



Holy Family RC Primary Academy

Prior Street, Darlington, DL3 9EN

School Unique Reference Number: 139533

Inspection dates:	17 – 18 May 2017
Lead inspector:	Miss Maria Elliott

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

Holy Family RC Primary Academy is a good Catholic school because:

- Holy Family is calm, happy, welcoming and fully inclusive with a deep sense of family, where every pupil is nurtured in a very caring school. The simple clear mission is a lived experience where all strive to 'see Christ in ourselves and all others.'
- Catholic Life of the school is good because it has the highest priority and very good relationships exist with all members of the school community.
- Collective Worship is good because prayer and worship are at the heart of the school community and forms the rhythm of daily life.
- Religious Education is good because pupils concentrate well, are keen to do well and enjoy most lessons. Teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Although the pupils are involved and participate in all that the school offers in relation to Catholic Life, they are not as yet at the centre of shaping the school's mission and ethos or fully understanding how these activities impact on them as individuals.
- Although from entry to the school pupils are encouraged and supported in their ability to plan and lead worship, this as yet has not been fully embedded.
- In Religious Education there are inconsistencies in the quality of assessment, differentiation and marking and feedback provided by teachers.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- This is an average sized primary school in Darlington, serving the parish of Holy Family.
- Holy Family is part of Carmel Education Trust.
- A very large majority of pupils are baptised Roman Catholic.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- A very small minority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium government funding is lower than the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of Catholic Life by:
 - Further developing the pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of all faiths to reflect the religious and cultural diversity of the wider community and the world at large.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Providing more opportunities for all pupils to be involved in preparing and leading Collective Worship independently.
- Further develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - Providing a more varied range of teaching activities and ensure teachers finely tune differentiation so that tasks are consistently matched to pupils ability.
 - Ensuring all staff further develop their understanding of the expectations required in relation to progress and attainment.
 - Ensuring that assessment data is used accurately and consistently across the school.

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

- The pupils have a deep sense of belonging and are proud to be part of the school family of Holy Family and this 'sense of family' is nurtured in the children from their earliest days in school.
- The pupils' contribution to shaping the school's mission and ethos is growing and developing; they take advantage of the opportunities the school provides to support both local and global communities. This is evident in their support of many charities and events including Mary's Meals, foodbanks and St Cuthbert's Care.
- Staff strive to lead by example and have very high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and as a result the pupils' behaviour is excellent; they are polite, happy, confident and courteous. The pupils show respect for adults and each other and trust the staff.
- The pupils are very well supported throughout school by a range of pastoral opportunities provided by very caring and deeply committed staff. Pupils' health and well-being needs are supported very effectively by a Well-being and Support Intervention Mentor.
- The pupils have a sense of justice and are keenly aware of the needs of others both within their local community and beyond.
- The pupils are proud of their own religious identity and beliefs.
- The pupils deeply value and respect the Catholic traditions of the school. There are very effective links with the parish; parishioners come into school weekly to lead the Mini Vinnies.

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

- Holy Family is a calm prayerful place with a clear school mission statement that endeavours to encourage the staff and pupils to recognise Christ through every encounter both in school and beyond.
- Excellent relationships are evident at all levels and all staff have a deep sense of being an integral part of the school family; as a result they are all fully committed to the implementation of the school mission statement.
- Holy Family is a school that is extremely committed to Catholic traditions and ethos. The children have an emerging understanding of other faiths but this needs to be developed further.
- The learning environment reflects the mission of the school where engaging displays

celebrate the mission and identity.

- The highest level of support is offered to the pupils through effective policies and procedures, along with an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable. Through effective pastoral support pupils, staff and parents are able to access help and advice when needed, this is appreciated by families.
- Pastoral programmes, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) are well planned and refer explicitly to Catholic teachings and principles.
- Holy Family's behaviour policy is rooted in Gospel values; it embodies the need for justice, is supported by weekly 'statements to live by' and fosters an atmosphere of forgiveness with the opportunity to move forward every day.

