

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**
SPIRITUALITY, FORMATION & EDUCATION SERVICE



S48 Inspection Report

**St Pius Xth RC Primary School,
Consett, County Durham**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE
SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS
EDUCATION**

School: St Pius X RC Primary School

Address: Thornfield Road
Consett
County Durham
DH8 8AX

Telephone Number: 01207 503604
Email address: stpius@durhamlearning.net

School URN: 114249

Headteacher: Ms Joanne Cruise

Chair of Governors: Mrs Louise Renwick

Inspector: Mr Martin Humble

Date of Inspection: 24 and 25 April 2012

This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Séamus Cunningham, the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle Diocese, (c.f. Code Canon Law, 804, 806), and for the Governing Body of the school (Education Act 2005, Section 48). 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.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Pius X is a small Catholic primary school situated on the outskirts of Consett. It serves a community where there are serious levels of deprivation. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school is held in very high regard by the parents, the parish community and the governors.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 82
Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 80%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: 9%
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 11%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: 7%
Percentage of pupils with special needs: 28%

Staffing

Number of full time teachers: 5
Number of part time teachers: 0
Percentage of Catholic teachers: 60%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 60%

Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education (RE):

FS	10%	Yr4	10%
Yr1	10%	Yr5	10%
Yr2	10%	Yr6	10%
Yr3	10%		

Parishes served by the school:

St Pius X, Consett

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Pius is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. There is a shared vision which promotes the highest expectations for all members of the school community. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have a total commitment to the ethos and mission of Catholic education where continuous improvement in every aspect of school life is a priority. All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the school is continuously striving to improve standards. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is good because of rigorous and accurate self-evaluation leading to clear challenging targets and appropriate priorities. Excellent relationships and a strong 'team' ethic are key strengths of the school. There has been a significant inward mobility of pupils into key stage two (KS2) in the past few years providing a wide variety of issues. These issues have been effectively addressed and resourced.

Pupils are very enthusiastic about their 'school community' and are very happy to come to school which results in them having a very positive attitude to learning and they make good progress. In RE all pupils make good progress. From well below average starting points pupils make good progress and attainment is average by the time pupils reach the end of KS2. Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. They respond to worship with respect and reverence. Their level of participation and skills in preparing and leading prayer and worship are outstanding. The promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

The school provides a good Catholic education. Teaching and learning in RE is good which enables pupils to make good progress. Parents and carers are kept well informed. The curriculum provided is rich and varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and raising standards. Assessment, monitoring and tracking systems, which are continually reviewed and developed, impact positively on pupil progress. The quality of collective worship is outstanding. It is well defined within the school day. Pupils are continually developing skills in the preparation and leading of worship as the staff are very good role models for pupils and offer a wide variety of quality prayer and worship opportunities.

The strong leadership of the headteacher ensures that all pupils are well cared for, known and respected as individuals and well motivated to make good progress. The senior management team demonstrate a commitment to strive for continuous school improvement in the Catholic life of the school. Leaders have a clear sense of direction and purpose in curriculum RE which is recognised as the core subject of the curriculum. Professional development of all staff is a high priority. This is tailored to both whole school and individual needs resulting in competent staff, committed to ensuring that all pupils make good progress. The headteacher is an effective RE co-ordinator, central to the continuing development of the Catholic life of the school and RE. The governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension. The governing body fully meets its statutory and canonical responsibilities. Leaders and managers effectively promote community cohesion.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Provide opportunities for greater pupil involvement in self-assessment using the 'I can statements'.
- Ensure consistency in using the tracking system to interpret individual pupil progress and for target setting.

PUPILS

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

1

The quality of pupils' learning and progress is good. Pupils are keen to do well. In all lessons observed pupils applied themselves diligently. They endeavour to produce their best work and are interested and enthusiastic in RE lessons. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their lessons and have positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils are increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge, skills and understanding continue to develop well in relation to their age and capability, with challenge suitably set for all. Attainment at key stage one (KS1) is average and overall attainment by the end of KS2 is broadly average although the attainment of pupils who have been in school from foundation stage (FS) to the end of KS2 is above average. All pupils make good progress across the key stages. Including those who have special needs and/or disabilities and those who enter school at other than the normal yearly intake, because their needs are accurately identified and appropriate, effective support given to meet them. There is no significant difference between the progress made by Catholic pupils and those other than Catholic.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The Catholic ethos enables them to take part in shaping activities with a religious character both in the school, parish and the wider community. Most are increasingly able to take on responsibility for themselves and others. They take full advantage of the many and varied opportunities the school provides for their personal support and spiritual development. The pupils from class one onwards show curiosity, are imaginative, intuitive and have a very strong sense of their own identity within their 'school community'. A large majority can discuss their own faith and spirituality with confidence and know other people have different beliefs. They are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus when talking about how to treat others and how to behave. Most pupils are extremely conscious of the needs of others and have a developing sense of justice and concern for others.

