



St Mary's RC Primary

Pemberton Road, Blackhill, Consett, DH8 8JN

School Unique Reference Number: **114248**

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| Inspection dates: | 28 – 29 January 2015 |
| Lead inspector: | Karen Holmes |

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| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Select Previous OE Judgement | 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

St Mary's RC Primary is a good Catholic school because:

- St Mary's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The distinctive nature is apparent as soon as you enter the school: that the prime purpose is Catholic education, with Christ at the centre.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. The areas for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic Life and participate in a variety of activities supporting their community which contribute to their moral, social and emotional development.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good. The prayer life of the school is a key part of every school celebration.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The quality of teaching and range of activities provided in Religious Education is inconsistent across the school.
- In Collective Worship there are limited opportunities for pupils to plan and prepare a variety of worship independently.
- Marking does not provide specific guidance for pupils to help them to improve their work in Religious Education.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- The school is an averaged sized primary school.
- It serves the parishes of Our Lady Immaculate, Blackhill and Our Lady of the Rosary, Shotley Bridge.
- There have been a number of changes in staffing and governance since the last inspection.
- Pupils are admitted from a wide variety of early years settings.
- The proportion of pupils identified as having a special educational need or disability (SEND) is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is below average.
- Almost all pupils come from a white British background.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - Ensuring consistency in marking so that pupils know how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.
 - Developing expertise among staff in levelling and annotating work, to increase accuracy and identify next steps for improvement.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Providing more varied opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship.
- Improve the quality of Catholic Life by:
 - Continuing with the identified plans and actions that are already in place.

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 good.

- The school's mission statement is clearly demonstrated by the commitment of the school to helping each individual to be the best that they can be. St Mary's is a place where Christ is at the heart of the school community.
- Pupils feel valued and enjoy the variety of roles that they have such as 'buddies' and 'mediators'. They value the many experiences that they are given and enthusiastically and effectively promote the Catholic ethos through the many projects that they have to help others. They recognise how this helps them to become better people.
- Pupils are aware of the needs of others so they willingly and enthusiastically take part in a wide range of fund-raising opportunities within the local community and beyond. They confidently explain the work that they have done, and have plans to do more, for example in their 'Mini-Vinnies' group. They proudly explain the many social justice projects that they are involved in, such as collecting for a local food bank and establishing links with a school in Sierra Leone.
- Behaviour is exemplary throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate kindness and consideration and show an awareness of others and their needs.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year in school and the parish community. They show interest in, and are developing knowledge of, the religious life of others.

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: the mission of the school is understood and embraced by all in their daily life.
- The school is a vibrant, happy and prayerful community. Its Catholic character is reflected through attractive displays and spiritual areas, such as the beautiful prayer garden and prayer room which are well used.
- 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 excellent role models and are fully committed to providing opportunities which enable all pupils to know that Christ is at the centre of everything they do. Parents comment that 'the school provides an excellent grounding in the Catholic faith'.
- Pastoral care for pupils is outstanding, due to the commitment of all stakeholders, with an ethos of mutual respect and support. Pastoral programmes working alongside personal,

social and health education (PSHE) and relationship and sexuality education (RSE) refer to Catholic teachings and principles.

- Staff play an active part in ensuring the best possible outcomes for pupils with strong teamwork, fuelled by the desire to move the school forward. Parents recognise and support this, valuing the inclusivity of the school.
- There is a tangible family ethos which is welcoming and caring. The pastoral needs of the staff are understood and catered for through regular retreats and effective training.
- Clear policies and procedures are in place, which provide high levels of support for pupils, staff and the wider community. 'Rainbows and Sunbeams' provide support to pupils and families with emotional needs, helping vulnerable pupils cope in difficult situations.
- The positive behaviour policy emphasises personal responsibility, rooted in the culture of respect, praise, rewards and choices, while encouraging reconciliation.

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

- The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the Catholic Life of the school: they are firmly committed to the Church's mission in education.
- All leaders and managers, including the governing body, have high expectations for the continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school. They have a clear picture of the school's role in the strong promotion of Catholic values throughout the community.
- The recent appointments to the leadership team and chaplaincy, supported by the headteacher, are fully committed to improving and embedding procedures to monitor and evaluate provision for the Catholic Life of the school. They have a very accurate picture of the school's areas for development.
- There is a clear development plan for the Catholic Life of the school leading to well-targeted improvement. This is very community based and builds on their successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers.
- The relatively new governing body are highly ambitious for the school and share in the aspirations of the senior leaders. They are visible around school, providing support and challenge where necessary. They have an excellent grasp of the challenges faced by the school.

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 good.