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

- Leaders and managers are passionately committed to the mission of the Church. They have a very strong sense of the mission of the Church and the school's role in expressing it.
- They are extremely conscientious in their delivery, providing a strong sense of spiritual purpose, with a focus on ensuring the fullest personal development of all pupils.
- The promotion of an authentic Catholic ethos is seen as a fundamental role of the leadership team and is shared by the whole community who demonstrate great pride in their school.
- The school's self-evaluation is aspirational and becoming a more accurate reflection of the school. Monitoring and analysis is leading to a more clearly focused plan for further improvement.
- The school engages extremely well with parents and carers to the great benefit of all its pupils and families. Parents have a very good understanding of the school's mission and are very supportive of it. They are very proud of their school.
- In recent years high priority has been placed on curriculum professional development to ensure that the distinctiveness of Catholic mission and ethos is at the forefront of whole school development. The chief executive officer, along with the headteacher have ensured that partnerships within the multi academy trust and other deanery schools, enables the school to benefit from sharing good practice.
- The parish priest, trust chaplain and governors are very knowledgeable about the Catholic Life of the school. They embrace and fully support all the opportunities offered to the pupils. The very effective work of the parish priest, trust chaplain and very knowledgeable governors embrace the Catholic Life and are very supportive of all the school is offering its pupils.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school, they are frequent visitors in school, passionate about the school's mission and their role in ensuring it has the highest priority.
- Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties extremely well. They work effectively with the headteacher and are committed to upholding the strong caring ethos that exists.

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

- Pupils act with developing reverence; join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence, and sing joyfully. Pupils respond respectfully, articulately and thoughtfully when participating in Collective Worship in small and larger gatherings.
- Pupils are keen to participate in staff led prayer and worship which is well planned and thought provoking.
- Pupils are becoming more confident in creating an atmosphere for reflection and prayer.
- Collective Worship is seen as central to the life of the school, and gives each day its rhythm. Pupils, dependent upon their age, are becoming more equipped to prepare and lead worship with growing confidence and enthusiasm and an increasing degree of independence.
- Pupils have a developing understanding of what it means to have a vocation and are supported in their development by a variety of visitors who share first hand experiences of their own faith journey.
- Pupils have an increasing knowledge and understanding of religious seasons and feasts and the different demands this makes on our worship. They demonstrate respect for, but have a limited understanding of other faiths.
- Most adults provide effective role models for the pupils. They encourage and foster a culture for prayer and worship which contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.
- Pupils are able to articulate clearly the centrality of prayer and are becoming more confident in describing how prayer has made a difference to themselves and the school community.
- School and parish work in partnership for the sacramental preparation following diocesan guidelines.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and forms the heart of the daily practise of the school. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship with a structured programme of liturgies, worship, and masses.
- Staff are becoming more confident and skilled in their understanding of what constitutes effective worship and as a result are able to guide and support the

development of pupils.

- Collective Worship opportunities include a variety of prayer styles and staff are growing in confidence in their use of artefacts, music, and images to engage pupils.
- Staff regularly pray together and this is seen as an integral part of the schools provision.
- Parents speak very positively about the opportunities offered to them to support worship at home. They spoke with enthusiasm about the Wednesday Word that is sent home to encourage and facilitate family prayer and worship.
- Statements to live by, school values, topical events and the liturgical year form the basis for Collective Worship themes.
- Acts of Collective Worship are reflective, thought provoking and fully inclusive.
- The school's high quality provision ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are met extremely well.

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

- Leaders and managers within both the school and the trust display expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver high quality experiences of Collective Worship. They have a very clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year and use this to very good effect in leading the school in its knowledge and understanding of Catholic rites and symbols.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher, priest, trust chaplain and governors are a very visible presence in school worship and have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for further development through a variety of monitoring activities. Leaders seek the views of pupils and parents and these responses are highly valued and lead to further actions.
- There is clear evidence of the quality of Collective Worship being monitored and evaluated by both the headteacher and the trust chaplain. There are observations followed by evaluation which feeds into the school improvement plan. It is given the highest possible priority by all leaders.
- Leaders support staff to continually develop their skills in leading Collective Worship and in helping pupils to become more independent in their leadership. Focused whole school professional development has increased staff confidence and skill in leading high quality worship.
- Surveys are carried out to determine the opinions of all stakeholders regarding Collective Worship and this feeds into the school improvement plan.
- The school's life of prayer and worship is given high priority by the headteacher, staff and governors and seen as the very heart of the school. They constantly seek to develop it through the school and parish community. Parents value this and speak very highly of the impact on pupils.

