



St Columba's RC Primary School

Station Road, Wallsend, Tyne and Wear, NE28 8EN, [Click here to enter text.](#)

School Unique Reference Number: **108625**

Inspection dates:	27– 28 January 2014
Lead inspector:	Elaine White
Team inspector:	Victoria Lindsay

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

- St Columba's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. It is very clear as soon as you enter the school that the prime purpose is Catholic education, helping children to develop their faith to understand that God loves them
- The quality of Religious Education is good. The areas for improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed and the school is continuing to ensure that all pupils make good progress because of good teaching.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. Governors, senior leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life and take a leading role in activities which promote the school's ethos within the school and wider community.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good. Prayer is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The quality of Religious Education is inconsistent across the school. Some lessons are not sufficiently planned and differentiated to meet the needs and interests of all children.
- In Collective Worship there are limited opportunities for pupils to plan and prepare worship independently.
- Marking does not provide specific guidance for children to help them to improve their work in Religious Education.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Columba's is an average sized primary school which serves the parishes of Our Lady and St Columba's, St Bernadette's, St Aidan's and St Francis.
- The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in local authority care or for service families, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is in line with the national average whilst the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of Catholic Life by:
 - Continuing with the identified plans and actions that are already in place.
- Improve Collective Worship by:
 - Ensuring that all staff have a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the wide variety of forms, methods and strategies to facilitate high quality Collective Worship.
 - Ensuring that children's skills in planning and leading worship are extended.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - Ensuring that the more able pupils are consistently challenged.
 - Ensuring tasks are sufficiently challenging to allow all pupils access to the higher levels.
 - Ensuring that marking is consistently providing information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.

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 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 and gain much benefit from it. They are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and are able to express their own beliefs with confidence having a good understanding of how their faith impacts on their own lives and the lives of others.
- Relationships within the school are very positive and pupils value the many opportunities that they are given. They are actively involved throughout the school taking on responsibilities very conscientiously and enthusiastically, such as Buddies, Eco Club members and school councillors. Pupils say they feel valued and are proud of their school.
- Pupils are very conscious of the needs of those beyond school and have a strong sense of justice and concern for others, they can articulate their views with confidence, explaining the purpose of fundraising for charities such as CAFOD 'World Gifts' scheme, St Oswald's Hospice, St Cuthbert's Fair, Children in Need and Rwanda. Most pupils have a strong sense of morals and justice which helps them to understand their place in the world and the influence they can have to make the world a better place.
- Pupils work well together demonstrating very positive and enthusiastic attitudes to all aspects of school life. Behaviour is very good and often exemplary; pupils are extremely polite and considerate of others demonstrating good emotional awareness. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a very good understanding and importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people.

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

- The school's provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given a very high priority with the school's mission statement permeating throughout.
- The school is a vibrant, happy and prayerful community and its Catholic character is reflected through attractive displays and artefacts in the rich learning environment.
- All staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the school's ethos and to the church's mission in education. They are involved in living out the school's mission statement and are fully committed to providing opportunities enabling all pupils to know that Christ is at the centre of everything they do.
- The 'Statements to Live by' programme is well used throughout the school. Pupils are clear about how these are used each week and how they help them to live by Gospel values.

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

- The welcoming and inclusive nature of the school evidences the priority leadership gives to the Catholic mission which is understood by all staff and pupils, ensuring quality moral and spiritual development based on the gospel values of love and respect.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team have a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education; personal development and high quality care are paramount. They are outstanding role models providing very clear direction for improvement and ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development are frequent and have significant impact.
- Governors involve themselves wholeheartedly, in the life of the school and are fully committed to promoting the religious and spiritual life. Together with the headteacher they have a clear vision and high aspirations for future developments.
- The school's mission statement is a living document which underpins all policies throughout the school and has a high profile.
- Parents speak very highly of the school and have a clear understanding of the school's mission.
- Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well. Through attendance at the annual joint meeting for staff and governors and their many visits to school, they work very effectively with the staff and headteacher, committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists throughout.

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.

