



St Mary's RC Primary School

Farrington Road, Cullercoats, North Shields, NE30 3EY

School Unique Reference Number: **108618**

Inspection dates:	14 – 15 March 2019
Lead inspector:	John Hattam
Team inspector:	Andrew Ramanandi

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Mary's RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- The Catholic Life of St Mary's is outstanding. St Mary's is a welcoming Catholic community where leaders, staff, pupils and parents live out an authentic Catholic Life firmly rooted in the teachings of Christ.
- Religious Education at St Mary's is good. Most pupils make good progress in lessons and over time. Skilful teachers ensure that expectations are very high.
- Collective worship at St Mary's is outstanding. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship across the school. Worship is a key part of all school celebrations and is highly valued by the whole school community. Leaders excel in the promotion of high quality Collective Worship.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Mary's is an average sized primary school with 236 pupils on roll.
- The vast majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported by Pupil Premium is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of baptised Catholic pupils is very high, currently at 80%.
- There is before-school and after-school provision on the school site.
- The school serves the parishes of St Mary's, Cullercoats and Our Lady and St Oswin, Tynemouth.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- To improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - extending opportunities in school for the most skilled teachers to share good practice.
 - providing a more consistent level of challenge for all groups of children so that attainment in relation to Diocesan averages improves.

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.

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it.
- Pupils have a deep sense of belonging to their 'school family' and parents comment that, 'at St Mary's, Christian values are applied in life'. Relationships are at the core of the school.
- Pupils wholeheartedly appreciate, value and participate in the Catholic Life of the school with the mission statement, 'Faith in Education', central to the daily routines. The Catholic ethos is tangible throughout the school.
- Pupils evaluate their input into the Catholic Life and the impact of their actions on their community on a regular basis. Pupils say they feel valued and very confidently express their ideas and feelings.
- Pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of the importance of how they live their lives and how they treat others. Pupils are happy, confident and secure in their own stage of spiritual growth, demonstrating exemplary behaviour towards adults and each another.
- Pupils are at the heart of school celebrations and through very strong parish links, pupils worship with parishioners on a very regular basis in both the parish church and chapel. Pupils are able to extend their relationship with the local community particularly through the actions of the Mini Vinnies group.
- Pupils willingly and eagerly take on positions of responsibility and leadership within the school. Pupils confidently talk about the various causes they support, effectively promoting the Catholic character of the school, such as CAFOD, Fair Trade and a Justice and Peace project to welcome asylum seekers called 'Walk With'.

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

- Excellent relationships exist within the school community with all stakeholders fully committed to making the school the best that it can be. Staff, governors, parents and pupils are all encouraged to be involved in school life and communication is a strength of the school.

- Parents comment that, 'St Mary's helps us as parents to support our children in their journey of faith'. There is a strong sense of family and parents take advantage of the many opportunities to worship and pray with their children.
- St Mary's is a school committed to Catholic tradition and ethos. The Catholic character of the school is evident in the creative displays and sacred spaces featured around the school.
- Clear policies and procedures are in place which are carefully planned to reflect the Catholic Life of the school for both pupils and staff. They provide high levels of support for pupils, staff and the wider community.
- High expectations of behaviour are promoted by all staff and pupils alike. This is seen in the 'Special Friends' system which sees year 6 and reception pupils paired up. One year 6 pupil commented, 'I like seeing other people happy; service gives me a spark of joy'.
- Pupils are clearly supported throughout school by a range of pastoral opportunities provided by the school including the very well embedded house point system. All staff play their part and everyone is valued for their contribution.
- The school takes full advantage of the Church's seasons as well as local and national initiatives to seize every opportunity to help others.
- The relationships and sex education programme is well established and delivered effectively at age appropriate levels following Journey in Love. This is delivered across school during a healthy school week.

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

- Leaders and managers throughout the school are instrumental in ensuring that the Church's mission in education is lived and breathed by all connected with the school. They have a very clear understanding of the vision of Catholic education and role of the Catholic school in the mission of the Church.
- Governors are active within the school community and fully participate in the Catholic Life of the school. They have an excellent grasp of the challenges faced by the school and work very effectively with the headteacher.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for all children. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and parish priest are excellent role models and are motivated and enthusiastic about the journey that the school is on. The impact of this leadership is evident across the school with staff and pupils mirroring the outstanding examples that have been given to them.
- The school has developed very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers, who have a clear understanding of the school's mission.
- The Catholic Life of the school is monitored by all stakeholders on a regular basis to inform priorities and evaluate success. Governors are confident in holding the leadership team to account, whilst being actively involved in supporting its mission. The governors have real expertise and benefit from having a particularly effective link governor.
- The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, gathered from a range of sources. It has clear links to the school improvement plan and is focused on improvements for pupil outcomes.
- The spirituality of staff is a priority and opportunities for the spiritual development of all staff are provided through regular prayer opportunities and regular retreats.

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 make good progress in Religious Education in each key stage. Given their relative starting points, attainment in relation to Diocesan averages needs to improve.
- Most pupils relative to their age and capacity are religiously literate and engaged young people; they use their knowledge, understanding and skills to reflect spiritually and to think ethically and theologically. As a consequence, most pupils are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.
- Most pupils are actively engaged in lessons and are committed to improving their knowledge, understanding and skills in order to further develop as competent learners. During the inspection pupils told us that they particularly enjoy Religious Education lessons where teachers have taken the time to incorporate creative elements in the learning process for example in the use of religious art.
- The quality of pupils' current work is good overall but there are inconsistencies in the quantity and quality of work across school.
- Almost all pupils approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils told us during the inspection that they enjoy challenging activities and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning.
- Behaviour in lessons is very good because most pupils enjoy Religious Education.

