



St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

Mill Road, New Seaham, Co. Durham, SR7 0HW

School Unique Reference Number: **114235**

Inspection dates: 07 – 08 February 2017
Lead inspector: Miss Maria Elliott

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

- St Cuthbert's is a calm, tranquil, welcoming and fully inclusive school with a strong family ethos and this enables children, staff and parents to flourish in a nurturing and caring community where each person is valued reflecting the school motto – 'Unique, talented and loved by God'.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the governors, senior leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils 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 because prayer is central to the life of the school and forms the rhythm of each day.
- The quality of Religious Education is good because pupils enjoy Religious Education, are keen to do well and make thoughtful contributions in lessons. The areas for improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- In Religious Education there are inconsistencies in the quality of assessment, differentiation and marking and feedback provided by teachers.
- From entry to the school pupils are encouraged and supported in their ability to plan and lead worship, but this as yet has not been fully embedded. Leaders and managers are excellent role models. They have a clear vision for how the provision of Collective Worship can improve.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- This is a slightly smaller than average sized primary school in New Seaham County Durham, serving the parish of St Cuthbert's, Seaham.
- The majority of pupils are baptised Roman Catholic.
- The majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds.
- Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium government funding is below the national average.
- The school provides a very well attended breakfast club for pupils.
- The school has gained the Investors in Children award and the Rights Respecting Schools award.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop the pupils' knowledge, understanding and appreciation for all faiths to reflect the religious and cultural diversity of the wider community and the world at large.
- 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 that marking provides clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work and are given the time they need to respond to feedback in order to move their learning forward.
 - Embedding 'I can' statements and ensuring pupils' skills in self-assessment are further developed.

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 pupils are at the centre of shaping the school's mission and ethos and take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides and, as a result they are happy and confident.
- The pupils have a deep sense of belonging and are proud to be part of the school family of St Cuthbert's and this sense of family is nurtured in the children from their earliest days in school.
- There are very high expectations of the pupil's behaviour. Staff strive to lead by example and as a result the pupils behaviour is excellent; they are polite and courteous. They recognise each other's strengths; they celebrate them and are happy to share their own, they show respect for adults and each other and trust the staff. As a result of these effective relationships the school achieved the Investors in Children award.
- They have a deep sense of justice and are keenly aware of the needs of others both within their local community and beyond.
- The pupils are extremely proud of their own religious identity and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. They know they are valued for who they are.
- 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 choir who sing at key liturgical celebrations in church.

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

- St Cuthbert's is a calm prayerful place where the school mission statement is a clear and inspiring expression of the educational mission of the church. It is understood and lived out by all and at the heart of all the school offers.
- 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.
- The learning environment reflects the mission of the school where all pupils are treated as individuals, feel secure and included, and their talents nurtured.
- St Cuthbert's is a school that is extremely committed to Catholic traditions and ethos.
- 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 very well planned and refer explicitly to Catholic teachings and principles.
- School expectations are clearly and consistently communicated by staff and governors resulting in the high standards of moral and ethical behaviour.
- St Cuthbert's behaviour policy is rooted in Gospel values, it embodies the need for justice and supported by weekly 'Statements to live by' and underpinned by the principles of the Rights Respecting Schools.
- The school has fully embraced the 'The Year of Oscar' and Oscar Romero's example of prayer, witness and care for the disadvantaged has been fully incorporated in to the schools provision.

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

- Leaders and managers are deeply committed to the mission of the Church. They have a very strong sense of the mission of the Church and the schools role in expressing it. They are extremely conscientious in their delivery, providing an authentic Catholic ethos with a strong sense of spiritual purpose, and a relentless 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 Religious Education coordinator is a driving force within the school and is considered to be a highly effective role model by all stakeholders.
- The school's self-evaluation is a coherent reflection of planned monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which leads to a 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, and feel the school enables their children to become 'well rounded individuals preparing them very well for life in the future as responsible citizens'.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school, they are passionate about the school's mission, ambitious for its future developments and their role in ensuring it has the highest priority. They are actively involved in the evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school and provide challenge and support where necessary.
- Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties extremely well. They work very effectively with the leadership team 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.

