

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
SPIRITUALITY, FORMATION & EDUCATION SERVICE



S48 Inspection Report

**St Cuthbert's RC Primary School,
Crook, County Durham**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION**

School:	St Cuthbert's RC Primary School
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School URN:	114256
Headteacher:	Mrs Barbara Simpson
Chair of Governors:	Mr William Laws
Inspector:	Mrs Christine Lynch
Date of Inspection:	26 and 27 April 2012

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 reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Cuthbert's RC Primary School is an average sized school serving the parishes of St Cuthbert's, Crook and St Thomas of Canterbury, Wolsingham. The vast majority of pupils are from the town of Crook which is situated in the Wear Valley and is an area of high social and economic disadvantage. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage where only a few are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. About half of the pupils are baptised Catholics and a large proportion are from other Christian denominations or of no religious affiliation.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 231

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 50%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 34%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 2%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 14%

Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 6%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 11%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 9

Number of part time teachers: 0

Percentage of Catholic teachers: 78%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 67%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education (RE):

FS	10%	Yr 4	10%
Yr 1	10%	Yr 5	10%
Yr 2	10%	Yr 6	10%
Yr 3	10%		

Parishes served by the school:

St Cuthbert's, Crook

St Thomas of Canterbury, Willington

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education	2
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The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
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MAIN FINDINGS

St Cuthbert's is a good Catholic primary school with many outstanding features. It is led by a strong, dedicated headteacher and senior staff who share the vision to develop the Catholic life of the school by promoting dignity, respect and equality for all. Positive relationships are a key strength of the school and everyone feels valued. Parents say they are very happy with the school's Catholic ethos and believe their children benefit from a good Catholic education. The school's capacity to improve is good due to the determination of the leaders and managers to succeed. All priorities since the last inspection have been addressed successfully.

Outcomes for pupils are good overall. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very positive about their learning in Religious lessons. All groups of pupils make good progress especially when compared to their very low starting points on entry to school. Standards of attainment overall are satisfactory. They are improving year on year and are presently good at the end of key stage one (KS1) and satisfactory at the end of key stage two (KS2). Pupils benefit greatly from the many opportunities given to develop the Catholic life of the school. They take on the role of prayer leaders in their classes and they are becoming more confident in preparing, planning and leading acts of collective worship.

The school's provision for Catholic education is good. Teaching and learning is good overall and all pupils make good progress. Assessment, monitoring and tracking are well established and are being used well to ensure progression and improvement. However, there is not a consistent approach to marking across the school. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils and is reviewed regularly. It is focussed on providing opportunities for pupils to improve and on raising standards. However, planning does not include differentiated tasks to challenge the more able. Collective worship is good and pupils enjoy the responsibility of preparing and leading liturgies and assemblies.

Leadership and management is outstanding overall. The headteacher ensures that everyone in school feels valued and part of the community. Leaders and managers have very effective systems in place to promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school. These systems provide information and data which is analysed thoroughly and in turn drives the improvement of provision and impact on standards. Leaders have a clear sense of direction and purpose in curriculum RE which is recognised as the core subject of the curriculum. The governing body are well informed and totally committed to supporting the school and as a result make a good contribution. The development of partnerships is outstanding and the promotion of community cohesion is outstanding.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Raise standards in RE by;
 - ensuring teachers plan appropriate differentiated tasks to enable all pupils, especially the more-able to achieve higher levels of attainment and provide them with more challenge;
 - developing a more consistent approach to quality marking and feedback so that individual pupils know how to improve;
 - ensuring assessment procedures are further developed to enable pupils to reach higher levels of attainment.

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
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The majority of pupils enjoy their RE lessons, they achieve well and progress and learning are good. Pupils behave very well and take an active part in the tasks provided. Pupils generally want to do their best work in lessons because of the enthusiasm and encouragement from their teachers. From below average starting points on entry to school the majority of pupils including boys and girls, Catholics and pupils from other religious backgrounds make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the support and intervention provided. However, the more able are not provided with enough challenging activities to enable them to achieve higher levels. Attainment at the end of KS1 is good and at the end of KS2 is average, but shows a rising trend (apart from 2011 which showed a decline due to a unique cohort). The school has identified the need to attain higher levels at the end of both key stages. Pupils are eager to learn and are able to speak confidently about what they are taught and how this impacts on their lives.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and they gain much from it. The vast majority of pupils take full advantage of the opportunities that the school provides. They are reflective and enquiring and ask searching questions. Pupils are very interested in finding out about their own religion as well as that of others. They know and understand major celebrations in the liturgical year and speak confidently about them. Pupils have a strong sense of caring for those less fortunate than themselves and understand they have an important responsibility to fundraise and pray. Pupils see forgiveness as an important aspect of their school.

