

DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education
Collective Worship
and
The Catholic Life of the School



School: St Mary's RC Primary

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Headteacher: David Harrison

Chair: Mary Connor

Date: 13th – 14th July 2011

Inspector: Susan Fall

INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. 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.

What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupil's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory Catholic school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's RC Primary School is a small school serving a rural town and the surrounding countryside. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small number who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average but the proportion with a statement is average. 56% of pupils are baptised Catholics. The school has received a number of national awards and accreditations in recognition of the contribution staff make to developing pupils' healthy lifestyles and progress in the basic skills, and to promoting inclusion.

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 100

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 14

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 56%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 44%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 0%

Percentage of pupils special needs: 7%

Teaching Staff:

Full-time Teachers: 4

Part-time Teachers: 1

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 100%

Support Staff:

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 1

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 2

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 33%

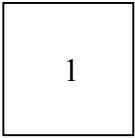
Percentage of learning time given to R.E

10% throughout school

Parishes served by the School

St Leonard's

1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS



MAIN FINDINGS

St Mary's is an outstanding Catholic primary school. It is a school where there is a culture of high standards, of real achievement and of high quality care and behaviour. The school has a very calm, friendly, welcoming atmosphere and its distinctive nature as a Catholic school is clearly apparent. Staff, governors and parents work together exceptionally well to nurture children so that they get the best possible in pursuing both their religious and academic progress.

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding and are a major factor in the school's success. The detailed self evaluation document demonstrates that the school knows itself well and is clear about plans for development. Standards are high by the end of Year 6 and the majority of pupils achieve extremely well. Pupils make very good progress. Teaching is excellent and rigorous assessment procedures are in place. Religious Education is well planned, monitored and evaluated.

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they demonstrate a genuine sense of belonging to and responsibility for their own and the wider community. Pupils and parents speak very highly of their school and value the commitment of the staff and the outstanding standard of teaching and learning. Pastoral care is excellent and is given high priority by all members of staff. Governors demonstrate a high level of commitment to the religious life of the school. There are excellent links with the local parish through the support given to the school by the parish priest who is on the governing body and along with the Chair of Governors is a frequent visitor to the school.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Implement 'Statements to Live By' across the whole school, introduced through Collective Worship and supported by Circle Time.
- Continue the development of good work on assessment already in place
- Provide more opportunities for staff to share good practice both within and beyond the school
- Strengthen to school's work in developing global links and provide opportunities for pupils to interact with others from different backgrounds

2. PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

1

Learning and progress in Religious Education are outstanding and standards of attainment are high. Religious Education is based on the 'Here I Am' programme which is well planned and its delivery offers a wide range of teaching styles which motivate and engage the pupils. Pupils are gaining knowledge and understanding of religion and an ability to reflect on meaning at a very good rate across all key stages. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The provision for special needs pupils is outstanding. Pupils with special needs are totally integrated into the school community and their needs are well met.

Pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. Pupils' written work is well presented and in discussion pupils show a thorough knowledge of the Catholic faith. Pupils of all age groups and abilities engage well in learning. Pupils' behaviour and attitude to their learning are outstanding and contribute to their achievement. In lessons observed during the inspection most pupils were able to concentrate very well and remain on task without direction from an adult.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and participate enthusiastically in the opportunities offered by the school. There is an active school council which allow pupils to have a voice in decision making and the pupils feel their views are respected, as evident in the recent purchase and installation of a water fountain. Pupils spoke highly of the care shown by staff and they themselves show respect and care for each other. All staff know pupils well, therefore, providing personalised support and as a result pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. Parents spoke very warmly and with gratitude of the care shown to their children and themselves in times of difficulty. Pupils are encouraged to and are given many opportunities to recognise the needs of others within their own, the Diocesan and wider community, they respond generously to these opportunities.

Prayer and worship are integral to the life of the school. Pupils are given opportunities to

write their own prayers and very good examples were seen during inspection. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the quality of Collective Worship. Many liturgies, acts of worship and Masses held in school are shared with families and parishioners. Pupils respond reverently and thoughtfully to Collective Worship in both large assemblies and classroom situations.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education? 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</i> 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress in Religious Education?</i> 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ <i>pupils attainment in Religious Education?</i> 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent do pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school? 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship? 	1

3. PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education

The quality of the curriculum for Religious Education is excellent and meets the needs of all learners. The curriculum fully meets the Diocesan requirements. It is well supplemented by daily prayer and worship. Pupils acquire a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith. They also develop an understanding and respect for other faiths and traditions. All lessons observed were good and the majority were outstanding. Lessons were marked by the enjoyment and progress of all pupils. Pupils are confident, and attentive. They reported that 'Religious Education lessons are fun and we learn lots about Jesus'. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent and contribute to their obvious enjoyment in learning. Another key feature of lessons was the way in which pupils respected each other, listened to each other and accommodated each others' needs.

