



St Michael's RC Primary School

Clumber Street, Newcastle, NE4 7RE

School Unique Reference Number: **144971**

Inspection dates:	23 – 24 January 2019
Lead inspector:	Angela Boyle

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Catholic Life:		Outstanding	1
Religious Education:		Good	2
Collective Worship:		Good	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- St Michael's is a very inclusive and welcoming school where all members work hard as a team to provide a caring community with Christ at its centre.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the mission and ethos of Catholic education underpins all that the school does. The quality of welcome from pupils, staff and governors is exceptional.
- The quality of Religious Education is good because pupils enjoy Religious Education, can explain its value and are keen to do well leading to good progress in lessons. Self-evaluation by leaders and managers impacts positively on provision and outcomes.
- The quality of Collective Worship is good because it is central to the life of the school and all pupils from a very young age are reverent and respectful during worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Michael's is an average sized primary school serving the parish of St. Michaels' in Elswick.
- There are currently 31% of pupils who are baptised Catholic.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who do not have English as their first language is high.
- The school is situated in an area of high social deprivation.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and or disabilities is above the national average.
- St Michael's is part of the Sacred Heart Partnership of Schools Multi Academy Trust.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - further embedding feedback for learning so that pupils are guided to make improvements to their work in greater depth in-order to move learning forward.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - allowing pupils to take the initiative and plan and lead worship independently in a range of contexts, using a variety of approaches.
 - ensuring there is a systematic progression of skills in pupil planning, preparing and leading Collective Worship.

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.

- Pupils are at the centre of the school's mission and ethos and eagerly participate in the many opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school.
- All pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their school family. They clearly articulate how the school is helping them to become better people, demonstrating their understanding of Gospel Values. One pupil stated, 'We have the Ten Commandments and we try to follow God's way'.
- Pupils confidently talk about their charity work taking place throughout the year; they are alert to and respond willingly to the needs of others. They actively organise a varied assortment of fund raising opportunities, such as collecting for the local food bank or singing to raise funds for the local care home. The recently established Mini Vinnies group now make decisions around charitable support.
- Pupils are willing and eager to take on positions of responsibility and leadership within the school and the wider community.
- Pupils discuss their own faith and spirituality with confidence and are proud of their religious background and beliefs. They demonstrate religious tolerance and a deep respect for faiths other than their own.
- Behaviour is exemplary, pupils show great care and respect for one another and say they feel safe and well cared for.

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

- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school has the highest possible priority with the school mission statement 'Live life to the full', lived out by all. This is prominently displayed throughout the school.
- All staff have high expectations and a shared vision with regard to the school ethos and the Church's mission in education.
- The school is a prayerful community and the learning environment reflects the school's mission and celebrates its Catholic character with vibrant displays, artefacts and the creation of sacred spaces throughout the school.

- Pastoral care for pupils and their families is outstanding as a result of the commitment of all stakeholders as well as having clear policies and procedures in place. There is an explicit commitment to the most vulnerable and needy. For example, the work of the school counsellor to support the emotional well-being of pupils which has had a significant impact on the work of the school. Similarly, the attendance team has made a significant impact and parents value their support.
- Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) are effectively planned and well taught at age appropriate levels. They reflect Catholic teaching and principles and follow diocesan policy and guidelines.

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

- School leaders are deeply committed to the mission of the Church and provide clear direction for the Catholic Life of the school. Together they very effectively promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school. They are highly ambitious for all children.
- The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of planned monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. It has clear links to the school development plan and is focused on improvements to the Catholic Life of the school and improved outcomes for pupils.
- Focused staff training and rigorous induction procedures have developed awareness, understanding and a commitment to the school's Catholic ethos.
- The school has very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers; they have a clear understanding of the school's mission and are highly supportive of it. Parents feel that the Catholic ethos is very strong; they feel very welcome and able to talk to staff about their children.
- Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and are actively involved in monitoring and evaluation. They make informed decisions, provide support and are prepared to challenge where necessary.

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.

- Most pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education and are keen to do well. They speak with enthusiasm about their learning and have very positive attitudes towards their lessons. Books are well presented with a good standard of work and an interesting variety of activities. Pupils in all classes take pride in their work.
- Pupils value and appreciate the support they receive from their teachers. In all lessons observed across the school, pupils concentrate well and are rarely off task. Behaviour for learning is outstanding.
- Outcomes for pupils are good overall and improving. Pupils generally enter school with knowledge and skills that are below what is expected for their age. They make good progress in lessons over time. Many pupils are reflective in their responses showing signs of their developing religious literacy. They are able to consider the impact of religious ideas on their own lives.
- Pupils identified as having a special educational need and or disability make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and are well supported by skilled teaching assistants.
- Systems are in place to evaluate the progress of different groups of learners. Inspection findings and evidence provided by the school show some differences between groups of learners. These issues are cohort specific and are currently being addressed by the school.