Pupils response to and participation in collective worship is good. They are eager to prepare, plan and lead acts of worship and they choose scripture effectively. They have very good role models in the staff. The pupils act with reverence and respect during liturgies and assemblies and they are confident and at ease talking about their beliefs and those of others. They understand the importance of prayer and how it affects and influences their everyday life. Resources are rich and varied and used effectively during acts of worship. Collective worship contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	2
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Teaching and learning is good overall. Nearly all of the teaching is effective in ensuring pupils are interested in their learning and are making progress. Teachers have a good subject knowledge which inspires and challenges pupils to ask questions and reflect; this enables them to make good progress. Planning is linked to assessment and prior learning. Teachers provide resources that engage pupils' interest and maximise learning opportunities. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs. Teachers generally plan well; however, there are not always enough differentiated or challenging tasks for the more able. Oral and written feedback does not tell pupils how to improve their work.

Assessment and monitoring strategies are in place and are used to measure individual progress. Leaders and managers use this information well to ensure continual improvement. The information enables teachers to set pupil targets and meet the needs of most groups of pupils. However, assessment procedures do not always ensure that higher levels of attainment are achieved. Feedback and marking are not consistent across school and systems to allow pupils to respond are not yet effective.

The religious education curriculum is good. It meets the needs of most of the pupils and prepares them very well for the next stage of their lives. The curriculum reflects and responds to local, national and international issues and pupils are able to make links between what they are taught and how it impacts on their lives. The learning environment reflects the importance placed on RE. The curriculum and the enrichment activities provide many opportunities for the pupils' spiritual and moral development. It meets all of the statutory requirements.

The quality of collective worship throughout the school is good. It is fully inclusive and ensures that the spiritual needs of all the pupils are well met. Prayer is central to the life of the school and pupils speak confidently about the opportunities for prayer each day. Worship is given a high priority in the school and is well resourced. The staff regularly review and plan for collective worship and are focussed on giving pupils more opportunities to prepare and lead prayer. Parents are actively encouraged to attend liturgies and assemblies. The school acknowledges and recognises different religious beliefs and treats everyone with dignity and respect.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	1
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The leadership and management team are outstanding in promoting the Catholic life of the school and they are deeply committed and driven to promote the Church's mission in every aspect of school and parish life. The headteacher and staff provide excellent role models for the pupils. Staff training and awareness ensure a strong commitment to the Catholic mission. There is explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school and the pupils' spiritual and moral development are seen as priorities for the school. The school's Catholic mission lies at the heart of all school development planning which leads on to very well targeted actions. As a result, pupils have an excellent understanding of the school's mission and are actively engaged in developing its purpose and promoting its success.

The monitoring and evaluation of RE is effective. The headteacher/RE co-ordinator is focussed on raising standards and improving teaching and learning. Leaders and managers ensure that effective monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place and are having a positive impact on pupils' learning, progress and outcomes. The monitoring and self-evaluation systems accurately inform areas of strength and areas for development. Clear steps for improvement are identified in the school improvement plan through the school's own self-evaluation.

The work of the governing body is good and governors provide effective challenge and support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They are committed to the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and areas to develop. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. Their relationships with staff are constructive and governors show an eagerness and determination to ensure the school moves forward and that any areas for development are tackled effectively. The governors have a good understanding of their roles and are well informed on matters of RE. They have clear systems for seeking the views of parents and pupils and mechanisms for acting on these.

Through the enthusiasm of the headteacher and senior staff the school has made some outstanding local and national partnerships. These partnerships have a positive impact on the pupils' learning and understanding and they make an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. Pupils benefit immensely from strong links with local primary and secondary schools as well as being involved with Churches Together and St Cuthbert's Care. Leaders and managers seek out opportunities to develop partnerships that provide experiences for the pupils that the school would not be able to provide alone. The development of these partnerships and opportunities are a strength of the school.

The promotion of community cohesion by leaders and managers is outstanding. There is a strong sense of belonging around the whole school and leaders and managers are committed to fostering their shared vision through respect for all and by celebrating differences. RE enables pupils to learn about other faiths and traditions. The school has strong links with the wider community and internationally, as leaders are committed to providing opportunities to foster a global awareness. Collective worship is truly inclusive where religious diversity is recognised, respected and celebrated. Relationships amongst pupils, are positive and this contributes significantly to the ethos of the school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding** Grade 2 **Good** Grade 3 **Satisfactory** Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

Overall effectiveness	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE	2
the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
pupils' standards of attainment in RE	3
the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship	2
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	2
the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE	2
the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in RE	2
the extent to which RE curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
the quality of collective worship provided by the school	2
How effective leaders and managers are in developing 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 and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met	2
how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being	1
how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	1