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

- Teaching observed during the inspection was mostly good. Teachers consistently plan good lessons linked to pupils' current assessment so that most pupils learn well. As a result of this teaching is mainly good.
- Most teachers are confident in their subject expertise and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. As a consequence, most pupils apply themselves well and make good progress over time. However, not all teachers have the skills necessary to develop creative learning sequences which will engage and inspire all pupils.
- The best teachers skilfully employ a range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work. Consequently, most pupils are motivated and concentrate in lessons.

- Teachers ensure most pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to good progress and increases their confidence in making further improvements.
- A consistent approach to planning ensures that teachers manage time well to secure good learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons. Most teachers communicate high expectations about Religious Education to their pupils who respond positively.
- The most skilful teachers use observation and questioning during lessons in order to adapt tasks and explanations, thus improving learning for most pupils.
- Success is celebrated through the whole school house system and the sharing of work with senior leaders, parents and through whole school displays.
- Good quality resources, including other adults, are used effectively to optimise learning for most pupils.
- The curriculum for Religious Education has been significantly enhanced by the introduction of the 'St Mary's Values Curriculum'. This innovation has been very well received by pupils and parents and is beginning to have significant benefits for the wider school community.

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

- The headteacher demonstrates a highly ambitious vision for the school and for what every pupil and teacher can achieve. She inspires and supports the whole school community.
- The skills of the dedicated Religious Education coordinator are clearly seen in the accurate records of lesson observations, analysis of data and the monitoring of pupils work in all classes across the school.
- The coordinator attends all diocesan training to ensure that cross moderation is verified, these sessions are then disseminated back to the staff in school-based curriculum professional development.
- All aspects of Religious Education are evaluated regularly, and all staff are kept very well informed about the priorities in Religious Education. Leaders use their findings effectively to promote improvement.
- The self-evaluation of Religious Education by leaders is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which is well informed by best practice in Religious Education.
- Governors are regular visitors to school and are routinely involved in a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. They are very knowledgeable about the many strengths in Religious Education at St Mary's as well as the areas for improvement. Their diverse backgrounds enable them to be extremely supportive, but also confident in their ability to challenge when appropriate.
- Leaders ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

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.

- Pupils are engaged by a wide variety of acts of Collective Worship at St Mary's. Collective Worship inspires in them deep thought and heartfelt response. There is a genuine enthusiasm for Collective Worship across school, reflected in the quality of communal singing, in the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of reverent participation in communal prayer.
- Pupils are keen to take the initiative in leading Collective Worship in class with their peers, in key stage gatherings and when parents are welcomed into school to pray alongside their children.
- Pupils are creative and resourceful in their planning of liturgy and want it to be the best it can be. Pupils described with a sense of pride how much they enjoyed creating acts of worship in response to world events. Pupils are very appreciative of the opportunities that worship created by their peers' offers, one pupil said, 'Collective Worship gives us time to just be with God'.
- Almost all pupils have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. Appropriate to their age and ability they are able to prepare acts of Collective Worship, which fully reflect this understanding.
- St Mary's is a faith-filled, praying community; this has a profound and visible effect on the spiritual and moral development of all pupils. Pupils have a deep sense of respect for those of other faiths.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Collective Worship is central to life at St Mary's for all pupils, whatever their own particular faith background, and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is a valuable part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff.
- The Catholic values of the school are given the highest priority and are embedded in the daily life of St Mary's. The bespoke values curriculum underpins the mission of the school and realises its aim to embed 'values that shape who we become'.

- Collective Worship whether it is led by the headteacher, Religious Education coordinator, teachers or pupils always has a clear purpose, message and direction. The themes for Collective Worship are carefully chosen and reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical season and the Church's mission in education.
- Leaders including governors ensure that Collective Worship is given the highest possible priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing; as a result, experiences of Collective Worship are of such a high quality that they are universally cherished by every member of St Mary's school community.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts, and are passionate about ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- Key staff are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver high quality worship. They have a comprehensive understanding of the purpose of Collective Worship and the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer.
- Leaders in school plan opportunities for worship in a manner that attracts and facilitates attendance by other adults associated with the pupils and the school and the response to this invitation is outstanding.

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

- The headteacher and senior leadership team have a very clear vision for Collective Worship at St Mary's. They offer outstanding leadership and are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. As a leadership team they strive to make worship accessible to all pupils in a contemporary context.
- Parents appreciate the welcoming community which the school provides when they are invited to join in acts of worship in school and in church. The views of parents and governors are regularly sought. Their responses are highly valued and lead to further developments.
- The Religious Education coordinator is a visible leader of Collective Worship in school; she ensures that continual professional development in-house, and at diocesan level, is promoted for all staff. Staff are appreciative of this support and enthusiastic in their approach to Collective Worship. They are quick to embrace new initiatives and share enthusiastically with their pupils
- Leaders have ensured that there are clear systems in place to monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship across school; as a result the quality of worship on offer at St Mary's continues to improve.
- Governors are very knowledgeable about the many strengths in the provision for Collective Worship at St Mary's. They are quick to identify areas for development and offer a significant level of challenge to the leadership team to ensure that the offer of quality worship continues to improve.

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

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:**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

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Mary's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108618
Local authority	North Tyneside
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	Mrs Caroline Maclean
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