



St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

Ropery Lane, Chester le Street, DH3 3PH

School Unique Reference Number: **114242**

Inspection dates: 30 April – 1 May 2018
Lead inspector: Elaine White

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Cuthbert's RC Primary is an outstanding school.

- St Cuthbert's is an outstanding Catholic school. On entering the school it is very clear that its prime purpose is Catholic education, helping children to develop their faith and to understand that God loves them. It is a welcoming place where everyone is valued and respected and the love of learning is evident in all aspects of the school.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding, it is central to the life of the school. Staff and pupils plan and lead high quality acts of worship and pupils act with the deepest reverence and respect.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. Governors, senior leaders and staff have very 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 taking on leading roles in activities which promote the school's ethos within the school and wider community.
- The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is outstanding. Staff know their pupils well and consistently teach high quality lessons which enthuse and engage pupils. Pupils talk very positively about their lessons and make good progress.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Cuthbert's is a smaller than average sized primary school which serves the parish of St Cuthbert's, Chester le Street.
- The majority of pupils are white British and there are currently 5 pupils who have English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils with a special educational need/disability is below national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil premium funding is below national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Continue to further develop the quality of the teaching and learning process by:
 - ensuring that differentiation is finely tuned so that planned activities are consistently matched to pupils' ability.

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.

- Catholic Life has a high priority in the school and pupils make an outstanding contribution to it. They are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and ethos and are actively involved. Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities offered to them such as reception class buddies, the Mini Vinnies, house captains, playground leaders and school councillors. Through these roles pupils are very aware of the Catholic character of the school and what this means in terms of relationships with God. As one pupil expressed, *'We want to be like Jesus, do good things and do what he would want us to do'*.
- Pupils are alert to the needs of those beyond the school, responding willingly and enthusiastically. They articulate their views with confidence, explaining the purpose of fundraising for various charities such as operation Christmas child, CAFOD, Fairtrade, the Good Shepherd appeal and Barnardo's. One Mini Vinnie commented, *'I like fundraising because I want to make a difference to people less fortunate than me'*. Pupils are outstanding ambassadors for the school and caring for others shows them living out the Gospel.
- Pupils express their own beliefs with confidence and have a good understanding of how their faith impacts on their own lives and others.
- Pupils show a great interest and engagement in spiritual, moral and ethical issues through projects including work on Laudato Si, Martin Luther King and Holocaust Memorial Day.
- Pupils talk with pride about St Cuthbert's school and are extremely knowledgeable about their Christian heritage. Pupils commented that they particularly enjoy the annual celebration of St Cuthbert's day. They have a deep sense of belonging to the school family and thrive in a well-established pastoral house system. They flourish in an atmosphere where everyone is valued.
- Throughout the school, pupils work well together demonstrating very positive and enthusiastic attitudes to all aspects of school life. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary: pupils are extremely polite and considerate of others, demonstrating good emotional awareness.
- Parents commented that pupils are proud of their beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth.

- Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a very good understanding and importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year.

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

- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school has the highest possible priority with the school's mission statement permeating throughout the school, ensuring that Christ is at the centre of all that takes place at St Cuthbert's: 'Be yourself, but be it very well'.
- From the moment you enter St Cuthbert's it is apparent that this is a school committed to the Catholic tradition and ethos. A strong team spirit amongst all staff, parents, governors and children sharing knowledge and good practice, is common place. Relationships are a strength of the school.
- The drive to develop the whole child and to nurture individual worth is embedded in the school culture.
- 'Statements to live by,' are used throughout the school and these are clearly used to help pupils to understand how to live in the way Jesus wants them to.
- St Cuthbert's has a vibrant and engaging learning environment where focal points and displays, linked to the church's seasons, provide opportunities to reflect, pray and celebrate its Catholic character.
- Relationships and sex education (RSE) is taught throughout the school at age appropriate levels and it is in line with the teachings of the Catholic faith.
- Pastoral care provision is outstanding, reflecting concern for the welfare of all and is central to the success of the school. One parent commented, *'St Cuthbert's is a fantastic school where we know our children are safe and happy and that's because of the wonderful ethos created by the school'*.
- Strong home, school, community and parish partnerships are a strength of the school and the school strives to further nourish this by continuing to build and improve on the effectiveness of these links.