- Pupils demonstrate reverence and respect in class and whole school worship. They are keen to participate in a variety of community prayer opportunities. They join in with appropriate responses during school and parish liturgies, including the preparations for the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead the prayer life of St Columba's school. They do so with confidence, enthusiasm and with increasing independence. Their knowledge of the variety of prayer styles is developing. Many children are able to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer, using silence and visual prompts.
- Communal prayer is inclusive and accessible. Children learn to 'sign' some prayers. Pupils are at ease in sharing prayer experiences with and from those of different faiths as observed in the early years foundation stage when discussing the ways the rosary and Muslim prayer beads are used by different families in worship.
- Adults provide good role models for the children and contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The children of St Columba's say they are proud that their 'big family' at school connects them with the church.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship. Daily acts of worship are central to the life of St Columba's. Celebrations are many and various throughout the liturgical year. They reflect its Catholic character and take into account all pupils' faith background.
- Staff use of prayer methods and styles varies. Their knowledge and skills range from the highly skilled to those keenly embracing professional development opportunities.
- The school continues to develop the skills of its pupils in planning and delivering worship. Collective Worship is based on clear themes and messages that engage the community, such as the year six interpretation of 'The Centurion's Servant'.
- The school welcomes families and parishioners and those from the wider community to participate in worship. Parents and governors appreciate and enthuse about the opportunities to attend popular prayer events such as the Christingle service and regular Masses.

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

- The school leaders have good knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality liturgy and worship. They understand the Church's liturgical year and traditions. They lead the school community to understand and appreciate these by making all forms of worship relevant to the children appropriate to their age, needs, experience and backgrounds.
- The professional development needs of leaders and staff are identified and supported through clear annual performance management processes and appropriate training is accessed. The school makes effective use of professional development opportunities in-house through the sharing of resources between classes, through peer to peer coaching and through the diocese and local authority.
- Collective Worship is part of the school's regular self-evaluation process. Leaders monitor and evaluate provision.

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

1

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

- The quality of learning and progress in Religious Education is good. Most pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education, have positive attitudes and work well in lessons, applying themselves to the tasks and working at a good pace. They enjoy talking about their work in Religious Education and take pride in their work.
- Pupils start school with knowledge and skills below those expected for their age. They make good progress across the early years stage as their personal needs are very well met as soon as they enter school. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout key stage one and key stage two. However in some lessons the work was not well matched to pupils' ability thus slowing down the progress of the more able pupils. By the time pupils leave year six, the majority of pupils have achieved expectations with some exceeding these standards. They take pride in their work and show interest and enthusiasm in their learning. Pupils are becoming more religiously literate and reflective in their oral responses.
- Most pupils said they enjoyed Religious Education and were keen to talk about the topics they had explored including work about the Bishop's role within the diocese and why St Paul was such an important and influential figure in Christianity.
- Those pupils identified as having a special educational need make good progress. The school is effective at meeting their needs by ensuring that work is closely matched to their ability. Very good support from skilled teaching assistants ensures that their attainment and progress are similar to that of other pupils.
- 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.

- The quality of teaching in Religious Education is good overall with some outstanding teaching. A wide variety of teaching strategies such as role play, hot seating and interviews, together with well-paced lessons, ensure that pupils engage well with their learning and make good progress.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and most lessons are planned building on prior learning. Effective use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) inspires and motivates pupils as seen in a key stage two class.

- Teachers mark work regularly and the quality of feedback given to pupils is generally positive and supportive. However this is inconsistent across the school and pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to teachers' feedback.
- As a result of sharing learning objectives, targets and 'I can' statements, pupils are beginning to understand how well they are doing and what is expected of them, however there are some inconsistencies across the school.
- The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement in Religious Education and has a rigorous tracking system which effectively informs planning.

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

- A systematic range of activities is in place for the monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education. This has enabled the leadership team to have an accurate awareness of the areas for development. The analysis of data is grounded in a secure knowledge of the individual pupil.
- The recently appointed Religious Education coordinator has a very clear vision and sense of direction for what is needed to bring about further improvement. He is enthusiastic and highly effective in promoting the high profile of this subject amongst staff.
- Staff and governors are kept well informed of the priorities which are identified through the strategies undertaken to evaluate the provision and outcomes for pupils. They are very well informed and knowledgeable about the schools' strengths and further areas for development. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are committed to the development of the school providing appropriate support and challenge to the headteacher and senior leadership team.
- The governors are mindful to make quality staffing appointments to ensure the Gospel values the school is based upon are upheld whilst discharging their statutory and canonical duties well. Changes in the senior leadership team have been managed extremely well to ensure continuity and progression which is reflected in the high expectations and outcomes in Religious Education over the past three years.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and is given a high profile throughout the school, contributing very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

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

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Columba's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108625
Local authority	North Tyneside
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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Date of previous school inspection	January 2009
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