



St John the Evangelist RC Primary School

Cowpen Lane, Billingham, Teesside, TS23 1LJ

School Unique Reference Number: **111675**

Inspection dates:	19 – 20 January 2016		
Lead inspector:	Mr Martin Humble		
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 John the Evangelist RC Primary School is a good Catholic school because:

- It is a very welcoming family community, helping pupils to develop their faith.
The Catholic Life of St John's is outstanding. Governors, senior leaders and staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school taking a lead role in activities which promote the school's ethos within school, parish and wider community.
- Collective Worship at St John's is good. It is central to the life of the school on a daily basis and a key part of school celebrations.
- Religious Education at St John's is good. The teaching is good and enables pupils to make good progress.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The quality of Religious Education is inconsistent across the school. Some lessons are not sufficiently planned and differentiated to meet the needs and interest of all children, particularly the more-able.
- Marking and the assessment of attainment is inconsistent across the school and does not provide specific guidance for pupils to help them improve their work in Religious Education.
- In Collective Worship there are limited opportunities for pupils to fully plan, prepare and lead worship independently.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St John the Evangelist RC Primary School is an average size primary school and serves the parish of St Thomas of Canterbury in the south of Billingham in the borough of Stockton on Tees.
- The majority of pupils are not from Catholic families.
- The number of pupils with special needs is slightly above the national average.
- The number of pupils from ethnic groups is well below the national average.
- The school deprivation indicator is in line with the national average.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - Ensuring all staff have a good understanding of how to assess attainment in line with diocesan guidelines.
 - Ensuring that all teachers use assessment information to plan challenging, differentiated activities which consistently build on and extend pupils' learning.
 - Ensuring that marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work and that pupils are given time to respond.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Offering more opportunities for pupil involvement in planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship independently throughout the school.
 - Ensuring staff have opportunities to work together in establishing a consistent approach to developing high quality liturgy, worship and prayer.

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 the life of the school and is understood and fully embraced by all pupils in their daily school life.
- Opportunities to participate in the evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school are provided through the Mini Vinnies and Prayer Guardians as well as during Religious Education lessons and pupil questionnaires.
- Pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their 'school family' and they all strive to do their best to promote the strong ethos within their school family and in the wider community. They are well aware of the needs of others, both locally and globally, seeking to support others through awareness raising assemblies and fundraising activities ably led by the Mini Vinnies group.
- Pupils take full advantage of the opportunities provided by school for their personal support and development. Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual and emotional growth.
- An effective programme for relationships and sex education (RSE) 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, benefitting from staff involvement in school and parish activities.

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

- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is a high priority which is reflected in the mission statement and in the way the mission of the school is 'lived out' by all in this family community. There is a very tangible sense of family and community in all aspects of school life which is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between all stakeholders.
- The school is a prayerful community which provides a stimulating environment to reflect the school's mission and its Catholic character.

- Pastoral care for pupils is outstanding as a result of the commitment of all stakeholders, and through having clear policies and structures in place. Pastoral programmes working alongside personal, social and health education (PSHE) and RSE refer to catholic teachings and principles. These programmes cater for the needs of all pupils with staff playing an active part in their delivery to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils.
- The school attends to the pastoral needs of staff to ensure the needs of all are understood and well catered for.
- The behaviour of pupils in and around school is exemplary. Where conflict arises parents are very satisfied that the school sets out to resolve issues in a way which embraces the importance of personal responsibility, the need for justice, whilst also facilitating 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 Church's mission in education. The senior leaders in school embrace the task and provide inspiration within the school community.
- All leaders and managers, including the governing body, have high expectations for the promotion and continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school. Senior leaders share the responsibility for the development of the Catholic ethos very effectively.
- The school's self-evaluation is a reflection of planned monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. The very effective work of the link governor for Religious Education embraces Catholic Life too.
- There is a clear focus on the Catholic Life of the school leading to well-targeted improvements utilising parishioners and parents to enhance the ethos of the school.
- There is a very good understanding of the school's mission as staff and pupils share its purpose and actively participate in developing and supporting it.
- The school engages very 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.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and they are passionate about the school's mission and their participatory role in 'living out' the mission. Governors are actively involved in the evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school and provide challenge and support where necessary.

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.

