



St Mary's RC Primary School

Central Avenue, Newton Aycliffe, Durham, DL5 5NP

School Unique Reference Number: **114265**

Inspection dates: 06 – 07 March 2019
Lead inspector: Christine Ingle

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's RC Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- The school is a welcoming and inclusive community where the care of pupils is everyone's first thought. The school's mission statement, "Guided by faith, nurtured by love and inspired to achieve," is understood and lived out by the whole community.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. The school upholds its Catholic values and principles in an open and honest manner. The school works well in partnership with the parish and community, everyone values the work the school does.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. Pupils state they enjoy their lessons and appreciate the variety in the learning tasks they are given. Pupils make good progress across the school and can express how their learning in Religious Education impacts on their daily lives.
- Collective Worship at St Mary's is good. It is central to the life of the school and praying together is a well-established daily ritual. This area of school life is given a high priority and contributes well to the development of pupils both spiritually and morally. Leaders and managers have established effective systems to monitor Collective Worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Mary's is a smaller than average primary school situated in a residential area of Newton Aycliffe. It serves the parishes of St Mary's Newton Aycliffe and St Thomas' Shildon.
- Most pupils are from white British origin. There is a small number of pupils from other ethnic groups.
- The school provides for a wide social mix of families and 33% of the pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities is above the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop the formal monitoring of the Catholic Life of the school by:
 - extending the opportunities already offered to pupils to be part of this process.
- Further improve the quality of Religious Education teaching by:
 - ensuring pupils are clear about how to improve their work and are given targets that focus on the skills they need to develop.
 - ensure learning tasks are differentiated still further to meet the needs of all pupils.
 - ensure the consistent use of self and peer assessment to quicken pupil progress.
- Further develop pupil's skills in planning and leading Collective Worship by:
 - ensuring pupils have more opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship so that more pupils become confident and skilful in this area.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

2

- 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 good.

- Most pupils talk positively about the part they play in the Catholic Life of the school. They understand the school's mission statement as they were part of the working party that created it.
- Pupils know that everyone is respected and cared for in their school. It is a very inclusive community as proven by the recent attainment of the Inclusion Award.
- The behaviour of most pupils is good. They take care of each other and they know about saying sorry and forgiving others for mistakes. They are aware that this is how Jesus teaches us to behave.
- Pupils take on responsibility and a variety of leadership opportunities are available in school. They are beginning to monitor and suggest activities which could improve the Catholic Life of the school, but their role could be developed further.
- Pupils are keen to be involved in activities which help other people and regularly take part in fund raising for different causes. The Mini Vinnie group in school plays a large role in these activities. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the impact their help can have on those who need it.
- Most pupils value the Catholic traditions the school promotes and are aware of the parish and wider community and express pride at taking part in local activities such as supporting the food bank.

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

- The school mission statement, 'Guided by faith, nurtured through love and inspired to achieve,' is clearly articulated and understood by all who work and learn in the school. There is a strong sense of community and the relationships established in school are very supportive of the ethos.
- The staff commitment to the Catholic ethos is high and the school's Catholic character is clearly demonstrated in the learning environment through displays, posters, prayer focus areas and the prayer garden.
- Governors, parents, staff and pupils all talked about the high levels of respect and care given to all members of the school community.

- The school provides the highest level of pastoral care to its pupils and there is a great commitment to the most vulnerable. This is evidenced in the provision of the parent support worker, student social worker and counsellor. The work of this support team is highly valued by parents, pupils, governors and staff and they have a positive impact on the Catholic Life of the school.
- Pastoral programmes are in place and are regularly taught across the school supporting pupils as they learn about Catholic teachings and principles.
- The staff support each other well and the headteacher and governors are attentive to the needs of staff as well as pupils.

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

- Leaders and governors demonstrate a commitment to the mission of the Church. They are good role models and gospel values are evident in the warm welcome they give to visitors.
- The school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, produced by the headteacher and Religious Education coordinator, clearly show this area of school life is given a high priority.
- Catholic Life is monitored informally and via comments collected from parents' questionnaires and pupils in school. The school leadership team continue to be keen to make further improvement to systems.
- School staff attend regular continuing professional development (CPD) provided by the diocesan education team. Staff understand the role they have to play in developing and supporting the school's mission. The school is keen to follow diocesan policies and initiatives.
- The school is eager to work with parents and carers and during interviews these groups expressed a good understanding of the school's mission. Their support was very evident at the Ash Wednesday Mass and in the numbers attending the whole school celebration assembly.
- Governors are ambitious for the school and are keen to support the development of Catholic Life. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and in interview talked about their role in offering challenge to school leaders.

