



St Charles' RC Primary School

Regent Farm Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 3HE

School Unique Reference Number: **3913472**

Inspection dates: 20 – 21 June 2017
Lead inspector: John Hattam

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 Charles' RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. All senior leaders, staff, parents and governors have very high expectations and a shared vision for the personal and spiritual development of all pupils. Pupils are actively involved in a range of activities, which support their community, and beyond.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Religious Education is very well managed. The behaviour of the children is good and they are keen to do well, applying themselves diligently in lessons.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. All members of the community benefit from the variety of worship opportunities on offer at St Charles', which are inspiring, uplifting and inclusive. Collective Worship is central to the life of the school.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Charles' is a smaller than average sized primary school with 238 children on roll situated in Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne serving the parish of St Charles.
- The school has a large number of baptised Catholic pupils, currently at 83%.
- The percentage of children eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The percentage of children with a special educational need is 9%

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- To improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - Improving the quality of teaching and assessment, by further strengthening subject knowledge for all staff, through high quality continuing professional development.
- To improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - Increasing the opportunities for pupils to evaluate how well they achieve, so that they are more confident and, as a result, are able to make further improvements to their work.

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.

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

- The mission statement is central to all aspects of life at St Charles' and is 'lived out' in a joyful way by all pupils in their daily school life.
- There are many opportunities for pupils to shape and evaluate the school mission through their work as junior leaders, Mini Vinnies eco councillors and buddies. They provide valuable feedback through pupil questionnaires. During the inspection they said, "We know we won't get everything we ask for but we know our teachers take our views seriously."
- Pupils say that they feel that they are part of the St Charles' family and they all strive to make sure that others feel the same. They are very proud of the support they have given to charities like Macmillan, CAFOD, World Kidney Day and St Cuthbert's Care. They have a well-developed awareness of the needs of others, both locally and globally.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school for their personal support and development. Pupils from nursery to year six are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual and emotional growth.
- Based on Journey in Love, St Charles' provides an effective programme for relationships and sex education, which allows pupils to develop and foster understanding appropriate to their age.
- Pupils are very proud of their religious identity, deeply valuing the Catholic tradition of their school and its strong links to the parish community. They are regularly involved with parish and diocesan celebrations.

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

- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest priority and is reflected in the school mission statement, 'Together we follow in Jesus' footsteps in our living and learning'. This statement is lived out at all levels within St Charles', which creates a real sense of family. The tight bonds that exist are evident in all aspects of school life and are most obvious in the quality of relationships that exist between children, staff, parents, governors and the wider parish community.
- The school is a prayerful and joy-filled community that provides a stimulating environment to reflect the school's mission and its Catholic character.

- Pastoral care for all pupils is outstanding as a result of the commitment of all stakeholders, and through having clear policies and structures in place. Pastoral programmes, such as Rainbows and Sunbeams, as well as personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education ensures that the needs of all pupils are met. Staff understand the importance of high quality provision and are committed to the best possible outcomes for all pupils.
- The school fully understands the importance of attending to the pastoral needs of all staff and as a result they talked with great enthusiasm about a recent retreat to Walker Walls at Wooler.
- The behaviour around school is exemplary because the school communicates clear and consistent expectations to all pupils. All pupils are encouraged to embrace personal responsibility and older pupils facilitate opportunities for reconciliation.

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 committed to the mission of the Catholic Church in education. The headteacher and recently appointed deputy headteacher provide heartfelt inspiration to the whole school community through their passion to make the Catholic Life of the school the best it can possibly be.
- Leaders at all levels in school, including the governing body, have very high expectations for the promotion and continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school. The development and sustenance of an authentic Catholic ethos is viewed as a core leadership responsibility. Governors are role models of service; they are proud to be associated with St Charles'.
- The school's rigorous self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of planned monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. The very effective work of the governing body is evident in their understanding of the detailed evaluation and monitoring of Catholic Life across the school.
- The school engages very well with parents and carers who describe how well the school promotes the Catholic Life of the school through effective communication using newsletters, class blogs and the website. They say that they feel well informed and part of the mission to transform the school and make it the best it can be for all children.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

- 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.

- St Charles' is a prayerful and spiritual school where worship, in a variety of forms, is central to the school day. All pupils are inspired by, and enthusiastic in, their response to Collective Worship. Pupils are keen to participate in liturgies and actively seek out opportunities for prayer and reflection during the day. All pupils gather reverently for worship, listen intently and offer heartfelt responses.
- Pupils are creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy, they are confident in their use of a variety of approaches to prayer. Pupils are very keen to take the initiative in leading prayer and speak with a great deal of enthusiasm about how praying with their friends helps to make them feel more peaceful.
- From the earliest ages in school, pupils are able to recognise the special nature of religious symbols and show respect. Older pupils are aware that religious belief is important, demonstrating respect for their own faith and the faith of others.
- The power of the prayer life at St Charles' was at its most powerful during the morning reflection where parents and their children, staff and governors came together to pray quietly and reflect on the life and work of Oscar Romero. Several thought provoking prayer stations allowed those who attended to explore their own unique vocation.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Prayer and Collective Worship are given the highest priority at St Charles' so that they are a part of each day and every school celebration. Great care is taken to ensure that Collective Worship provides interest and inspiration for staff and pupils.
- The school's policy for Collective Worship ensures that it is frequent and inclusive. The themes chosen for worship reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical seasons and the Church's mission in education.
- Collective Worship is skilfully planned and resourced, following the yearly pattern of Gospels. Pupils and adults praying together is a daily experience, with parents and other adults welcomed joyfully into this prayerful community.
- Adults are passionate about ensuring that Collective Worship is of the highest quality and take every opportunity to model high quality liturgies. Sensitively chosen questions allow all pupils to develop an awareness of contemporary issues and discuss them in relation to