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

- The leadership of the school in promoting the Catholic Life is outstanding.
- The Catholic Life of the school is given the highest priority by leaders. This is reflected in the school's thorough self-evaluation which is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring and explicit focus.
- The school's mission statement is a living document which underpins all policies throughout the school and has a very high profile.
- The headteacher is a very positive presence around the school. She has a very clear understanding of Catholic education and the role of the Catholic school. Together with the senior leadership team, they very effectively promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- Staff and pupils work well together to live the mission of the school with understanding and appreciation; consequently pupils are able to articulate the distinctive mission of the school extremely well.
- The headteacher and senior leadership team have a deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. They are outstanding role models. They provide very clear direction for improvement and ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development are frequent and have significant impact; personal development and high quality care are paramount.
- 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. Their strong promotion of Catholic values is clearly shared by the whole community who demonstrate great pride in their school.
- Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well, working very effectively with the staff and headteacher. They are committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists throughout.

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.

- All pupils are truly inspired by, and enthusiastic in, their response to Collective Worship. From the earliest age pupils listen intently, show respect and offer heartfelt responses.
- Throughout the school, pupils respond very well to times of prayer and worship. They participate wholeheartedly in terms of quiet reflection, prayer and singing.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead the prayer life at St Cuthbert's School. They do so with enthusiasm, confidence and expert understanding of the liturgical year. They are very confident in using resources and helping to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer, using silence and visual prompts.
- Pupils from year six regularly plan and lead high quality liturgies for pupils in reception class. One year six child commented, *'I enjoy having the responsibility of planning liturgies so that I can help my buddy in reception class to get to know Jesus better'*.
- Pupils are confident and at ease in sharing their prayers with others. They are enthusiastic and skilful in planning and leading acts of worship.
- Responses by pupils to a recent Collective Worship questionnaire, demonstrates their understanding of the organisation and focus of Collective Worship throughout the school and the opportunities for prayer and reflection.
- There is a calm and peaceful ethos which pervades the school and this is reflected in the pupils' outstanding behaviour and consideration for others.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship which is central to the life of the school and makes a significant contribution to the moral and spiritual needs of the pupils.
- Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff which has a very positive impact on the school's sense of community.
- Acts of worship are well resourced and age appropriate, centred on themes and messages which are easily accessible to pupils. A planned programme of liturgies, Masses and other liturgical celebrations such as the 'Buddy Welcome Assembly' provide many opportunities

for participation from the wider school and parish community.

- Staff are highly skilled at enabling pupils to lead Collective Worship. They have a thorough understanding of the forms prayer can take and are adept at sharing this with pupils.
- Developing the spirituality of all is seen as central in supporting the Catholic ethos of the school and this ensures that the needs of all pupils are well met.
- The school welcomes families to participate in worship which is well received by all. Families are becoming increasingly more involved in the pupils' religious and spiritual development. Parents commented that they value and enjoy the many opportunities the school provides for them.
- In a recent questionnaire on Collective Worship in school, parents commented enthusiastically on the opportunity to see children, *'reflective and listening to the Gospel'*.
- There is a great sense of community at all levels which is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between everyone, staff, governors, pupils and parents. One parent commented, *'St Cuthbert's is a truly inclusive school with a very caring staff who care for everyone'*.
- Pastoral care for all pupils is outstanding as a result of all stakeholders. Clear policies and procedures are in place, which are rooted in Gospel values.
- There are strong links with the parish where many pupils serve at Mass and take an active part in Sunday Mass and other aspects of worship.

