

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**  
— DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION —



## **S48 Report**

**St Vincent's RCVA Primary School  
Monkchester Road  
Walker  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE6 2TX**

**URN 108514**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

**on**

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

**School:** St Vincent's RCVA Primary School

**Address:** Monkchester Road  
Walker  
Newcastle upon Tyne  
NE6 2TX

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**School URN:** 108514

**Headteacher:** Sister Josepha Matthews

**Chair of Governors:** Mrs Alice Dack

**Lead Inspector:** Miss Mary Tate

**Date of Inspection** 14 - 15 February 2013

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Vincent's Primary School is smaller than the average sized school situated in the East of Newcastle in the Walker ward.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average, but the proportion at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is around average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.

### Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	181
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	84%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	12%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	1%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	3%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	9%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	33%

### Staffing

Full time teachers:	7
Part time teachers:	6
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	85%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	23%

### Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education

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

### Parishes served by the school

Our Lady and St Vincent's, Walker

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

3

## KEY FINDINGS

- St Vincent's is a good Catholic school which makes good provision for Catholic Education. The school is a very inclusive and welcoming community. Priorities since the last inspection have been met and there is a continuous drive for improvement for the good of the whole school community.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The governors, school leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regards to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Staff set good examples, are very proud of their school and work well together. Excellent relationships and communication are key strengths of the school. Parents have a high opinion of the school and welcome the opportunity to participate in school life. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding.
- Collective Worship is good. Children act with reverence and are at ease, joining in prayers confidently. It is not yet outstanding because children do not have sufficient opportunities throughout school to take the initiative in leading prayer and worship.
- The quality of Religious Education requires improvement. Teaching is not consistently good across the school due to inconsistencies in planning, differentiation, marking and feedback. Teacher assessment is in its infancy in terms of its accuracy and is not always used to plan future learning. The senior leadership team have a strategic approach to monitoring and evaluating the quality of Religious Education but have not yet had time to measure the impact of their work.

## WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
  - ensuring that all teachers accurately assess learning and that this assessment information is used to plan challenging, differentiated activities which consistently build on and extend pupils' learning;
  - ensuring that teachers' marking and feedback provides information to enable pupils to improve their work and pupils are given time to respond to this feedback.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
  - providing opportunities for pupils to develop the skills they need to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship.

## 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.

1

1

1

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take advantage of the many opportunities offered to them and talk about how their school motto 'Truth, Loyalty, Peace,' helps them to become better people. Pupils say they feel valued and are able to confidently express their own views and feelings. One pupil said they felt like God was at their side at St Vincent's. Pupils are proud of their religious backgrounds and beliefs; they are reflective and are respectful of those with beliefs different to their own. They are well aware of the needs of others and seek to support others through awareness raising assemblies and fundraising. An effective programme for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) allows pupils to develop and foster excellent understanding, appropriate to their age. Pupil behaviour is good and a strong pastoral team supports vulnerable children and their families. This is underpinned by outstanding moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. St Vincent's is a welcoming, friendly community with a strong family ethos where all are respected and pupils flourish. Governors, managers and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos. There is a tangible sense of family and community in all aspects of school life which is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between all stakeholders. The school is a prayerful community that provides a stimulating learning environment to reflect the school's mission and Catholic character. Catholic principles and values underpin behaviour and relationship policies resulting in a strong shared vision for the Catholic Life of the school. Effective training supports staff commitment. The physical resources of the school are used very well to help achieve priorities set.

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school are outstanding. All leaders and managers, including the governing body, have high expectations for the promotion and continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school. The headteacher provides a clear direction for the Catholic Life of the school which is given the highest priority, along with the spiritual and moral development of pupils together with the deputy headteacher; they have a strong vision for the school which is articulated through their actions. Effective systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the Catholic Life of the school which are linked to school improvement and subsequently to outcomes for pupils. The school's self-evaluation has a clear focus on the Catholic Life of the school. The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers; they have a clear understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it.

# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

## THE QUALITY OF 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. 2

St Vincent's is a prayerful community where pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. Pupils have a secure grasp of what worship is about and are at ease when praying with their school community in large and small gatherings. Older pupils take part in, lead and prepare prayer and liturgy with enthusiasm and increasing ease and confidence. They know what constitutes the various elements of worship and regularly lead Collective Worship with younger pupils. Collective Worship planners help children to devise their own liturgies and these now need to be embedded across the whole school. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the 'Statements to Live By' and are able to reflect on how they impact on their own lives. They have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical celebrations and are able to prepare for these celebrations, in line with their age and ability, with developing levels of expertise. A prayer corner in each classroom impacts positively on the quality of prayer and provides pupils with stimuli for thought and reflection. Pupils participate in the school and parish linked sacramental preparation programme which has a very positive impact upon their on-going spiritual development. Collective Worship contributes positively to the spiritual, moral and personal development of pupils.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are well met. Prayer is at the heart of the school community and is inclusive and reflective. The headteacher models and leads high quality Collective Worship and children enjoy helping to organise and lead whole school worship. Staff are skilled in planning worship and older pupils lead with increasing confidence, skill and enthusiasm. Children are beginning to plan, prepare and lead good quality Collective Worship. Acts of worship are appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils with themes based upon the scheme of work topic and the liturgical calendar. Appropriate planning that encompasses the religious beliefs and backgrounds of all pupils, shows progression as they journey from foundation stage to year six. Sacramental preparation is well embedded and senior leaders deliver the programme in the parish. Collective Worship has a significant impact on spiritual and moral development.

Leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship well. Leaders have a clear vision for its development, which is shared with and understood by the whole school community. They provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon the Church's liturgical year, seasons, rites and symbols through the provision of quality worship experiences. They provide opportunities for staff to worship together and ensure staff training in liturgical formation and spiritual development is a priority. The headteacher leads days of reflection at the start of the school year which are attended by all staff. Leaders ensure that the pupils have the best possible sacramental preparation and both the headteacher and Religious Education coordinator deliver the programme in the parish. Very good strategies are in place to monitor many aspects of Collective Worship and as a result the quality of Collective Worship continues to further develop and improve.

## THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

3

- 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

3

3

3

Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons, have good attitudes and want to do their best. Pupils are able to talk about their work in Religious Education, what it means to them, and what they gain from it. There are no notable differences between groups of learners and arrangements are in place to ensure that whenever necessary, pupils are supported in order to make progress according to their needs and capabilities. While pupils are very interested and enthusiastic about their learning, the presentation of their work in their books does not always accurately reflect the quality of the work they do. Attainment is in line with Diocesan averages with an increasing majority of pupils meeting age related expectations at the end of key stage two. Pupils' progress in Religious Education has steadily improved over the last three years, so that now, almost all pupils, in all groups, are making at least expected progress. Anomalies with teacher assessment indicate that not all staff are confident with levelling work accurately.

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education requires improvement although good teaching was observed during the inspection. Lessons are carefully planned but teachers do not consistently use assessment to plan differentiated activities that appropriately challenge all pupils, especially the more able. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and use a range of teaching strategies to engage pupils in their learning and help develop their independence as learners. Behaviour is generally good and pupils are beginning to understand their progress in Religious Education. In the best lessons, questioning is usually used well to probe pupils' understanding and challenge them further, and these lessons are generally well paced and hold pupils' interest throughout. Relationships between children, teachers and support staff are warm and constructive and contribute to their obvious keenness to learn. Assessments are regular and systematic although some examples of levelling seen during the inspection were not always accurate. Similarly, at its best, marking and feedback refer to key Religious Education skills and allow pupils the opportunity to respond to advice given in order to help them take the next steps in their learning. This good practice is not yet consistent across all year groups and the school recognises this as an area where development is still on-going.

The headteacher is committed to driving improvement and together with the committed RE coordinator, has high expectations. Assessment and tracking systems are in place as are procedures for monitoring pupil outcomes and lesson observations, however these are not yet consistent or rigorous enough to have had impact and feedback to staff does not give clear steps for improvement. The governing body is very supportive of the school, committed to its Catholic Life and is beginning to be more informed about the school's performance in Religious Education and what needs to be done to ensure continuous improvement in standards. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and have a good understanding of the challenges faced by the school.



## 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.

2

### RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

3

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

3

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

3

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

3

	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Catholic Life	1	1	1	1
Collective Worship	2	2	2	2
Religious Education	3	3	3	3
	2	2	2	2