



St Cuthbert's RC Primary School

Church Hill, Crook, Durham, DL15 9DN

School Unique Reference Number: **114256**

Inspection dates:	02 – 03 February 2017
Lead inspector:	Mrs Lisa Stokoe

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 Cuthbert's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the well-being and personal development of each pupil is at the heart of the school's vision and the staff and governors are united in implementing this across all areas of school life.
- The Collective Worship of the school is outstanding because it is central to the life of the school. Pupils confidently plan and lead worship acting with reverence and respect.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. It is not yet outstanding because accuracy of assessment is not yet embedded across the school. Evaluation and monitoring systems also need to become more rigorous and to include self-assessment by pupils.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Cuthbert's is a slightly below average sized primary school serving the parishes of St Cuthbert's, Crook and St Thomas of Canterbury, Wolsingham.
- 47% of pupils are baptised Catholics.
- The percentage of pupil premium children at 29% is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who receive special educational needs support is below the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - Continuing to embed the accuracy of assessment particularly at higher levels.
 - Introducing more formal and rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems including self-assessment by pupils.
 - Increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching through the sharing of good practice and training.

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 outstanding.

- The highly visible school motto is used and understood by the entire school community, 'live the light, share the light, be the light'. They strive every day to live this out in their interactions with each other and can clearly articulate what this means to them. They are truly, 'the lighthouse at the top of the hill'.
- Numerous opportunities exist for pupils to become involved in leading the Catholic Life of the school through their Junior Mission Team, Mini Vinnies and school council. They enthusiastically embrace these opportunities to influence the work of the school. They speak with pride about their efforts supporting CAFOD world gifts through the money jar appeal, sponsoring a child in Sudan and collecting food for their local food bank.
- Behaviour is exemplary: pupils are polite and considerate of others, demonstrating outstanding emotional awareness. This view is endorsed by pupils themselves as well as staff, governors, parents and parishioners.
- The Catholic Life of the diocese has encouraged the pupils to attend the annual diocesan Youth Festival, Faith 15, The Event and a two day retreat for year six pupils to the Emmaus Village. Pupils show a real interest in, and are developing knowledge of, the religious life of others and this is particularly apparent in this, the Year of Oscar Romero.

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

- The quality of provision for Catholic Life has the highest priority. The school's motto which is lived out daily has been further developed by linking it to an inspirational song, familiar to all.
- There is an overwhelming sense of family in all areas of school life evidenced in the quality of relationships that exist between all staff, pupils, leaders, governors and parents. Excellent relationships and the close cooperation of the whole school team are key strengths of the school. As several parents said, 'everyone here always puts themselves out to help you.'
- St Cuthbert's has a distinctive Catholic character which is embodied in the central atrium, prayer room and prayer garden. These carefully designed and well-resourced prayerful spaces reflect the importance placed on the Catholic Life of the school. Inspirational art work, stained glass, mosaics and religious artefacts make these spaces sacred.

- There is a real commitment to care for all pupils and the most vulnerable are supported through a variety of effective nurturing programmes including the employment of a Parent Support Advisor (PSA). Pastoral materials such as social, emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) compliment diocesan resources. 'Statements to live by' showing us how to love like Jesus and 'Journey in Love' (Relationships and Sex Education Programme) are all used effectively to promote Catholic teaching and principles.

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

- The headteacher, who is a very visible and positive presence around the school, has a very clear understanding of Catholic education and of the role of the Catholic school. She is embedding this very effectively throughout the school so that pupils, staff, parents and parishioners recognise and support it wholeheartedly.
- School self-evaluation is rigorous and robust including all stakeholders. This leads to well-planned and well-resourced school improvements.
- Governors know the school well; they are knowledgeable and well informed. They provide a significant level of challenge and act as critical friends. This leads to school improvements which enhance the communal life of the school. As a result, staff and pupils' understanding of the mission of the school is excellent.
- There are excellent partnerships with parents and the wider community resulting in a variety of activities which improve the school's provision. This is a school which is constantly looking to improve further and thrives on challenge, ensuring the best possible care for all pupils.

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 Cuthbert's is a very prayerful and spiritual community where various forms of worship are regular and meaningful parts of the day. There is a calm and peaceful ethos which pervades the school and is reflected in the pupils' excellent behaviour and consideration for others.
- Pupils are inspired by, and enthusiastic in their response to Collective Worship. This is evidenced in their keen participation in a variety of forms of worship and prayerful reflection, most notably liturgical dance which has a high status across the school. By key stage two (KS2) pupils are confidently able to prepare and lead acts of class worship even including a 'surprise dance' within the year four class. Voluntary acts of worship are confidently and creatively led by the Junior Mission Team and pupils from across the school regularly attend these sessions.
- From the earliest stages pupils recognise the special nature of liturgical symbols and show respect. They are aware that religious beliefs are important, demonstrating respect for their own faith and the faith of others.
- Adults provide excellent role models for pupils and contribute significantly to their spiritual and moral development and this is evident when pupils lead their own liturgies. Pupils commented, 'I liked it when we dropped the pebble in the bowl because we got to say a prayer in our heart' (year two) and, 'it's a time to talk to God about all our worries' (year four).