Pupils' responses to and participation in the school's collective worship is outstanding. The pupils are at ease in their worship and in times of reflection and prayer. Their level of participation is high. Vibrant acts of worship engage all pupils and inspire them to respond thoughtfully, reverently and respectfully. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship confidently and enthusiastically in a variety of gatherings and settings. Most are knowledgeable about and skilled in using a variety of ways, such as scripture, music, silence and artefacts, to pray and worship. They sing joyfully and express their thoughts and feelings openly when worshipping within their school community. The high quality collective worship is having a significant, positive impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

2

Teaching is good. A range of teaching styles, good questioning techniques, clear explanations, well paced lessons and good use of ICT ensure that all pupils are consistently interested in their learning and make good progress. Effectively planned lessons build on prior learning and meet the varying needs of pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge which inspires and promotes confident learners and contributes to their good progress. They have high expectations and make learning interesting which impacts positively on pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation. Pupils are provided with feedback, both orally and written, and the quality of marking to move pupils on in their learning is developing well throughout the school. Support staff are very effectively deployed.

Assessment and monitoring procedures are good and give a clear and accurate picture of pupil progress and attainment. Leaders and teachers use this information to good effect, ensuring continuous improvement. Tracking systems for RE have been successfully incorporated into the whole school assessment system which enables the school to focus on ensuring that different groups of pupils achieve equally well. This information is being used effectively by teachers in setting targets for improvement. However, the tracking system is not used consistently throughout the school, to interpret individual pupils' progress and target setting. Good guidance ensures that pupils know how well they are doing but the school recognises that, pupils' skills in self-assessment need to be developed further in order to enable them to become more responsible for their own learning.

The RE curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the pupils with specific needs. It is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well planned strategies and relevant resources which engage and motivate the pupils and have a positive impact on learning. Planning ensures full coverage of the curriculum and identifies pupils' prior learning. The RE curriculum provides good opportunities for and impacts positively on pupils' spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are very well met. Prayer is central to the life of the school, is fully inclusive, reflective and very well planned enabling pupils to take an active part. The staff are very good role models and ensure that pupils are very skilled and equipped in leading prayer. There is a very wide, varied range of formal and informal opportunities for prayer, reflection and liturgy and pupils eagerly and confidently share different forms of prayer in class, school liturgies and school/parish masses. Acts of collective worship have a very significant impact on pupils, parents and parishioners. They are very public demonstrations of the ethos of the school.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

The Catholic life of the school is good. The school's leaders and managers promote the Catholic life of the school well. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision. The deep commitment, drive, energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher, is an inspiration to the whole school and parish community. Self-evaluation at all levels within the school is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, thorough analysis and self-challenge. This results in targeted and coherent planning and actions to ensure continuous improvement with pupils making good progress in all aspects of the Catholic life of the school. Good quality induction and staff training have ensured an awareness, understanding and commitment to the very strong Catholic ethos.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for RE is good. The headteacher in her role as co-ordinator for RE has effectively ensured that monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place to impact positively on pupils' learning, progress and standards. They accurately inform areas of strength and areas for further development and contribute to the good capacity for improvement. The co-ordinator has high expectations, keeps staff well informed and is very supportive. Detailed and well targeted plans are in place and strategies for improvement are implemented effectively, resulting in continuously improving outcomes for all pupils.

Governors provide effective challenge and support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They are well informed on issues relating to RE and the Catholic life of the school, understand well the school's performance in RE and know what needs to be done to ensure continuous improvement of standards. Some governors are visible in and around school on a daily basis and are an integral part of this community. Consequently there is a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and they put the well-being and development of the whole child at the centre of their work. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of leaders and staff.

Leaders and managers are very successful at developing partnerships with other providers and organisations. The school engages in a wide range of partnership activities which impact significantly on pupils' achievement and well-being and to the Catholic life of the school. Sacramental preparation is provided by an effective partnership that exists between school and parish. The headteacher and deputy headteacher (RE subject leader) ensure that links are well established with other Catholic primary schools, local community schools, the Diocese, the parish and local organisations to provide opportunities which enable pupils and staff to enjoy, achieve and develop well in areas which the school alone could not provide.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is good. The school is an inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each other through the school pastoral system and as a result they recognise, respect and celebrate differences and have a strong sense of the common good. The school has established good links with schools in Liverpool, Nepal and France which has helped develop a greater understanding of their place in our global society. The school provides practical support to local charitable ventures and initiatives and pupils develop ideas to support others with fund raising activities. The RE curriculum is effectively planned and resourced to promote community cohesion across all year groups.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding** Grade 2 **Good** Grade 3 **Satisfactory** Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

Overall effectiveness	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	1
• how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE	2
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
❖ pupils' standards of attainment in RE	3
• the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
• how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship	1
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	2
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in RE	2
• the extent to which RE curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
• the quality of collective worship provided by the school	1
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School	2
• how well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
• 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	2
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being	1
• how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	2