Teachers plan well with clear learning intentions made explicit to pupils. Lessons are well structured; learning objectives are made clear and shared with the pupils. Pupils are taught in mixed age range groups and staff plan to ensure consistency and progression. Lessons are planned to ensure that pupils really understand what they should know by the end of the session. This enables pupils to reflect on their own progress. Teachers use their own or the pupils' experiences as starting points for lessons. This was evident in the Foundation Stage Class when a lesson relating to 'Special Places' began with a suitcase of memorabilia which immediately engaged the pupils' interest. Teachers make good use of information technology resources as evident in a Key Stage 2 class where children were using laptops to create brochures relating to 'Special Places'. All activities planned for on the day of the inspection were devised to be practical and achievable.

Work with individual pupils or group work is extremely well supported by teaching assistants who are in a clear professional partnership with the teachers. The well directed teaching assistants reinforce and support teaching and learning very effectively.

A scrutiny of work showed evidence of coverage, differentiation and a range of

activities. Workbooks and conversations with pupils and indicate that there are opportunities for reflection on the links between the life and teachings of Jesus and their own lives. Current assessment procedures provide an accurate and up to date picture of the achievement of all pupils. They inform planning and ensure progression which in turn sustains high achievement. Teachers' marking is both affirmative and constructive in helping pupils to know what they can do next to improve their attainment. However, opportunities to make these improvements and follow up on suggestions or comments need to be consistently applied throughout school.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school 	1

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school

The leadership and management are outstanding in developing the Catholic life of St Mary's School. There is a shared sense of purpose to promote the Catholic identity of the school. High expectations are at the heart of the school's improvement and as a result the school provides high quality care and education for all groups of pupils. Self evaluation at all levels within the school leads onto well targeted planning and actions. The headteacher's excellent leadership is ably supported by members of the governing body and staff. They have an understanding of their community and have generated a shared sense of purpose. The value placed on relationships is a strength of the school and this has a positive impact on the ability of all in the school community to work well together.

Governors take their responsibilities seriously and play a full part in the school's development. Through their system of 'Governor of the month' and regular governors' meetings, they provide the school with critical support that supplements its smooth day to day running. They use their professional skills and talents to ensure that the school thrives. Governors ensure that all policies and documentation reflect and support the school's Catholic identity and they are rigorous and pro-active in monitoring and evaluating practice.

Leadership and management of Religious Education are outstanding. Effective monitoring and evaluation of the subject area is at the heart of the school's progress. Staff are well guided in their expectations of what pupils can achieve through moderation work. The subject leader ensures that resources are deployed effectively so that all pupils are included fully in the religious life of the school. Through the established cycle of scrutiny of planning, pupils' work and lesson observations she has an excellent understanding of the strengths and areas for development which are included in the school improvement plan.

The school is effective in developing partnerships with other providers and organisations which result in positive outcomes for the pupils and making an

excellent contribution to pupils’ achievement and well-being. Links with other schools support curriculum development and partnerships to support sport and extended school activities have been developed.

Pupils participate in neighbourhood and parish community activities. Fundraising and contributions to a number of charitable projects enable the pupils to develop their commitment to the common good.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including chaplaincy provision, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively leaders and managers promote and develop Community Cohesion 	1

5. THE SCHOOL'S CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

The school has an excellent capacity for improvement and development. The Governing Body, parish priest, headteacher and all members of staff are totally committed to providing the best possible Catholic education and care for the pupils. The leadership draws upon a wide range of evidence: a rigorous and evaluation monitoring system, feedback from staff and pupils and parental questionnaires on which to base its judgements and formulate improvement plans.

Parents are very well supported by the school in developing their children's Religious Education through a variety of leaflets and informative newsletters and the regular invitations they receive to attend Masses, liturgies and other celebrations and events. Parents feel valued that they are regarded by the school as partners in their children's' education. The Self Evaluation document gives a clear and realistic analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development which are fed into the School Improvement Plan.

The very good relationship between staff, governors and parents ensures that there is a shared vision which is sharply focused on continuous improvement. This enables the school to develop the opportunities offered to all children. The school is therefore well placed to continue its outstanding preparation of pupils for their future in a Christ centred environment.