

St Joseph's RCVA Primary School

Prince Consort Road, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE8 1LR

School Unique Reference Number: **108383**

Inspection dates:	04 – 05 February 2014
Lead inspector:	Barbara Simpson

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Collective Worship:		Good	2
Religious Education:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Joseph's RCVA Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the whole community is at the heart of shaping the school's mission and ethos and as a result all feel a deep sense of belonging, enthusiastically living out their faith, both in school and in the wider community.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good because pupils act with reverence, participate enthusiastically and regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence.
- The quality of Religious Education is good because pupils enjoy Religious Education, can explain its value and are keen to do well, leading to good progress in most lessons.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The practice of children planning and leading Collective Worship is not consistent between classes.
- Some acts of Collective Worship lack creativity, and pupils should experience acts of worship in a wider variety of forms and dimensions.
- There are inconsistencies across the school in the pace of learning in lessons.
- Leadership of Religious Education is not yet sufficiently dynamic and rigorous.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Joseph's is an average sized primary school in the heart of the town of Gateshead.
- Most pupils are of white British heritage, although there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups and those who speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for pupil premium is well above the national average and increased considerably in 2013.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is more than double the national average but there are fewer supported with school action plus or with a statement of special educational need.
- Since the last inspection there have been a number of changes in teaching staff, particularly in key stage one and the Religious Education subject leader is relatively new to the post.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of class based Collective Worship so that it is consistently good by:
 - Further developing creativity and imagination in worship in all its forms.
 - Introducing a greater variety of ways to express spirituality.
- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - Developing the expertise, vision and confidence of the Religious Education subject leader.
 - Developing the skills of the subject leader in order to ensure there is a relentless focus on improving teaching and learning.

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

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1

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

- Pupils are at the heart of shaping the school's mission and ethos. All pupils know their mission statement by heart and most have a deep understanding of how to live out their mission in school and in the wider community. They have a deep experience of belonging and enthusiastically embrace the demands that membership of the community entails.
- Behaviour is exemplary and pupils feel safe and cared for. They report that there is no bullying and that minor disagreements are soon resolved.
- Pupils are alert to the needs of others, seeking justice within and beyond the school community through activities such as membership of Mini Vinnies, collections for a food bank and support of local and national charities.
- Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual growth and have a strong sense of personal worth. They treasure the outward signs of the school's identity. They deeply value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school, even though many are not Catholic themselves, and value links with the parish community, taking part in parish activities such as Masses and other celebrations with enthusiasm.
- There are good links between school and parish which are greatly supported by governors, parents and parish members. The school benefits greatly from a nominated governor responsible for promoting school/parish links.

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

- The school's mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the church, which was developed through a collaborative effort by all staff, pupils and governors. Pupils and staff articulately express a commitment to its implementation across the curriculum and the whole life of the school.
- There is a tangible sense of community at all levels, which parents described as a family feeling, evidenced in the quality of relationships between staff, pupils, parents and governors. The learning environment reflects the school's mission through displays and signs of the school's Catholic character.
- There are clear policies and structures to provide pastoral care and an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and needy, for example the school's enthusiastic welcome and support of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Programmes for Personal, Social and Health Education and Relationship and Sexual Education have been thoughtfully designed and carefully planned in line with Catholic

teaching. The highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour are promoted through clear and consistent communication of the school's expectations.

- Pupils' achievements are recognised at weekly celebration assemblies and through displays throughout the school and on the school website.

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

- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the church's mission in education. Leaders, including governors, are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration to the whole community, leading to highly effective monitoring of the Catholic Life of the school.
- The development and sustenance of an authentic Catholic ethos, including a chaplaincy role, is seen as a core leadership responsibility. The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's self evaluation and leads to well targeted planned improvements.
- Leaders provide outstanding leadership of the Catholic Life of the school by continually seeking out new ways to make links with the parish and the wider community.
- Staff, governors 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. Parents and carers also have a good understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it.
- The governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example in emphasising it as a development priority. They are passionate about the school's mission, 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.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

2

2

2

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

- St Joseph's is a prayerful community where pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in Collective Worship in all its forms. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship from reception class upwards. This is done with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence, appropriate to their age and development. They use a variety of approaches to prayer, including scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music. They told the inspector that they enjoyed leading worship.
- Outstanding practice was observed in reception class when pupils prepared and led worship on the theme of jewels. When asked, one pupil told the inspector they had chosen the theme of jewels because God is precious and in our hearts. The teachers and pupils had a good understanding of the purpose of worship; however this understanding is not consistent throughout the school and as a result Collective Worship sometimes feels routine rather than moving or inspiring.
- Pupils are at ease in sharing prayer experiences with those of different faiths and none, making Collective Worship inclusive.
- Pupils participate actively and with enthusiasm in the school's sacramental preparation programme following diocesan guidelines.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Staff and pupils pray together regularly and prayer is a daily part of school life.
- Acts of Collective Worship are well resourced and planned, as a result they are engaging and all members of the community - pupils, staff, parents and governors, speak positively about these opportunities and are able to point out particular examples that were engaging or inspiring.
- Collective Worship is centred on clear themes and messages. Chosen liturgical themes are consistent with the season and Catholic character of the school but are also inclusive of those who are of other faiths.
- Attendance by other adults associated with the school is encouraged and the response is mostly good. A good number of parents, grandparents and governors attend the weekly whole school Collective Worship, usually led by one class, and parents stay for refreshments afterwards, making it a pleasant community occasion, which they said they valued.

- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in helping pupils to plan and develop worship. Most have a good understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the various forms it can take, however this understanding is applied in a way that is not sufficiently creative or inspirational.
- Staff have a good understanding of the church's rites and seasons and ensure that pupils have a good experience of the church's liturgical life.

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

- Leaders know how to plan and provide good quality experiences of Collective Worship. They are able to lead the school in its understanding of the liturgical year, its rites and symbols in a way that engages pupils. Most pupils respond well and act reverently during worship.
- Liturgical and spiritual development is part of the professional development cycle for leaders and targets for improving Collective Worship are included in teachers' annual appraisal reviews.
- Leaders also offer staff in the school regular opportunities to develop their spiritual and liturgical understanding through attendance at a variety of diocesan professional development courses.
- Leaders and managers lead Collective Worship within school and are models of good practice for staff and pupils, however they do not model a sufficiently wide range of forms of worship and so are not currently encouraging staff and pupils to be more creative and interactive. The outstanding practice observed is not yet sufficiently developed throughout the school.
- Leaders and managers regularly review Collective Worship as part of the self evaluation process and are keen to continue to improve the quality of its provision. Some staff have taken part in diocesan Collective Worship professional development enabling them to develop their own skills and those of their pupils. Current performance management targets for teachers will ensure that this opportunity is extended to all staff.
- The views of parents, governors and pupils are sought and parents and governors often comment upon the high quality of worship, evidenced in parental questionnaires and interviews.

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.

2

2

2

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

- Most pupils enjoy Religious Education and can explain its value. They know it is a core subject. They are keen to do well, apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace. Behaviour for learning is excellent.
- Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are secure in their understanding.
- Across the school pupils are developing and applying a range of skills well, including independence, imagination and the ability to interpret sources, to engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives. For example, in a year five class, pupils were observed learning to make links from the old testament story of the Passover to the Lamb of God and their own faith.
- Pupils cooperated well with each other in paired and group work, listening to each other and taking turns.
- Pupils were seen making good and sometimes rapid progress during lessons and most showed a good and sometimes outstanding level of understanding of topics they were studying.
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities are well supported and are achieving well. Inspection findings show no notable difference between groups of learners.
- Due to the state of transition in level expectations across all diocesan schools, the current averages for attainment and progress are not reliable benchmarks. Therefore no judgement will be made in this report against diocesan averages for either attainment or progress.

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

- Teaching is mainly good with examples of outstanding practice. Therefore most pupils and groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with SEN, make good progress over time.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education which they communicate effectively to pupils. Pupils are reminded at the beginning of each Religious Education lesson that this subject is different to others. Teachers have a confident level of subject knowledge which they use well in planning and teaching.
- They use a good range of resources and teaching strategies to promote good lessons and use time well to secure good learning across a range of lessons.
- Teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, skilfully intervening when necessary, so maximising pupils' learning. As a result of good assessment procedures teachers and teaching assistants have a good awareness of pupils' needs and plan to meet them. Tasks are very well differentiated and pupils are given clear

advice about how to reach each level of attainment.

- One very effective strategy observed is the way that groups of pupils are sent to work on their independent tasks, whilst others stay for further teaching.
- Marking and constructive feedback across the school tells pupils how to improve and they are given time to respond and they are developing their ability to self-evaluate.

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

- Leaders conduct a range of systematic monitoring activities of provision and outcomes in Religious Education, including work scrutiny, joint lesson observations and planning scrutiny. They use this monitoring analysis in their rigorous self-evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- The Religious Education development plan is founded on sound evidence and evaluation of data. It tackles key areas for development, whilst building on areas of strength.
- The leadership team is becoming increasingly well informed about current developments in Religious Education, so they are able to effectively monitor, improve and support effective teaching. As a result teaching is improving with most lessons observed being at least good.
- As a result of increasingly good quality leadership, Religious Education has a prominent profile in the school and makes a positive contribution to the moral and spiritual development of pupils. The subject leader for Religious Education has only relatively recently been appointed to the role but is keen to develop her leadership skills and confidence and is rapidly doing so enthusiastically supported by the staff and senior leadership team.
- The Religious Education curriculum is designed to meet pupils' needs and ensure progress in learning. It compares favourably with other core subjects in terms of staffing, resources and time. Staff regularly tell pupils that Religious Education is different from other subjects as it permeates their whole lives.
- Good links with other schools in the Catholic cluster, the parish and other agencies provide a range of enrichment activities, for example an annual retreat to Holy Island, which is funded by the parish.

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

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Joseph's RCVA Primary School
Unique reference number	108383
Local authority	Gateshead
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, (c.f. Code Canon Law, 804, 806), and for the Governing Body of the school (Education Act 2005, Section 48). The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.	
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