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Worship and prayer is at the heart of this school community. Praying together is part of the daily life of staff and pupils. Prayer tables and focal points in all classrooms and the atrium are imaginatively resourced and carefully designed. Pupils enjoy selecting from a range of religious artefacts to enhance their worship and they take pride in the way that they employ these resources.
- Collective Worship is carefully planned and resourced using 'Statements to live by', Oscar Romero resources and the liturgical year. Parents, parishioners and governors are invited to share in various acts of worship, when appropriate, and many attend events which are timetabled throughout the year.

- Families are becoming more involved in the pupils' religious development through weekly circulation of the Wednesday Word, Travelling Cribs during Advent, Easter Mystery during Lent and bible story bags to extend pupils' knowledge of different scriptures.

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

- The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator 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 and use this to very good effect in leading the school.
- Leaders prioritise the liturgical development for all in school and ensure that time is devoted to it. This is evidenced in staff prayers and in-service training days, and the opportunity for pupils to visit the Emmaus Village, Faith 15 and St Mary's Cathedral where they led worship through their Spirited Arts award winning dance.
- Leaders and governors have an effective monitoring and evaluation system for Collective Worship. Pupils and parents are consulted regularly about the quality of worship and through the school council, Mini Vinnies and Junior Mission Team pupils are able to give appropriate feedback.
- Collective Worship is promoted through school with vibrant displays in classrooms and corridors which help pupils understand the essential elements that are found in outstanding Collective Worship.

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 start school with knowledge and skills typically below those expected for their age. They generally make good progress in their learning as they journey through school. There are slight variations in the attainment and progress of children with special educational needs and those who are known to be entitled to free school meals. Leaders are aware of this and are addressing this in the school action plan.
- Through evidence in work and from conversation, pupils are able to demonstrate effective use of prior knowledge when making links between religious ideas and using scriptural references accurately.
- Pupils identified as having special educational needs are well supported by highly skilled teaching assistants as evidenced by a year three child who had proudly developed his own powerpoint about St Cuthbert.
- Current tracking for 2017 shows that the standards of attainment of most pupils in each year group are now in line with diocesan averages and, where this is not the case, the difference is diminishing.

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

- Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and are a real strength of the school. This was commented upon by staff, pupils and parents alike. 'We genuinely care for every child,' 'we are a family and we look out for each other,' and, 'there's a real sense of community – it's open and friendly.'
- Teaching is mainly good and pupils generally make progress over time as evidenced in their books. In the lessons observed during the inspection teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge and a variety of teaching strategies. Support staff are used well to support and extend pupils of different abilities.
- Marking is generally positive and supportive with guidance, feedback and questions given to move learning on. This is used and responded to consistently by pupils as evidenced in their books.

- There is insufficient evidence of the use of self-assessment as a means of developing pupils understanding of what they need to do to improve. The school has identified this need in its action plan; however, this is not yet embedded across the school.

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

- As a result of good leadership Religious Education has a very high profile in the life of the school. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are actively involved in the school community. They have a good understanding of the school's performance in Religious Education and are becoming more involved in monitoring and evaluation activities such as learning walks and lesson observations. They are supportive of staff and leaders but also confident and challenging in their approach. Governors ensure that all statutory and canonical responsibilities are very well met.
- The extremely conscientious Religious Education coordinator is committed to ensuring that pupils achieve the very best they can. She has a clear view of strategies to support improvements in teaching and keeps all staff well informed as to current developments in Religious Education.
- Leaders have a strategic picture of the school's strengths and areas for development, founded on sound observations, and have drawn up action plans to ensure that the school is continually improving. A tracking system is in place and pupils are monitored to ensure that they make progress both throughout the year and annually. The Religious Education coordinator is working hard to ensure that assessment is used consistently and accurately across the school.
- Opportunities exist for pupils to experience their own traditions as well as those of other faiths. For example, key stage two pupils were recently able to visit a synagogue when studying Judaism and also visited St Mary's cathedral completing a treasure trail of the various artefacts.
- Diocesan guidelines for sacramental preparation are followed enthusiastically by all. The parish priest works well supporting the school, catechists (which includes the school caretaker), parents and pupils.

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.

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Cuthbert's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	114256
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.	
Chair of governors	Mrs Tanya Devereux
Head teacher	Mrs Rosaleen Donnelly
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