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 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 are keen to do well and state that they enjoy their learning in Religious Education lessons. They like the variety of tasks they are given and say many of them are fun.
- Behaviour in lessons is good. Children are engaged by their learning tasks and concentrate well. Lessons usually proceed without interruption.
- Pupils can talk about how well they are doing in Religious Education, but they are not always sure about the skills they need to work on to improve their work.
- Work in books shows most groups of pupils including those with special educational needs are making good progress. The use of self-assessment and peer assessment to increase pupil progress is not yet used consistently across the school.
- Most pupils are knowledgeable and can talk about the impact their learning in Religious Education has in everyday life. They state that their learning in Religious Education 'Helps us to understand and to know how to behave'.
- School data shows that the attainment of pupils is in line with Diocesan averages.

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

- Teachers use 'Come and See' materials to plan well. Lesson observations show teaching is mainly good.
- The majority of teachers use good subject knowledge and good questioning skills to bring about effective learning for most pupils.
- There is evidence that teachers use a variety of learning strategies and groupings to ensure pupils are well motivated in lessons.
- Good quality resources and additional adults are used effectively to optimise learning for most pupils. Sometimes tasks could be differentiated further to meet individual needs.
- Teachers regularly mark pupil's work and learning is accurately assessed but pupils are not always sure how to improve their learning. The use of self and peer assessment is not yet used consistently across the school.
- The achievement and effort of pupils is celebrated weekly in assemblies and in displays around the school.

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

- The Religious Education curriculum is planned to meet pupils' needs. It fulfils the requirements of the Bishop's conference in each key stage.
- Leaders and managers ensure that Religious Education has a high profile as a core subject. As a result, the correct time is given to the subject, it is well resourced, and staff attend regular diocesan training.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and based on established monitoring systems put in place by the headteacher and Religious Education coordinator. Feedback from these monitoring systems is further improving the quality of teaching across the school by addressing the small amount of weaker teaching.
- Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements in the areas identified but staffing changes and a school restructure have slowed the process.
- The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator are clear about any further improvements to be made. They are passionate that the provision and opportunities provided for pupils, continues to grow stronger.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and know their role is to challenge as well as support.

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

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2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship is good.

- Pupils act with respect and reverence during various forms of Collective Worship. They listen well to the key messages presented by adults and pupils offering opinions on which forms of Collective Worship they enjoy most and why.
- There is evidence that some pupils are involved in planning and leading Collective Worship and some can confidently speak about what they would include. However, the development of these skills is not yet consistent across the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's year and can talk about religious seasons and feasts in detail and with confidence. Other faith traditions are explored and respected.
- Pupils demonstrate in interviews that they are aware of a variety of prayer styles including prayers they write themselves, traditional set prayers, prayer journals, singing, dancing, quiet times and using the prayer garden or station in class.
- Participating in the school's Collective Worship has a positive effect on the pupil's spiritual and moral development as they can explain what is expected of a faith community. They explained this by saying, 'We follow the Gospels and do what Jesus showed us to do - like looking after each other, forgiving each other, sharing and helping other people'.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- At St Mary's prayer is central to the life of the school and praying together is a well-established daily ritual for staff and children.
- Collective Worship is well planned using 'Statements to Live By' to ensure the pupils hear a purposeful message that is relevant to their everyday life. Collective Worship ensures pupils have a clear understanding of liturgical seasons and Catholic traditions.
- Since the school's last diocesan inspection in 2013, leaders have ensured that there is more variety in the opportunities offered for Collective Worship. As a result most pupils are engaged and say they enjoy these experiences.
- Most staff have the skills to help pupils plan and lead Collective Worship and some pupils show confidence in this. However, the development of these skills, is not yet consistently implemented across the school.

- The parishioners and members of the local community regularly attend the school's Collective Worship opportunities and the books showing feedback from people who attend are very positive.

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

- Leaders and managers are committed to the provision of quality Collective Worship experiences and have the skills to provide them. They see it as part of the school's mission which is shared by all.
- The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator are passionate in ensuring Collective Worship gives pupils a clear understanding of liturgical seasons and Catholic traditions. They set good examples for all to follow.
- Leaders are active in promoting pupil's opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship. This is developing but not yet consistent across the school.
- Staff are offered regular opportunities to attend professional development. Liturgical and spiritual development is a priority and leaders know staff must feel valued and nurtured along with pupils.
- There are systems in place and evidence to show that leaders and governors regularly review the school's Collective Worship.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

2

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.

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

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

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Mary's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	114265
Local authority	Durham
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.	
Chair of governors	Fr Anthony Cornforth
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