2

2

1

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

- Pupils act with developing reverence; reflect in silence, 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 becoming more confident to create an atmosphere for reflection and prayer.
- Collective Worship is seen as central to the life of the school, and gives each day its daily rhythm. Pupils, dependent upon their age, regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm and a growing degree of independence.
- Pupils have a developing understanding of what it means to have a vocation and as one pupil stated 'as a Christian it is our job to help others and to make the world a better place'.
- Pupils have a sound 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 contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.
- Pupils are able to articulate clearly the centrality of prayer; contributions to the school prayer board are regular and thoughtful, reflecting both current affairs and personal need.
- 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 support and guide the pupils to enable them to plan, prepare and lead worship with regard for their developmental age.

- Collective Worship opportunities include a variety of prayer styles and all members of the school community speak positively about the impact these opportunities have on them as individuals.
- Parents speak very positively about the opportunities offered to them to support worship at home. They spoke with enthusiasm about the Romero bags that had been 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 worship take place in a variety of locations; classroom, school hall, church, on the sea front and other venues in the local community.
- Acts of Collective Worship are fully inclusive. Well-resourced, class liturgy boxes contain resources, artefacts and readings which are available for pupils and adults to use. All classes have a spiritual focal point with well thought out resources which provide pupils with stimuli for thought and reflection.
- The school's high quality provision ensures that the spiritual needs of the pupils are met extremely well.
- Collective Worship is reflective, thought provoking and fully inclusive, and as a result of very supportive staff, all pupils are able to take part at their own level.

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

- Leaders and managers 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 stemming from their own faith and a commitment to passing this on and nurturing it with the pupils. They use this to very good effect in leading the school in its knowledge and understanding of Catholic rites and symbols.
- The headteacher, priest and foundation governors are a very visible presence in school worship, both in school and in church 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.
- 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 at leading high quality worship.
- 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.

2

2

1

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

- Most pupils say they enjoy Religious Education, they have positive attitudes and older pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning, explaining 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.
- 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 Eucharist theme of Unity; using the scripture passage from 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, year six pupils reflected and made links and showed an understanding of how, if world leaders took their advice from this scripture passage, the lives of people around the world could be changed.
- 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 above the diocesan average. 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 generally 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 Eucharist theme of Listening and Sharing, the children were engaged in a speaking and listening activity; where spies had been secretly planted into the groups and who then, at feedback, reported the wrong information that had been shared with the group members, illustrating the need for effective listening skills.
- Most teachers have a clear understanding of the values of Religious Education; they use the 'Come and See' materials with confidence to plan generally interesting and imaginative lessons and use a good range of resources. Some teachers use effective questioning to extend pupils' learning however learning activities are heavily literacy

based and differentiation is often achieved by outcome.

- Most teachers manage their time well and deploy support staff effectively; as a result good learning is secured in most lessons.
- Regular homework is used to contribute to pupils learning, and where this is the most effective, it is used as a catalyst for class discussion at the beginning of a new topic.
- 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.
- 'I Can' statements are shared with pupils, but inconsistencies of practice don't always allow pupils to be fully involved in assessment practices.
- 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 however there are inconsistencies in practice across the school.

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

- The headteacher is enthusiastic and highly effective in promoting the high profile of Religious Education amongst staff.
- The headteacher who is also the subject leader of Religious Education is very committed, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic. She is very well informed about current developments and has high expectations which she communicates effectively with staff. She is well respected by her colleagues and seen as a source of support and guidance for all 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 strong leadership and commitment of the headteacher/Religious Education coordinator have had a significant 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 Religious Education curriculum provides some interesting activities and some imaginative teaching however activities are often heavily literacy driven.
- 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 routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. They are extremely supportive and confident in their ability to challenge. They have great 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:****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.

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 Cuthbert's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	114235
Local authority	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.	
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