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.

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

- Generally pupils say they enjoy Religious Education, they have mostly positive attitudes and older pupils speak about their learning. They are able to explain how it helps them to understand how to live their lives. They are keen to do well and generally work at a good pace in lessons.
- Most pupils concentrate well in lessons, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Behaviour for learning throughout the school is good enabling good learning to take place; however, disruption in learning does occur in a minority of lessons.
- Pupils develop and apply a range of skills well, and as they reach upper key stage two are able to interpret sources, reflect and evaluate, engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives. Whilst exploring the Pentecost theme of Witness using information gained from first-hand information from a deacon, year six pupils reflected, made links and were beginning to show understanding of how people can be effective witnesses to those they encounter.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils make good progress in Religious Education within lessons and over time. Pupils start from average starting points but by the end of key stage two standards are generally above the diocesan average, but saw a dip in attainment in 2016. However the school continues to focus on the accuracy of its assessment procedures. Evidence from book scrutiny and lesson observations generally show some variety and range of learning activities, and progress is evident.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are well supported by effective support staff and achieve well according to their age and ability.

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

- The majority of teaching is good therefore most pupils and groups of pupils make at least good progress over time. Teaching was most effective where the learning was handed over to the pupils. In year three, while exploring the Pentecost theme of Energy, pupils used scripture to explore the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit making links to the global church family; and while reflecting on the gift of 'speaking wisely' a pupil made links to the work of Oscar Romero saying 'I want to be like Oscar Romero, he stood up for the poor not the rich and he cared for them'.
- Most teachers have a clear understanding of the values of Religious Education; they use the 'Come and See' materials with growing confidence to plan generally interesting and imaginative lessons and use a good range of resources. However activities are heavily

literacy driven and they do not always provide a wide range of teaching strategies and learning activities that fully harness pupils' engagement and enjoyment. Work is not clearly differentiated or challenging to ensure the best learning outcomes for all pupils.

- Most teachers manage their time well and deploy support staff effectively; as a result good learning is secured in most lessons.
- Teachers mark work regularly and feedback given is positive and celebratory but does not always inform pupils as to how to improve their work further.
- Pupils are beginning to know their levels of attainment in Religious Education and are increasingly aware of how to improve.
- 'I Can' statements are shared with pupils, but inconsistencies of practice don't always allow pupils to be fully involved in assessment.
- Respond booklets are used to capture pupils learning at the end of each topic to varying degrees of success.
- The school has an effective tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and achievement in Religious Education. Staff are becoming more confident and accurate in their assessments and new procedures are in place, but as yet have not been fully embedded throughout school and there are inconsistencies in practice.
- Success is celebrated throughout the school through the weekly Shining Star and Golden Cushion Awards.

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

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are enthusiastic and highly effective in promoting the high profile of Religious Education amongst staff. He has recently become the subject leader for Religious Education and is very committed to the role. He is well informed about current developments and has high expectations which he communicates to staff.
- Leaders ensure that the school's vision is shared through staff meetings, and staff attendance at diocesan training events. As a result Religious Education has a high profile in the school.
- The leadership and commitment of the headteacher/Religious Education coordinator is beginning to have an impact on raising standards, consequently, teaching and learning is improving.
- Through a range of systematic and rigorous monitoring activities, including lesson observation, work and planning scrutiny, leaders have an accurate picture of achievement as well as a very clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development and have systematic plans in place to bring about further improvements.
- The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Governors are highly visible around the school and are involved in monitoring and evaluation activities. They are extremely supportive and confident in their ability to challenge. They have confidence in the headteacher/subject leader of Religious Education and are extremely proud of the school.

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.

1

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

2

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.

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.

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	Holy Family RC Primary Academy
Unique reference number	139533
Local authority	Darlington
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 P M Frank
Head teacher	Mr C Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	January 2012
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