

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



S48 Report
St Joseph's RC Primary School
Blackhall

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Joseph's RC Primary School

Address: Coast Road
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School URN: 114280

Headteacher: Mrs Marie-Louise Binks

Chair of Governors: Mrs Nicola Park

Lead Inspector: Karen Holmes

Team Inspector:

Date of Inspection 26-27 February 2013

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school where almost all pupils are white British. Although it is an area of considerable economic deprivation the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is average. The number of pupils supported at school action is above average and the number of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) are well above average. The headteacher has been in post since January 2011 and is currently seconded from a local school where she is also headteacher on a 0.5 basis. This arrangement should be formalised as permanent in the near future. There are three mixed age classes covering the age range from 4-11: reception and year one; years two and three; years four, five and six.

Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	77
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	13
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	49%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	32%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	5%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	14%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	5.2%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	27%

Staffing

Full time teachers:	3
Part time teachers:	1
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	75%

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 Joseph's, Blackhall

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

CATHOLIC LIFE

2

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

KEY FINDINGS

- St Joseph's is a good school. It is a very warm and welcoming community in which all share the headteacher's clear, determined vision for the school. The relatively new headteacher has a very accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is the driving force behind the recent improvements. All staff work as a very cohesive team committed to raising pupils' attainment and progress. Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been successfully addressed.
- Pupils' progress, attainment and understanding of the importance of Religious Education is good. Pupils enjoy lessons and are developing a good understanding of how Religious Education shapes their lives. The strong teaching evident in the school has been instrumental in the rapid improvement seen in pupils' attainment and progress this year. It is not yet outstanding because attainment is not consistent across age groups.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. Pupils make good use of the opportunities offered to them through the everyday life of the school, taking responsibility for a variety of activities which support their community. It is not yet outstanding because many of the systems for monitoring and evaluating are relatively new and not yet firmly embedded in the structure of the school.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good. Pupils are at ease when praying, using periods of reflection reverently and appropriately. Pupils are involved in opportunities to plan and prepare worship. It is not yet outstanding because the pupils are still building up their skills to provide high quality Collective Worship.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

To improve further the school needs to:

- Continue to raise achievement by:
 - Ensuring that pupils are consistently involved in evaluating how well they achieve by understanding their targets and how these relate to levels.
 - Ensuring that pupils have a detailed understanding of what they need to do to improve their work
- Continue to improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Encouraging all pupils to lead themselves more confidently in worship with enthusiasm and joy
 - Providing further opportunities to embed links with the school, Church and family
 - Ensuring that liturgical and spiritual development is seen as a priority in the professional development of all staff

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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Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. The mission statement is central to the life of the school. Pupils are actively involved, participating willingly, in the evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school. The very effective 'Rights Respecting Ambassadors' are outstanding role models, demonstrating positive attitudes and values throughout the school community. Relationships within the school are very positive and pupils value the opportunities they are given. The school council are actively involved in planning events within school and with a variety of partnership schools. They fully appreciate the community that they are a part of, promoting the ethos of the school very effectively when involved with activities such as planning and raising funds to improve the playground. The behaviour of the pupils is now good as a result of the very high priority and efforts of staff and governors to work with pupils and families to raise expectations. Behaviour management follows UNICEF guidelines and because of this pupils are polite, caring and very aware of those in need. Pupils demonstrate good understanding of Gospel values- 'Don't judge anyone because God doesn't judge you'. Pupils respond well to the many varied opportunities that school provides for their personal development. They work well with each other, demonstrating good emotional awareness. Pupils routinely have access to a good range of support strategies such as 'Listening Matters' and, as a result, pupils are confident and happy. They are considerate to others, respond to the needs of people beyond the school and understand the need for forgiveness. Pupils value the Catholic tradition of their school and are very proud of it. They are aware of the importance of spiritual values and show an interest in, and knowledge of, the religious life of others. Pupils are aware of the key celebrations in the liturgical year and recognise their importance. They are becoming increasingly more involved with parish activities and celebrations due to the new parish priest who actively encourages this.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good. All staff are fully committed to the vision of the school and see the mission statement as a way of achieving this. Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils and the school is a supportive and caring community. Staff, parents, governors and pupils work together as a cohesive team providing challenge and support for each other, ensuring that Christ is at the centre of all that takes place at St Joseph's. There are clear signs of the school's Catholic character throughout the school with high priority given to sacred spaces in classrooms, as well as an additional special area created for liturgies and silent prayer. Thoughtful liturgies and assemblies provide time for pupils to reflect and share thoughts linked to Gospel values. Themed worship, linked with Ethos Statements, provides good opportunity for spiritual and moral development. Clear policies and procedures are now in place with high levels of pastoral care provided for all pupils with a commitment to the most needy and vulnerable. Personal, Social and Health Education is seen as a strength of the school with support packages seen as fundamental provision. The school recognises that supporting the pastoral needs of staff is an area which requires development and has plans to address this.

The relatively new headteacher and parish priest are sources of inspiration for the whole community. They are firmly and deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and are excellent role models for parents and staff. They nurture the Catholic ethos of the school and have high aspirations for future developments. Leaders successfully promote a welcoming and caring ethos, which reflects Gospel values. Together they have a clear vision and a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. Leaders use their monitoring and evaluating to form an accurate analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, building on the many strengths and tackling any areas identified for development. Staff and pupils work together to live the mission of the school with understanding and appreciation. Staff are highly ambitious for all pupils who are encouraged to be the best that they can be. The school has highly successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers, some of whom have found working with school difficult in the past. The highly successful 'Stay and Play' strategy encourages families to engage with the school from an early age. Governors are highly ambitious for the school and share in the aspirations of the headteacher. They work effectively with the headteacher and are highly visible around school, committed to upholding the strong, caring ethos that exists. They contribute significantly to the Catholic Life, are passionate about the school's mission and are prepared 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.