- Pupils demonstrate reverence and respect in class and whole school worship. Pupils speak of feeling calm and peaceful during, and after, Collective Worship which contributes positively to their spiritual, moral and personal development.
- Communal prayer is inclusive and accessible: pupils learn to 'sign' a variety of prayers and do so with reverence.
- Pupils are keen to participate in acts of Collective Worship in which they demonstrate interest and enthusiasm. Pupils are familiar with traditional prayers and are comfortable when creating their own prayers. They join in with appropriate responses and are at ease when praying with their school community in large and small gatherings.
- Adults provide good role models for the pupils and contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of religious seasons and feasts and the different demands this makes on our worship.
- Pupils are developing independent skills in leading worship and enjoy the opportunities that they are given to do this. However, pupils are not yet involved in monitoring, or evaluating different forms of Collective Worship.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship with a well-structured programme of liturgies and assemblies which are thoughtfully resourced. Daily acts of worship are central to the life of the school.
- Staff and pupils pray together regularly and the use of annual retreats and missions have promoted a sense of reflection and developed good spiritual awareness.
- Collective Worship is often reflective and fully inclusive, enabling all pupils to take part, appropriate to their age and needs. Staff work with pupils to enable them to plan, prepare and lead worship which is carefully planned for their developmental age, but they need to develop creativity and a greater variety of forms for worship.
- Collective Worship has a clear sense of purpose and is based on clear themes and messages, demonstrated by year six in their liturgy on 'Love'.
- Families and parishioners, and those from the wider community, are welcomed into the school and church to participate in worship. Parents and governors appreciate and enthuse about the opportunities to attend class liturgies and 'Welcome' Masses.

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

- The leadership team has recently reorganised and is strengthened in number. The team provides excellent knowledge and support for other staff. They are enthusiastic, highly motivated and aspirational in their vision for all staff and pupils in the school, providing excellent role models.
- The headteacher and governors place the school's life of prayer and worship at the centre of the school and constantly seek to develop it through the school and parish community.
- School leaders have a very accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development in Collective Worship. They have efficient and detailed action plans to further improve provision based on rigorous self-evaluation.
- Leaders demonstrate good knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality liturgy and worship. They understand the Church's liturgical year and traditions, enabling them to provide opportunities for pupils to reflect through Collective Worship experiences pertinent to the lives of pupils at St Mary's. The whole school mission week was inspirational and further developed spiritual awareness.
- Sacramental preparation is well embedded and in line with diocesan policy. The school works effectively with two parishes to deliver the programme.

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 good.

- The quality of learning and progress in Religious Education is good. Most pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education and have positive attitudes. They find it interesting and can explain why it is important. 'We learn how to live like Jesus wants us to live,' and 'we learn how to make the world a better place' were thoughts from the Mini-Vinnies.
- Pupils display good behaviour for learning and apply themselves well in lessons, working at a good pace. They take pride in their work and enjoy talking about their tasks in Religious Education, becoming more religiously literate and reflective in their responses.
- Outcomes are good overall. Evidence from book scrutiny and lesson observations shows a good variety and range of learning activities where progress is clear. Work is differentiated appropriately with targeted lesson objectives, which meet the needs of all learners. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities are very well supported and achieve well according to their age and ability.
- Inspection findings and evidence presented by the school showed no differences between groups of learners.
- Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are secure in their understanding. They develop a range of skills well and are able to consider the impact of religious ideas on their daily lives.
- 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 practice. A wide variety of teaching strategies, such as 'Conscience Alley', together with well-paced lessons, ensure that pupils engage well with their learning and make good progress.
- Teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education which they communicate effectively to pupils. Most teachers have a good subject knowledge which they use in planning and teaching Religious Education to provide well planned, thoughtful lessons. Effective use of information communication technology (ICT) inspires and motivates pupils to design websites about Gospel stories and use iPads to research other faith denominations.

- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and, as a result of sharing 'I Can' statements and success criteria, pupils are beginning to understand how well they are doing. However marking does not tell pupils how to improve their work or how to achieve the next step.
- 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.
- The school has a rigorous tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and achievement in Religious Education but evidence seen during the inspection indicates that staff are not yet secure with the new assessment arrangements in levelling pupils' work.

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

- 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 areas for development.
- Leaders have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for development, founded on sound observations, and have drawn up a comprehensive and detailed action plan to ensure that the school is continually improving.
- The leadership team has a very clear vision and sense of direction for what is needed to bring about further improvement. They are enthusiastic and highly effective in promoting the high profile of this subject amongst staff.
- Good links have been forged with the parish, cluster schools and youth mission team to provide a range of enrichment activities to promote pupils' learning and engagement. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well.
- Sacramental provision is well embedded and is in line with diocesan policy. The school liaises effectively with two parishes to deliver the programme.
- Governors are highly visible around school. They are supportive but also challenging in their approach. They are well led by an enthusiastic chair of governors who is a regular visitor to 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.

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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:**2**

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

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

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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.

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SCHOOL DETAILS

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| School name | St Mary's RC Primary |
| Unique reference number | 114248 |
| Local authority | Durham |
| 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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