



St Catherine's RC Primary School

Greystoke Gardens, Sandyford, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE2 1PS

School Unique Reference Number: **108507**

Inspection dates:	20 – 21 November 2017
Lead inspector:	Carolyn Duffy

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Catherine's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because there is a very strong sense of an inclusive and just community where the mission of Catholic education epitomised in the school mission statement, 'Let your Light Shine' is palpable in every aspect of school life. Behaviour is exemplary and pastoral care for all pupils ensures that the needs of pupils are quickly identified and supported.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding because prayer and worship are at the very heart of the school. All pupils of all faiths are reflective, enthusiastic, reverent and thoughtful in their worship and prayer.
- The quality of Religious Education is good because pupils enjoy and are influenced by their Religious Education lesson. They are keen to do well and improve their knowledge and understanding and make good progress. It is not yet outstanding due to pupils being given insufficient guidance on how to improve their work.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- This is an average sized primary school serving the parish of St Dominic's, Shieldfield, Newcastle.
- There are approximately 37% of pupils of white British heritage with the remainder of pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds.
- The school has approximately 40% of pupils who are Christian of which 25% are baptised Catholic pupils. There are 31% of pupils of other world faiths. Approximately 50% of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having a special education need is well below average.
- The school offers a breakfast club together with a variety of other school clubs which are well supported by parents and pupils.
- St Catherine's has a high level of pupil mobility with significant numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school other than in the normal admission round. Pupils joining the school may not complete the full key stage or remain pupils for longer than two to three years. The majority of pupils who transfer into St Catherine's out of the normal admission round have little or no English, may be of other world faiths or none and very few have attended a Catholic school.
- The school has recently been awarded the honour of International School by the British Council and achieved the 'Investing in Children' award.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education by:
 - Ensuring that teachers' marking provides regular and frequent feedback to pupils clearly identifying how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Introducing more creativity and variety in worship to build upon the already strongly embedded formats of prayer and worship.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF 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.
- 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 outstanding.

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. They are involved in shaping and evaluating the school mission statement and in determining how the school develops and extends provision. One year six pupil described being part of a Catholic school just before Christmas 'is about more than just being jolly and giving presents'. She described it as 'being able to express yourself fully as a person through preparing for the birth of Jesus'.
- They talk confidently and proudly of the many charitable initiatives within school and the contribution they have made. For example, pupils nominate and speak about a variety of charitable opportunities throughout the year and then pupils vote on which charities or themes to pursue. One charity agreed on after this was 'Team Evie' a charity formed by parents following the death of a baby and which the pupils regularly support with donations.
- Behaviour of all pupils is exemplary and pupils talk easily about how they deal with any issues or problems which arise. There is a strong sense of personal responsibility about choices made and how staff support pupils in managing difficult situations. For example, pupils described how they try to 'talk things out' if they have a disagreement and how staff will facilitate a 'just resolution' if pupils misbehave.
- Pupils are genuinely proud of each other's accomplishments and celebrate how their behaviour reflects the school mission statement 'Let your light shine'. Evidence of this is portrayed throughout school with certificates as well as verbal examples.
- All pupils are proud of their school and of their school identity which reflects a wide variety of world cultures and faiths. These differences are celebrated through exploration of other faiths but also in a wide range of displays such as 'Universal Family' and school booklets which confirm that each pupil and their family is a unique and special gift from God.

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

- St Catherine's school is a vibrant faith community where all are valued and the unique nature of individuals is celebrated. 'Be who God wants you to be and you will set the world on fire' (St Catherine of Sienna), is the first message which greets pupils and visitors to the school.

- All staff are committed to ensuring that pupils experience the love of God through the explicit taught curriculum, together with their role modelling of relationships, justice and pastoral support for the vulnerable and care for those in times of need.
- Within classrooms, corridors and external areas, the school environment reflects the school's mission and identity with a variety of displays and spaces for prayer and reflection together with a wide range of informative displays of pupils work. For example pupils have contributed to 'Gods Work of Art' tapestry, 'Love our Planet' frieze and 'Creation is a Caress from God' display which all demonstrate pupils' participation and understanding of the Catholic Life of the school.
- All policies including behaviour, Relationship and Sex Education and Personal, Social and Health Education are rooted in Gospel values and carefully planned and implemented to support pupils. There is equal attention given to the needs of staff.