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

- The school leaders have expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality liturgy and worship. They understand the Church's liturgical year and traditions and are outstanding role models to both staff and pupils. The headteacher shows a real depth of passion and commitment and has a clear vision, sense of direction and understanding of what is required to bring about improvement, which is shared with all staff. She leads 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 background.
- Excellent systems and structures are embedded throughout the school which allows quality Collective Worship to take place across the school.
- The headteacher ensures that all staff throughout the school receive the quality formation that they require in the development of spiritual and liturgical understanding.
- The views of pupils, staff and parents are regularly sought through informal meetings and questionnaires. The views of everyone are all valued by the governors and senior leadership team of the school.
- The dedication and commitment of the senior leaders and governors in the school are instrumental in the drive to provide high quality Collective Worship and quality prayer life throughout the school.
- Interviews with governors, the parish priest and headteacher, along with the scrutiny of both pupil, staff and parent questionnaires, reflect the importance of true partnership, evaluation and a mission to ensure the very best for all pupils at St Cuthbert's school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- 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 outstanding

- Pupils enter school with knowledge and skills that are in line with what is expected for their age. They make good or better progress throughout foundation stage and key stage one, this continues throughout key stage two.
- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education and are keen to do well, they have very positive attitudes and speak enthusiastically about their learning. One child commented, *'I like Religious Education because the teachers make it fun!'*
- Pupils understand how well they are achieving in Religious Education. Teachers' marking and annotations in pupil books show that there is good progress across the school.
- Pupils identified as having a special educational need make very good progress because of the effectiveness of focused support given to them by skilled staff.
- Inspection findings and evidence provided by the school show no noticeable differences between groups of learners.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is outstanding

- The vast majority of teaching and assessment throughout the school is outstanding. Teachers demonstrate high expectations, plan interesting lessons and set appropriate targets for pupils to achieve in their work, based upon increasingly accurate assessment. They are continuing to fine-tune differentiation when planning to ensure that activities are consistently matched to pupils' ability.
- Teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour which are communicated effectively to pupils. They are knowledgeable and confident in their teaching and use a wide range of resources creatively, ensuring that children are engaged and motivated in their learning. They are committed to achieving the best possible outcomes for their pupils.
- The school has a highly effective assessment and tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and achievement in Religious Education which informs planning and ensures that pupils are continually challenged.

- Marking and feedback are high quality and pupils regularly respond to feedback which enables their good progress. Pupils are involved in self-assessment and this is well embedded across the school.
- Assessments are regular and systematic, both internal and external moderation indicate levelling is accurate.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

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

- The role of Religious Education coordinator is given high priority within the school which ensures that Religious Education has a high profile. The coordinator, senior leadership team and headteacher work closely together to ensure that all staff feel supported and valued.
- The senior leaders conduct a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes in Religious Education. Their analysis provides a firm basis for appropriate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for development.
- Leaders carry out monitoring and analysis of teaching and learning and the school improvement plan identifies very clear steps for ongoing development. Religious Education is given a high priority within the school improvement plan.
- Leaders and managers make very good use of professional development opportunities to support all staff.
- Governors are kept well informed of the priorities identified to bring about further improvement. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are committed to the development of the school, working closely with the headteacher and senior leadership team. They provide appropriate challenge and support to the senior leadership team.
- The deeply committed headteacher and senior leadership team are ambitious for the school and have the professional drive and religious conviction to ensure that Religious Education continues to move forward.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference; it is well resourced and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Sacramental preparation is given a high priority and is fully embedded in the Religious Education curriculum; it is of high quality and in line with Diocesan guidelines. It is highly valued by parents and pupils.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

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CATHOLIC LIFE:

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

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

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

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COLLECTIVE WORSHIP:

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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

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

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The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

1

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St. Cuthbert's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	114242
Local authority	Co. Durham
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	Mr Paul Dodds
Headteacher	Mrs Clare Swales
Date of previous school inspection	4 – 5 December 2012
Telephone number	0191 3882305
Email address	p3343.admin@durhamlearning.net