

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



S48 Report
St Mary's RC Primary
Forest Hall

Great Lime Road
Forest Hall
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE 12 7AB

URN: 108620

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Mary's RC Primary School

Address: Great Lime Road
Forest Hall
Newcastle Upon Tyne
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School URN: 108620

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Fallon

Chair of Governors: Mrs Margaret Henderson

LeadInspector: Mrs Nora Moffatt

Date of Inspection 10 – 11 June 2013

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's is a smaller-than-average sized primary school with an increasing number of pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The executive headteacher, who is a national leader of education, took up post in May 2011 and leads two schools. When he is not present, two assistant headteachers lead the school. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. The school is now an accredited provider of the leadership programme, 'Successful teaching: successful learning'.

Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	155
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	61
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	21
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0.6
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	17.4
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	5.1
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	12.9

Staffing

Full time teachers:	6
Part time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	87
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	12.5

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

St Mary of the Rosary, Forest Hall
Our Lady and St Edmund, Backworth

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

KEY FINDINGS

- St Mary's is a good Catholic school. It is an inclusive school where everyone is welcomed, valued and affirmed with prayer and worship at the heart of the life of the school. The children, staff, parents and governors are proud of St Mary's school. The mission statement, 'Walk with us in our learning and our lives,' is lived out so that everyone strives to provide the children with a firm foundation for the future. The mission and ethos of Catholic education is lived out daily by staff and pupils alike. The executive headteacher and two assistant headteachers, supported by a very dedicated staff and very committed governing body – led by a strong chair of governors – have ensured rapid progress since the last inspection. The school is held in high regard by the pupils and parents.
- All areas from the last inspection have been addressed and the school continues to ensure that the Catholic Life of the school is given high priority. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding.
- The quality of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. It has the highest possible priority. Pupils are very keen to participate in the varied opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from them. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems are in place and result in continuing improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good. Pupils response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. From an early age pupils are encouraged and supported in their ability to plan and lead worship. Leaders and managers are continually seeking ways to further develop, promote, monitor and evaluate Collective Worship.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Learning and progress are at least good in each key stage and outstanding in some parts of the school. Teaching and assessment are good. The quality of Religious Education is not yet outstanding as there are inconsistencies in practice across the school.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Further develop the effectiveness of the learning process in Religious Education by:
 - ensuring that marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.
 - ensuring that best practice in pupil self-assessment is implemented consistently across the school.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - ensuring pupils have the opportunity to engage in a wider variety of prayer forms.
 - ensuring pupils have the opportunity to pray in a wide variety of settings, beyond the classroom.

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.

1

1

1

The quality of Catholic Life within St Mary's is outstanding. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. The pupils have a deep experience of belonging and are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and ethos and work tirelessly to promote this both within school and in both the local and global community. As part of the work of the Ethos Committee and the Peace and Justice Group they take a leading role in activities which promote the school's ethos, and speak with great enthusiasm and pride about the areas in which they have been involved. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they treat others with a high level of respect. The oldest pupils are very clear in their responsibilities and see themselves as role models for the younger pupils. They are proud of their own religious identity and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. Older pupils are very articulate when discussing the religious identity of their school, they deeply respect the Catholic traditions of the school and its links with the parish community and diocese. At the same time they both respect and appreciate those who come from other faith communities.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding and has the highest possible priority. The school's mission statement is a clear expression of the educational mission of the church. All staff and governors have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school; they are fully involved in nurturing and living out the school's mission statement and together they ask God to, 'Walk with us in our learning and our lives'. There is a tangible sense of community at all levels as evidenced by the excellent relationships that exist among and between staff, pupils, governors and parents. The school is a cheerful and prayerful community and its Catholic character is effectively reflected through displays and artefacts in the learning environment and the creation of many opportunities for prayer around the school, such as prayer journals in classes and prayer boards which the children delight in adding to. Clear policies and procedures are in place which provide the highest levels of pastoral support to all pupils and staff. High standards of moral and ethical behaviour are promoted through the schools' expectations. Behaviour policies are rooted in Gospel values and the teaching of the Catholic Church.