the Gospel.

- Parents, parishioners and governors are given many opportunities to share in the spiritual life of the school through various acts of Collective Worship and school celebrations. Parents describe the many opportunities to pray with their children as a genuine strength of the school. As a result, communal acts of Collective Worship are very well attended.

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

- The headteacher leads by example and sets very high standards for Collective Worship. Through her inspirational leadership she ensures that pupils and staff develop a deepening appreciation of the Church's traditions, seasons, rites and symbols.
- The headteacher's passionate promotion of Collective Worship ensures that liturgical and spiritual development are priorities in school and that time is devoted to them.
- The Religious Education coordinator is a model of outstanding practice for both staff and pupils; she works closely with colleagues across school and in the wider diocesan family to provide the very best opportunities for Collective Worship.
- The senior leadership team have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in Collective Worship, as a result of very rigorous formal and informal monitoring. Effective evaluation of staff strengths has resulted in well-targeted training for staff new to Catholic education.
- The governors are a visible presence at many acts of Collective Worship; this helps them to have a clear understanding of the many strengths and areas for development in Collective Worship.
- Leaders strive for continuous improvement and regularly seek the views of pupils, staff and parents regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school and are quick to respond to these findings in a systematic and thorough way.

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.

- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education, demonstrating commitment in their learning. Behaviour in lessons is good with the majority of pupils concentrating well and displaying positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils are keen to do well. They apply themselves well in lessons and work at a good pace. Pupils in key stage two say that they want to improve the standard of their work and would like more guidance from teachers to help them understand how to achieve this. Some pupils have a limited understanding of how well they have done and what they need to do to improve
- The school's current data, when compared to diocesan averages, shows that pupils make progress over time and that their knowledge and understanding is developing well, although there have been some inconsistencies in this data over time. The school recognises that given the starting points of most pupils, this progress could be better and is taking steps to address these issues.
- Pupils enjoy learning most when teachers plan lessons that allow them to express themselves creatively; the use of art and music has inspired pupils and helped them to deepen their understanding of scripture.
- As pupils progress through key stage two they develop and apply a range of skills well, including independence, imagination and the ability to interpret sources and symbols. They have opportunities to reflect and evaluate religious ideas and integrate them into their lives.

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

- Teaching is mainly good with evidence of outstanding teaching. Most pupils and groups of pupils, including those with a special educational need or disability make progress over time.
- The best teachers use their expert knowledge to plan interesting and interactive lessons, which are differentiated appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils, thus stimulating and capturing pupils' interest and enthusiasm. However, some staff need to further develop their subject knowledge so that pupils can achieve the best outcomes.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers select appropriate resources and teaching strategies to promote good learning. Questioning is used effectively to assess understanding and

monitor progress, to challenge pupils and build on prior learning.

- Where teaching is outstanding, marking and constructive feedback are most frequent and of a consistently high quality, leading to high levels of engagement, interest, learning and progress.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and are a real strength of the school. Support staff are used effectively to reinforce learning and to support and extend pupils of different abilities.
- Assessments of pupils' progress are made regularly. This data is recorded and shared with key staff. The school works closely with colleagues from across the diocese to moderate work to ensure the accuracy of assessments.

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

- The headteacher demonstrates a highly ambitious vision for the school and for what every pupil and teacher can achieve. She inspires and supports the whole school community.
- Leaders use a range of monitoring activities to regularly check the quality of the teaching and, as a result, have a very accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development. Clear steps for improvement are detailed in the school improvement plan and the Religious Education action plan.
- The appointment of the Religious Education coordinator, who is knowledgeable, approachable and efficient, has had a significant impact on raising standards. Consequently, teaching and learning is improving at a rapid rate.
- All aspects of Religious Education are evaluated regularly and all staff are kept very well informed about the priorities in Religious Education. Leaders use their findings effectively to promote improvement.
- The self-evaluation of Religious Education by leaders is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well informed by best practice in Religious Education.
- Governors are regular visitors to school and are routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. Their diverse backgrounds enable them to be extremely supportive, but also confident in their ability to challenge when appropriate.

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 Charles' RC Primary School
Unique reference number	3913472
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.	
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