is central to the daily routines. The Catholic ethos is tangible throughout the school.
- Pupils readily evaluate their input into the Catholic Life and the impact of their actions on their community on a regular basis. Pupils say they feel valued and very confidently express their ideas and feelings.
- Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of the importance of how they live their lives and how they treat others.
- Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual growth, demonstrating exemplary behaviour towards adults and each another.
- Pupils are at the heart of school celebrations and, through very strong parish links, worship with parishioners on a regular basis. Pupils are planning to extend their relationship with the local community through the actions of the recently formed Mini Vinnies group.
- Pupils are willing and eager to take on positions of responsibility and leadership within the school.
- Pupils confidently talk about the various causes they support, effectively promoting the Catholic character of the school, such as CAFOD, LEPR, Mary's Meals and Operation Christmas Child.

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

- The Catholic values of the school are given the highest priority and are embedded in the daily life of St Aidan's. The mission statement is a vital part of school life which all members of the community have played a part in shaping. This living statement continues to be reviewed to ensure it represents the current school community, particularly since the change from being a First School to Primary School.
- Excellent relationships exist within the school community with all stakeholders fully committed to making the school the best that 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.
- The school is a prayerful community where all members of the community feel welcomed. Parents comment that, 'St Aidan's always offers a very warm welcome'. There is a strong sense of family and parents take advantage of the opportunities to worship and pray with their children.
- St Aidan's is a school committed to Catholic tradition and ethos. The Catholic character of the school is evident in the creative displays and sacred spaces featured around the school. The planning is well underway to develop a school prayer garden.
- Clear policies and procedures are in place which are carefully planned to reflect the Catholic Life of the school for both pupils and staff. They provide high levels of support for pupils, staff and the wider community.
- Pupils are clearly supported throughout school by a range of pastoral opportunities provided by the parish priest, youth ministry coordinator and caring adults. All staff play their part and everyone is valued for their contribution.
- There is an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable and needy with regular fundraising and food collections.
- The relationships and sex education programme is delivered effectively at age appropriate levels. However, it is to be reviewed as a result of the move from First School to Primary.

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

- Leaders and managers throughout the school are instrumental in ensuring that the Church's mission in education is lived and breathed by all connected with the school. They have a very clear understanding of the vision of Catholic education and role of the Catholic school in the mission of the church.
- Governors are active within the school community and fully participate in the Catholic Life of the school.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for all children. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and parish priest are excellent role models and are motivated and enthusiastic about the journey that the school is on.

- The school has developed very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers, who have a clear understanding of the school's mission.
- The Catholic Life of the school is monitored by all stakeholders on a regular basis to inform priorities and evaluate success. Governors are confident in holding the leadership team to account, whilst being actively involved in supporting its mission. They have an excellent grasp of the challenges faced by the school and work very effectively with the headteacher.
- The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, gathered from a range of sources. It has clear links to the school improvement plan and is focused on improvements for pupil outcomes.

## 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.**

- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education demonstrating commitment in their learning. They work hard during lessons and behaviour for learning is excellent. Pupils say that they enjoy lessons most when they include a variety of activities such as drama or role play.
- The majority of pupils are making progress in Religious Education lessons and over time. They are developing well in their knowledge and understanding so overall, outcomes are good. The school's data shows that pupils make good progress over time through early years foundation stage, key stage one and key stage two, although there are some areas of inconsistency.
- Through evidence in pupils' work and in conversations they are able to demonstrate effective use of prior knowledge when making links between religious ideas and using scriptural references accurately. They can link their work to everyday life and articulate that they need to follow Jesus' teaching and live like him.
- Historically, attainment has been below diocesan averages. The school's current tracking shows these gaps are closing.

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

- The teaching in the school is good overall. Teachers demonstrate high expectations of behaviour and engagement and as a result pupils concentrate well.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and are a real strength of the school. Support staff are used well to support and extend pupils of different abilities. Pupils commented that staff make the work easier because they explain it so well.
- Teachers use diocesan plans and guidance to deliver well planned activities through a range of teaching strategies. This helps pupils to develop and extend their knowledge and fosters their motivation to learn and their enthusiasm for the subject.
- Teacher confidence in accurately levelling work is inconsistent across the school. Good practice needs to be built upon in the future to ensure this area becomes consistent. Marking and feedback procedures vary across the school and need to be fully embedded to ensure all staff consistently follow the school marking and feedback policy. Staff must ensure that all pupils respond to any next steps comments to enhance their learning. There is a need to develop

further in-house moderation opportunities.