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

- Teaching is consistently good. The Come and See programme is used effectively and teacher's subject knowledge is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour which are effectively communicated to pupils.
- Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education and there is a willingness to share good practice.
- A variety of teaching strategies, good questioning skills and clear explanations ensure that pupils are interested and engaged in their learning and make good progress.
- Teachers have developed common strategies across all classes ensuring that work is differentiated to closely match pupils' needs and abilities.

- Teachers mark work regularly and the feedback given to pupils is positive and supportive. There are some good examples of focused marking with accurate steps to improve learning. Pupils are routinely given time to respond to feedback with some pupils in upper key stage two beginning to respond in greater depth. However, challenge and further questions are not always closely linked to the task and therefore do not move learning forward.
- The school has an effective tracking system to monitor pupils' progress and achievement in Religious Education. Staff have become confident and accurate in their assessments and pupils are involved in self-assessment.

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

- The leader for Religious Education and the Head of School are committed, knowledgeable, enthusiastic and are well informed of current developments in Religious Education.
- Leaders ensure their vision for the subject is shared through staff meetings, briefings and attendance at diocesan training. As a result, Religious Education has a very high profile in the school and is well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. It compares favourably with other core subjects in terms of staffing, resources and time. A number of staff hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Leaders carry out a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes in Religious Education and the school is well placed to further improve.
- Governors are frequent visitors to the school and have a high profile. They are extremely supportive but also confident in their ability to appropriately challenge the leadership team. Governors are well informed of standards in Religious Education. Regular monitoring is carried out by the Religious Education link governor who provides high quality, insightful feedback to the leadership team.
- Sacramental preparation is given a high priority by the school; it is fully embedded in the Religious Education curriculum and follows diocesan guidelines. It is highly valued by parents.

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

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2

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

- St Michael's is a very prayerful community where worship is a regular and meaningful part of each day.
- From the earliest age pupils act reverently and show respect when participating in acts of worship. They join in prayers with confidence and sing with great enthusiasm, they are at ease when praying with their school community. Pupils speak of, 'feeling calm and peaceful' when praying with their class.
- Pupils know what constitutes the various elements of Collective Worship and are able to prepare and lead class worship with increasing confidence. Pupils rely heavily on structures and formats provided by adults and now require further opportunities to plan and lead worship independently in a range of contexts using a variety of approaches.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts.
- Pupils confidently discuss what being part of a prayerful community means to them. Collective Worship contributes significantly to their spiritual and moral development.
- There is a deep sense of respect for faiths other than their own and pupils are well informed. They have an excellent understanding of other world faiths.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Collective Worship is central to the school and forms the heart of each day; it is inclusive, reflective and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are well met. It is very well resourced. Staff and pupils pray together as part of all school celebrations.
- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship with a well-structured programme of liturgies and a clear sense of purpose and message which reflects the Catholic character of the school.
- Collective Worship planning indicates pupils are competently guided in their preparation, planning and delivery of Collective Worship. Pupils in year three presented a very reflective class liturgy. The pupils involved in planning were able to clearly explain their role in preparation and the part they played in planning and their choice of Gospel reading. Currently there is no systematic progression of skills at age appropriate levels across the

school to encourage independence when planning or leading Collective Worship.

- Focal points and displays in each classroom and throughout the school are thought provoking, well-resourced and provide very good support for reflection and prayer.
- Parents and governors are invited to share the spiritual life of the school, they appreciate and take full advantage of the opportunities to attend special events and say they are moved by the experience.

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

- Leaders and managers are enthusiastic and know how to plan and deliver high quality experiences of worship which is relevant to all pupils. They model this in school and ensure it is shared with staff. They have a deeply rooted understanding of the church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols and ensure displays and artefacts around the school reflect this.
- Leaders ensure staff receive formation in the development of spiritual and liturgical understanding. They make effective use of professional development opportunities offered through the diocese as well as personnel from the Sacred Heart Partnership.
- Leaders regularly monitor Collective Worship and it is under regular review. They are constantly seeking ways to improve upon the pupil experience and have a clear vision that Collective Worship is seen as a priority.
- Leaders seek the views of pupils, staff and parents regarding the quality and significance of worship. Parents often comment upon the high quality of worship and their views are recorded and highly valued.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school and are a visible presence at many acts of worship enabling them to have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development; they ensure Collective Worship forms part of the review of school performance.

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

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

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.

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Michael's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108511
Local authority	Newcastle
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Séamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle 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	Michael Scurr
Executive head teacher	Mr. N Conway
Date of previous school inspection	December 2013
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