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 outstanding. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors demonstrate a deep commitment to Catholic education and the church's mission for all pupils and their families in school, in the parish and beyond. For example, the headteacher speaks in St Dominic's to the parish after mass about the work of the school and asks for their comments. These are then incorporated into the school improvement plan. In addition there is a dedicated school notice board in church to inform parishioners of the actions taken to address their needs.
- The headteacher is a role model for the school's mission and demonstrates a strong witness and deep commitment to his faith and responsibility as a leader. Parents say the one thing they would like for the future is to ensure the headteacher does not leave/retire because of the impact he has on the Catholic Life of the school.
- Governors and the senior leadership team collaborate closely to promote high quality learning experiences for all pupils which allows pupils to succeed and fulfil the school's mission statement.
- Staff are actively encouraged to undertake the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies and almost half of the teachers have completed this course.
- The Catholic Life and Religious Education working group are highly effective and hold the leadership team to account through learning walks, scrutiny and analysis of questionnaires, discussions with pupils and parents whilst supporting the development of initiatives to further the school mission.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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

- Collective Worship engages all pupils and they respond with deep thought, palpable enthusiasm and joy. Pupils are reverent when listening to the word of God and reflective when thinking about what that means for them in today's world. For example, after listening to Paul's letter to the Colossians, pupils were able to make links to the words of Martin Luther King and identify how, as Christians, they should try to live today.
- Pupils are skilled and experienced appropriate to their age, and work in liturgy teams to plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship. This is well embedded within the school and pupils take increasingly more responsibility as they move through the school. Pupils are experienced in following a format and are confident in using music, scripture, silence and other religious artefacts in their liturgies with increasing skill. However pupils are not given the opportunity to be more creative or imaginative when planning liturgies.
- From the youngest pupils, there is an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, special feasts and liturgical colours. For example pupils in key stage one were able to explain that the colours on the prayer tables will change in Advent.
- Pupils eagerly participate in opportunities for prayer and reflection offered by the school or by parish catechists such as the Rosary groups throughout October. There is also a spiritual garden and prayer space for pupils to use to reflect with their peers in times of joy and sadness. For example, when a child was recently bereaved a small group held their own quiet worship time in the spiritual garden, without any staff present.
- Times for worship are valued by pupils who remind staff regularly that they are the liturgy team for that week or that they would like to share a liturgy for some particular pupil or occasion. One pupil reported that they felt 'their worries had been washed away' after the class liturgy.
- Respect for other faiths is also central to St Catherine's and pupils reflect sensitively and with genuine enthusiasm to their peers when celebrating other world faith festivals such as Eid, Hanukah etc. Pupils are skilled and confident to talk about difference whilst acting with sensitivity and integrity when praying with others who may not share the same beliefs. For example, the pupil group described how they might ask their peers to close their eyes, hold hands or 'just relax and think' when sharing in a prayer.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship is central to everything in school and pupils are highly engaged, respectful, enthusiastic and joyful from the earliest stages. Opportunities for pupils to be involved in Collective Worship take place throughout the week as a whole school, in phases and in class liturgies.
- All Collective Worship has a clear purpose, message and direction. For example, the school uses 'Nurturing Human Wholeness' statements as the basis for the majority of school Collective Worship and each class takes the message from the liturgy back to their classroom where it is placed in a prominent position for all to see, read and reflect. Pupils readily describe how this influences their behaviour on a day by day basis as they see it and think about it frequently. One pupil described that she 'keeps it in her mind at break time and lunchtime so that she can really try to help others'.
- Teachers model parts of the liturgy for pupils as they begin to take on the role of planning and leading and this decreases as pupil become more confident and skilled.
- Staff also pray together on a regular and frequent basis and have opportunities for their own spiritual development through retreats (Holy Island) and reflective time together. This spiritual time is an essential part of their on-going formation as leaders of Catholic education.
- Opportunities for parents, governors and parishioners to share in Collective Worship with pupils are planned throughout the year and attendance is outstanding. Parents reported that these times are very powerful for them when they see their own children so reverently engaged in worship.