- The school has plans to adopt the use of the Age-related Standards in Religious Education in line with Diocesan guidelines to further develop assessment of attainment.
- Pupils use the success criteria shared at the beginning of the lesson to self-assess their work.

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

- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the Bishops' Conference requirements in every respect; that the required amount of time is given to Religious Education and that it is comparable to other core subjects in each key stage.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher demonstrate and share an ambitious vision for the school and for what every pupil and teacher can achieve. They inspire and support the whole school community.
- All aspects of Religious Education are evaluated through observation, pupil voice, data analysis and questionnaires with the findings used to plan for improvements. The school also works with a small cluster of schools to develop these findings further.
- Good opportunities exist for pupils to experience their own traditions as well as those of other faiths.
- Sacramental preparation is in line with diocesan guidelines. There are strong links with the parish community, parents, governors and parishioners. They are extremely supportive in their work with the pupils.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and are kept informed of developments in Religious Education within the school. They are extremely supportive but also confident in their ability to challenge and guide where necessary.

## 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. Aidan's is a prayerful community. There is a calm and peaceful ethos which pervades the school and is reflected in the pupils' excellent behaviour and consideration for each other. Pupils' involvement in Collective Worship is a central part of their experience.
- From the earliest age pupils act reverently when participating in acts of worship. Pupils are confident in planning and carrying out Collective Worship using a variety of styles and resources reflecting the liturgical year. They are able to talk knowledgeably about the variety of prayers and liturgies that take place.
- Pupils recognise the special nature of liturgical symbols and show respect. They are aware that religious beliefs are important, demonstrating respect for their own faith and the faith of others.
- Pupils enjoy sharing liturgies at home with the travelling crib and travelling cross as they 'take Jesus to their home'.
- Adults provide excellent role models for pupils in their response and participation in liturgy and this is evident when pupils lead their own liturgies.

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

- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship; it is carefully planned and resourced and is central to everyday life at St Aidan's.
- There is a rich variety of different forms of worship evident throughout the school. In all areas of the school there are references to prayer, including stimulating and thought provoking displays.
- The developing prayer garden area is to be used to provide further opportunities for a variety of spiritual experiences led by staff and pupils.
- There is a comprehensive timetable for Collective Worship. Parents, parishioners and governors are invited to share in various acts of Collective Worship and they regularly attend Masses, liturgies and other timetabled acts of worship.

- Parents welcome their involvement and comment extremely positively about the opportunities they have to be involved in school and parish based masses and liturgies. They comment very positively on the spiritual impact these acts of worship have on their family life, as children talk and discuss their thoughts at home.
- The support of the parish priest is very effective in maintaining high quality worship opportunities across school.
- Staff meet regularly for prayer and liturgy acting as excellent role models for all pupils.

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

- The headteacher has set a high standard for Collective Worship in school. She leads by example, ensuring that pupils and staff develop a deepening appreciation of the church's traditions, seasons, rites and symbols and that prayerful, reflective opportunities contribute to the spiritual formation of pupils and staff.
- The governors have invested resources into spiritual development across school. The parish priest is highly respected throughout the school and effectively leads and supports worship development.
- Leaders regularly review Collective Worship throughout the school. They seek the views of pupils and parents through the use of questionnaires and verbal feedback after school events. Pupil, staff and parent responses are very affirming of their experiences and of the school.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and parish priest are passionate that liturgical and spiritual development are priorities for all in school and that time is devoted to this. This is evident in the provision for staff and the variety of opportunities offered to pupils.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have a very visible presence in school and a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in Collective Worship through both formal and informal monitoring. Effective evaluation of staff strengths has resulted in an effective continuing professional development programme for all staff.
- There is clear evidence of the quality of Collective Worship being monitored and evaluated by the deputy headteacher. It is given a high priority by all leaders and active involvement by governors ensures they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for further development in 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.

1

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.

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

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## SCHOOL DETAILS

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| <b>School name</b>   | St Aidan's RC Primary School          |
| <b>Unique reference number</b>   | 122307                                |
| <b>Local authority</b>   | Northumberland                        |
| This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Séamus Cunningham 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>  | Miss Ann Howe                         |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Mrs Samantha Leslie                   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | September 2013                        |
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| <b>Email address</b>   | admin@st-aidans.northumberland.sch.uk |