Leaders and managers are outstanding in promoting provision for the Catholic Life and mission of the school. The school's leadership team and governors alike are deeply committed to the church's mission in education and highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school. The headteacher, Religious Education leader and governors provide a very clear direction for the Catholic Life of the school and they are seen as role models by all and a source of inspiration in their development and sustenance of an authentic Catholic ethos. There is unequivocal and explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is the highest priority along with spiritual and moral development of pupils. This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation, which is a coherent reflection of monitoring and evaluation; clearly and explicitly focused on the Catholic Life of the school. This leads to well targeted planned improvement. As a result staff and pupils' understanding of the school's mission is outstanding. They share its purpose and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it. Consequently, pupils are able

to articulate the distinctive mission of the school very well. The school has successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers. Parents have a good understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. The work of the governors, led by a chair – who not only has a very high profile in school, but is also both very passionate and proactive – make a highly significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. The parish priest, along with other governors, are regular visitors to the school and are actively involved in its evaluation and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary.

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

Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. Prayer is integral to the everyday life of the school and pupils are keen to participate and are at ease when praying with their school community. They listen and sing with enthusiasm and respond to acts of worship with reverence and respect. Pupils write their own prayers and are beginning to be more involved in leading, planning and preparing Collective Worship throughout the school. There is a calm and peaceful ethos throughout the school which is reflected in the pupils' outstanding behaviour and consideration for others. Collective Worship contributes extremely positively to the spiritual, moral and personal development of pupils.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good and is given a high profile throughout the school and is well resourced. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and the school uses a good range of strategies to ensure that Collective Worship is both regular and inclusive. Through a well planned programme of Masses, liturgies, assemblies and other liturgical celebrations which are appropriately matched to the pupils' stages of development, pupils are given many opportunities to participate in a range of acts of worship. A variety of forms of prayer, including traditional prayers, scripture, music, symbols and artefacts are modelled well for the pupils. There is a focal point in each class with well thought out resources impacting significantly on the quality of prayer and which provides pupils with stimulus for thought and reflection. Sacramental preparation is well embedded and the school works effectively with the parish catechists. The school is now at the stage of seeking ways by which it can make more use of the children's own initiatives in planning, producing and leading prayer and worship independently and consistently.

Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Collective Worship is good. Both the headteacher and the Religious Education coordinator radiate energy and enthusiasm, giving good leadership and are models of good practice. Together they have a clear vision, sense of direction and understanding of what is required to bring about improvement and they share this with staff. They regularly seek the views of pupils, staff and parents regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school and respond to these findings appropriately. Their dedication and commitment are instrumental in the drive to provide high quality Collective Worship and quality prayer life throughout the school.

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

2

Pupils have a very positive attitude to their learning in Religious Education and work well together on shared tasks. The majority of pupils enter the school with skills below those expected from pupils their age. By the end of key stages one and two, the majority of pupils are achieving above average standards. Standards are rising rapidly. Progress is good for most pupils and there is little variation in the progress of different groups, including boys and girls, and those identified as having special educational needs. Most pupils are achieving well.

The quality of teaching in Religious Education is never less than good overall, often with outstanding features; in some classes it is outstanding. Teachers plan thoroughly for Religious Education lessons; in the best classes there is clear differentiation, with tasks built on prior learning. Lessons are stimulating, with activities that are imaginative and challenging. Pupils exhibit exemplary attitudes to Religious Education because lessons are made stimulating to engage them. The expectation for pupils is that, 'Only outstanding is good enough' as a result standards have risen rapidly and dramatically. All pupils are clear about targets, and some teachers use marking well to provide pupils with clear steps for improving their work. Pupils now need to be encouraged consistently to revisit each piece of work to improve it as a matter of course.

The self-evaluation of Religious Education by leaders and managers reflects rigorous monitoring, analysis by the headteacher and subject leader. This results in well targeted planning and strategic action taken by the school which lead to increasingly good outcomes in Religious Education. Leadership of Religious Education is informed by a high level of expertise and vision which focuses relentlessly on improving teaching and learning in Religious Education, resulting in teaching that is sometimes outstanding and never less than consistently good. The headteacher and subject leader provide leadership of Religious Education which is inspirational and has resulted in whole-hearted commitment from pupils and colleagues. As a consequence, Religious Education has a very high profile in the life of the school and is actively involved in initiatives within the school, having a profound impact on the moral and spiritual development of pupils and on their ability to discern their own unique vocations. The Religious Education curriculum is skilfully designed to match the full range of pupils' needs and to ensure highly effective continuity and progression in their learning. Excellent links are forged with the wider community and local parishes to provide a good range of enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and engagement. The curriculum enables pupils to gain first hand experiences of the liturgical life of the Catholic Church and of a wide diversity of religious and belief communities, through their visits to a mosque and a synagogue when studying world faiths. Religious Education is well resourced in terms of staffing and physical resources. The school meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference fully.

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

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

2

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