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

- Leaders have experience and knowledge of how to plan and lead high quality liturgies for pupils. They are excellent role models, have expert knowledge of the church's liturgical seasons, rites and traditions and lead the pupils to an ever deepening relationship with God. The headteacher is highly visible in this role and always leads whole school worship.
- Leaders and managers frequently monitor the quality of Collective Worship. Pupils, parents and staff provide feedback on their experiences and leaders value these and act swiftly to improve and extend provision and opportunities for staff and pupils in school.
- Support for staff to further their own knowledge and experience is given high priority and time and resources are allocated to on-going formation. Continuing professional development is given a high priority and appropriately resourced.
- Governors and the headteacher have been astute in their recruitment and have appointed teachers with good subject knowledge and an ability to teach Religious Education effectively. 82% of teachers are of the Catholic faith. Together with regular opportunities for training and sharing of good practice, staff have an excellent understanding and knowledge of the church's liturgical heritage and are skilled in promoting and modelling high quality liturgies for pupils.
- The Religious Education coordinator regularly updates the staff on any diocesan wide developments to promote or enhance liturgy.

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

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

- Pupils are passionate about Religious Education, describe it as one of the best lessons they have and can explain its value. They are keen to do well and improve. Pupils are highly motivated and engaged, enthusiastic in group and paired work, able to reflect on meaning and able to consider the impact of religious ideas and teaching on their own lives.
- Behaviour in all classes is exemplary and there was no disruption to lessons.
- Most pupils are making progress in lessons and over time. They quickly acquire knowledge and are able to identify links with previous learning. They enjoy improving their work and are given time to do so following prompts from the teacher to include another example or include a further fact. However pupils are not yet given specific guidance on how to improve their work.
- Standards of attainment at the end of key stage one are in line with diocesan averages.
- Standards of attainment in year four and year six are more variable. This is partly due to the high levels of mobility of pupils transferring in and out of the school mid-year and their relatively short time span, of 2-3 years, in school.
- Pupils' books evidence a good quantity of work, range of strategies and a good standard of attainment although there is some evidence of inconsistent standards of presentation.

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

- Teaching is good and most pupils and groups of pupils are making good progress over time.
- Religious Education is taught using creative and imaginative resources which engage pupils and ensure they achieve and enjoy their lessons.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use 'Come and See' together with Diocesan curriculum plans and their own creativity to ensure pupils are offered a rich and interesting curriculum experience. For example, starting a new topic, pupils in year six were using 'The Boy who Learned to Fly' to reflect on expectations whilst in year five pupils were asked to 'freeze frame' emotions whilst thinking about 'waiting'.
- Assessment is used throughout lessons to check pupils understanding with effective questioning leading to pupils responding articulately and with considered thought. Marking is regular and 'Think Pink' is used to prompt pupils to improve their work with further detail or information. Pupils are not yet given constructive feedback on how to improve their

work.

- 'I can' statements are used across the school to support pupils in evaluating how well they have achieved which gives them greater confidence.
- Additional adult support is well used in all lessons, ensuring good progress for most pupils.
- Pupils' achievement and contributions are recognised and celebrated both in class and with a 'Let your Light Shine' award.

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

- The commitment and expertise of the Religious Education coordinator has had a significant impact upon the quality of Religious Education. She has used every opportunity to implement Diocesan advice and guidance to support colleagues in their teaching and assessment of Religious Education.
- Leaders and managers review teaching and assessment regularly. Governors are regular visitors to school and have formed an Religious Education and Catholic Life group. As a result the school improvement plan for Religious Education is coherent, rigorous and relevant. The coordinator knows the strengths and areas for improvement and is able to plan decisively to make improvements in a timely and effective manner. This leads to improving outcomes and more rapid progress for pupils and groups of pupils.
- Leaders actively encourage and support teachers to complete the Certificate in Catholic Religious Studies. St Catherine's have 45% of teachers who have now completed the course. This has ensured that teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- Pupil tracking systems are well embedded but kept continually under review to ensure that data is robust, relevant and used effectively to plan to meet individual pupil's needs ensuring continuity and progression.
- Sacramental preparation is given a high priority, fully embedded in the curriculum, delivered in partnership with the catechists of St Dominic's and is in line with Diocesan guidelines.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

1

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:

1

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

1

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

1

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.

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Catherine's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108507
Local authority	Newcastle
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese 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	Mrs J Hastie
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