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Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. Acts of worship engage the interest of all pupils and provoke thoughtful responses. They participate willingly in whole school and class worship. During acts of worship pupils are given opportunities to reflect and they do so with reverence. Pupils enjoy this time to 'communicate with God' and 'feel calmed' while doing so. They are at ease when praying within their school community, listening carefully and joining in appropriately. Pupils now regularly prepare and lead worship with increased confidence and independence, using a variety of approaches appropriate to their age and development. School recognises that although children enjoy Collective Worship they need to develop more confidence and enthusiasm in their approach. Adults are excellent role models for the pupils and support them well in becoming more skilled in independently preparing their own worship. Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical celebrations and are able to prepare for these celebrations, in line with their age and ability. Pupils show respect for different faiths and awareness that religious beliefs are important. Collective Worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of their background.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good and is increasingly given a high profile throughout the school. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship with a well-structured programme of liturgies and assemblies which are shared with parents on a regular basis. The whole school attend Mass at the parish church on a weekly basis and opportunities for more family participation are hoped to be developed in the future. Prayer opportunities are offered to pupils throughout the day where pupils and staff are given time to reflect and share thoughts. There is also a weekly reflection, where pupils and adults can choose to come and pray. All classes have a spiritual focal point with well thought out resources which provide the pupils with stimuli for thought and reflection. All staff work with pupils to enable them to plan, prepare and lead worship carefully planned for their developmental age. Sacramental preparation is now well embedded and in line with Diocesan policy. The school works effectively with the parish. The school is now at the stage of seeking ways to increase links with the parish and have more involvement for families.

Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Collective Worship is good. The headteacher is a source of inspiration for staff and pupils, radiating energy and enthusiasm as she lives out her vision for the school, providing an excellent role model throughout the school. The Religious Education coordinator provides good leadership and support for all staff. Together they have a clear sense of direction and understanding of what is required to bring about further improvement and this is communicated well to all staff. Staff work together to show a shared vision and the strong values placed upon all aspects of Collective Worship. The head teacher and Religious Education coordinator regularly seek the views of pupils, staff and parents regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship and use this to inform the planning of new initiatives. They are dedicated and passionate in their drive to provide high quality Collective Worship and quality prayer throughout the school. The views of pupils, staff and parents are valued highly and acted upon to ensure Collective Worship continues to evolve throughout the school and parish community.

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

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The quality of learning and progress for pupils in Religious Education is now good. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education and have positive attitudes to learning because they are 'learning about the love of God'. Pupils start school with knowledge and skills well below what is expected for their age, however they make good progress throughout the school and current data indicates that standards at the end of each key stage are now at the expected level. While attainment has been below Diocesan averages historically, there has been a big improvement this year and data shows that 100% of pupils in year two will achieve a level two this year (the standard expected of them) and 77% of pupils in year six will achieve a level four. This puts attainment at least in line with Diocesan averages. Progress is good and 100% of pupils who had key stage one data in 2012 achieved the level expected of them. There are no differences in attainment between boys and girls or SEN. Progress and attainment are now more secure due to the detailed tracking system recently implemented. Pupils take pride in their work and see their Religious Education lessons as 'time to communicate with God.' They are becoming increasingly religiously literate and becoming more articulate in their responses.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good with some examples of outstanding practice evident. In the best lessons, motivated, inspiring teaching fully engages the pupils. They feel that teachers make their lessons enjoyable and fun. Pupils demonstrate good levels of engagement and positive attitudes to learning. There is now clear evidence in pupils' work of accelerated progress and attainment in line with what is expected. Differentiation is very well managed in the mixed age classes, with pupils working at their own level and making good progress. Staff have high expectations and are enthusiastic in their approach to Religious Education which they communicate very effectively to pupils. Staff are increasingly confident in their subject knowledge and plan exciting activities to enthuse and engage the pupils. An interview with a parent regarding her views of love and her faith was planned, executed and recorded by the pupils for the class to see. The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement in Religious Education and the new tracking system has had a direct impact on standards. Moderation with other Catholic schools has ensured that assessments are accurate. Marking is detailed and thorough with 'I Can' statements used by teacher and pupils. However it does not detail the next steps in learning so that pupils know how to improve their work or how to move onto the next level. While pupils generally know their targets, they are not clear about how these can help them to improve their work.

The monitoring of provision and outcomes by leaders and managers is now good. In a relatively short period of time the headteacher has accurately identified the schools strengths and areas for development. She has put in place actions to bring about improvement and these are evident throughout the school. All staff have a strong commitment to her vision and this is evident in the progress that all pupils are making. The analysis of data is grounded in a very secure knowledge of each individual and their needs as one parent commented, 'they are not just a number - all individuals have a story'. School development planning is focused and builds on areas of strength. The enthusiasm of staff is channelled by the headteacher and Religious Education coordinator to good effect and as a result teaching has improved with nothing that is inadequate and much that is good. The Religious Education curriculum is carefully shaped to match pupils needs and interest while meeting the requirements of the Bishop's Conference, governors are well informed and very active in the school: they have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses and use this to challenge and support the leadership team. Effective use is made of the links with other agencies and local schools to provide a good range of enrichment activities and support to promote pupils' learning and engagement such as the Youth Ministry Team retreat for year six. All staff and governors share the vision in the School Improvement Plan to raise attainment and ensure that the curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the pupils and make a positive contribution to their moral and spiritual development.

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

2

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	2	2	1	2
Collective Worship	2	2	2	2
Religious Education	2	2	2	2
	2	2	2	2