1

2

2

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

- All pupils at St John the Evangelist respond very respectfully when participating in Collective Worship in small and larger gatherings. Pupils act with reverence: they sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. They are encouraged to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer, described by one pupil as, 'time to talk to God and listen to God'.
- Dependent upon their age, pupils take on responsibility to plan and prepare Collective Worship, supported by the class teacher. This is done with confidence, enthusiasm and a degree of independence.
- St John's 'Prayer Guardians' effectively promote the development of prayer and the need to allocate time for prayer utilising a prayer space in the school library.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of religious seasons and feasts and the implication this has for Collective Worship.
- Adults provide good role models for the pupils and contribute significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Teachers and pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the purpose of worship.
- Pupils participate actively, and with enthusiasm, in the school's sacramental preparation programme following diocesan guidelines.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good. Prayer is central to the life of the school and important to everyone.
- Opportunities to take part in Collective Worship experiences are carefully planned for staff, pupils and parents. Staff try to ensure that Collective Worship opportunities include a variety of prayer styles and that pupils are engaged in them.
- Pupils, parents and staff speak positively about the experiences offered.
- Themes used for Collective Worship are linked to school, values, topical events and the liturgical year. The themes could be widened to further explore everyday events and pupils' interests. The school needs to develop more age appropriate themes for pupils to

plan, prepare and lead Collective Worship throughout the school lessening the need for adult input.

- The majority of school staff are skilled at helping the pupils prepare and lead Collective Worship. They have good knowledge of the Church's customs, rites and heritage and use their knowledge to provide opportunities for the pupils to develop basic liturgies. This needs to be developed with all staff for greater consistency.
- The quality of Collective Worship is not consistent throughout school. Where pupils are fully involved in the planning, preparation and leading it is good, but this was not evident in all year groups.

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

- Leaders and managers are good at promoting, and evaluating the provision for Collective Worship in the school. They show good understanding of the elements necessary for Collective Worship and plan experiences carefully for different school audiences.
- Monitoring systems are in place, leaders take their responsibility really seriously and regularly provide feedback on developmental ideas to all staff. Evidence of monitoring and evaluation shows leaders ensure that pupils are given opportunities to take part in different forms of Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship development is a priority when planning professional development opportunities. Staff are keen to improve their skills by regularly reviewing practice and attendance at diocesan training.
- The leadership team are dedicated and enthusiastic about Collective Worship. They value its place as central to school life and are keen to continue to improve all aspects of their work in this area.
- Sacramental preparation follows diocesan guidelines and the school works closely with the parish to give pupils all the support they can.

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

2

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

- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education demonstrating passion and commitment in their learning. Behaviour in lessons is good with the majority of pupils concentrating well and displaying very positive attitudes to their learning.
- Pupils make good progress across a range of skills and are developing well in their knowledge and understanding. They demonstrate good prior knowledge and are able to use this well in their new learning.
- Outcomes for pupils are good overall. From below average starting points in early years foundation stage pupils make good progress through key stage one (KS1). Good progress continues through key stage two (KS2). Pupils' books evidence a good standard of work, although there are inconsistencies across year groups.
- Inspection findings and evidence presented by the school shows no notable differences between groups of learners. Pupils identified as having special educational needs make good progress because of the quality of targeted support from skilled staff.
- The majority of pupils attain in line with the diocesan average at the end of KS1 and above diocesan average at the end of KS2.

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

- Teaching is good overall with some evidence of outstanding teaching. In the best lessons pupils are set challenging tasks which are well matched to their learning needs and which successfully engage all pupils. Teachers demonstrate high expectations of behaviour and engagement; as a result, pupils concentrate well.
- In some lessons tasks are not always sufficiently well matched to the learning objective to promote good learning, particularly for more able pupils. Activities are not always sufficiently matched to pupils' abilities to engage all groups of learners or to enable them to work independently. An overreliance on worksheets can hinder the progress of more able pupils.
- 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 are regular and the school has developed an effective tracking system. However levelling of pupils' work is not always accurate as teachers are not yet fully confident with levels of attainment in Religious Education.

- Teachers deliver well planned activities through a range of teaching strategies which help pupils to develop and extend their knowledge and foster curiosity and enthusiasm.
- Teachers make good use of time to maximise learning and develop a range of skills interpreting signs and symbols, asking significant questions and engaging with religious ideas.
- The standard of marking and feedback varies. There are some good examples of focused marking, however written comments by teachers on steps to improve learning are not used consistently throughout the school. Where they do exist, pupils require greater opportunities to respond to teacher comments in order to enhance learning.

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

- The headteacher demonstrates and shares an 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 on the quality of 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 development plan.
- All aspects of Religious Education are evaluated regularly and all staff are kept very well informed about the priorities in Religious Education. Leaders, managers and governors use their findings effectively to promote improvement.
- The Religious Education curriculum provides a range of interesting activities and imaginative teaching opportunities to foster engagement and enable pupils to make good progress in their learning. The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and are routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. They are extremely supportive but also confident in their ability to challenge. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties well.

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.

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

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

2

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	St John the Evangelist RC Primary School
Unique reference number	111675
Local authority	Stockton
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	Mrs Sheila Gatenby
Head teacher	Mrs Julia Rea
Date of previous school inspection	January 2011
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