



St Benet's RC Primary School

Fulwell Road, Fulwell, Sunderland, SR6 9QU

School Unique Reference Number: **108837**

Inspection dates:	23 – 24 June 2015
Lead inspector:	Karen Holmes
Team inspector:	Jane Weatherall

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- St Benet's is a very inclusive and welcoming community with a strong family ethos. All members of the school community share the headteacher's clear vision for the school and work hard as a team to provide a caring community with Christ at its centre.
- The quality of Collective Worship at St Benet's is good. Pupils are keen to participate and are developing skills to enable them to lead worship independently.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the mission and ethos of Catholic education underpin the work of this inclusive community.
- The quality of Religious Education is outstanding. Teaching across the school is consistently good with examples of outstanding practice. As a result pupils throughout the school are challenged to achieve high standards and so their progress is good. The areas for improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Benet's is a larger than average sized Catholic primary school which serves the parish of St Benet's in the Monkwearmouth area of Sunderland.
- The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium government funding is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of educational needs is below the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Further develop Collective Worship by:
 - Providing a greater variety of creative opportunities for all pupils to be involved in preparing and delivering Collective Worship independently, at age appropriate levels.
 - To provide pupils, parents and governors with opportunities to monitor and evaluate Collective Worship.
- Further develop the Catholic Life by:
 - Providing opportunities for all stakeholders to be involved in formal monitoring of the Catholic Life of the school.

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.

1

1

2

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

- Pupils and staff have a deep sense of belonging to a family and feel that they have a commitment to the other members of their community.
- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They are rightly proud of their school, its Catholic identity and the strong links with the parish.
- Pupils live out their mission statement as a result of being actively involved in its formation. The year six pupils pass on this mission by choosing an aspirational motto statement to guide the next cohort of year six through their final year. They see this handing on as an important part of their role.
- They seize many opportunities to live out their faith through working in Mini Vinnies initiating fundraising for many charitable causes such as the Youth Mission Team, St Benedict's hospice and Operation Christmas Child.
- Pupils show a very good understanding of the liturgical year and its key celebrations both in school and in the parish.

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

- From the moment you enter St Benet's it is apparent that this is a Christ centred school deeply committed to the Catholic tradition and ethos.
- Very supportive relationships exist between colleagues, support staff and pupils. There are high expectations of behaviour which the pupils live up to. As a consequence behaviour is exemplary.
- Vibrant displays and artwork around school reflect the school's mission and Catholic character. They contribute positively to the stimulating learning environment.
- The school shows a clear commitment to its most vulnerable pupils and their families, whom it supports in a variety of ways. Parents speak very highly of the care and concern shown to each pupil and feel lucky to be a part of St Benet's school life.
- Pupils have many opportunities to participate in a variety of activities including visits to the Emmaus Youth Village and to other deanery schools. These experiences have a very positive effect on their personal development.

- Pastoral care for pupils is outstanding as a result of the commitment of all stakeholders, and through having clear policies and structures in place. Pastoral programmes working alongside personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (RSE) refer to Catholic teachings and principals.

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

- The headteacher and governing body show a deep commitment to the mission of the Church and ensure it permeates every aspect of school life. They are highly regarded by staff, pupils and the community.
- Governors are fully involved in many aspects of the school's work and regard their role as an honour. They have worked successfully with the pupils on projects such as the school's anti-bullying policy.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given high priority and leaders have a clear sense of how they want the school to develop. Stakeholders, however, are not formally involved in embedding and improving procedures to monitor and evaluate provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school has very successful strategies for engaging parents and carers and from nursery onwards they have a clear understanding of the school's mission. Parents feel that the Catholic ethos is strong and they are very supportive of it.
- High quality staff training, the importance placed upon relationships and the care and concerns each member of the school community show one another are major strengths of the school.

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

2

2

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

- Pupils' response to, and participation in, the school's Collective Worship are good. The pupils are confident in their contributions and respond well to the opportunities the school provides for them to participate in Collective Worship. Pupils demonstrate reverence and respect, joining in with appropriate responses during school liturgies.
- Pupils were reflective and focussed during the Collective Worship observed. They know that song is a form of prayer and use sign language confidently in their worship. This engages and focuses pupils well.
- Pupils express their thoughts and feelings openly when worshipping within their school community, which has a positive impact on their spiritual and moral development. They are comfortable sharing personal prayer needs and asking others to pray for them.
- Pupils understand the importance of prayer and worship in their lives and embrace the opportunities, engaging readily in small and large gatherings.
- Older pupils are involved in the preparation and delivery of worship using scripture, liturgical music and artefacts to engage their peers. Collective Worship is based on clear themes and messages that engage the community, such as the year six liturgy which built on ideas from their visit to the Youth Village.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of religious seasons and feasts and the different demands this makes on our worship. They demonstrate respect for, and interest in, other faiths.
- The school continues to develop independent skills but there is no systematic progression of pupil involvement at age appropriate levels throughout the school. Pupils are not yet involved in monitoring or evaluating different forms of Collective Worship.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are well met. Acts of worship are appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils with themes based upon the liturgical calendar or special events.
- Collective Worship at St Benet's has a clear sense of purpose and message that reflects the Catholic character of the school. Staff and pupils pray together as part of all school celebrations. Parents and governors appreciate and enthuse about the opportunities to attend special prayer events throughout the year.
- Staff use of prayer methods and styles varies. Their knowledge and skills range from the highly skilled to those keenly embracing professional development opportunities.
- Pupils are guided and supported when preparing acts of worship but do not have

opportunities from an early age to develop their skills in preparing and delivering Collective Worship independently.

- Focal points for prayer are evident throughout the school, in classrooms and shared areas, ensuring that prayer is central to the life of the school. Prayer walls are well used by pupils to provide opportunities for spontaneous prayer regarding their own intentions.
- Collective Worship is reflective and fully inclusive, enabling all pupils to take part.

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

- The Religious Education coordinator is very enthusiastic and passionate about her role. She is highly visible and has a very accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in Collective Worship. She radiates energy and enthusiasm in her role as leader of the subject providing support and encouragement for pupils, staff and parents.
- Leaders and managers have good knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality liturgy and worship. They understand the Church's liturgical year and traditions. They lead the school community to understand and appreciate these by making all forms of worship relevant to the children appropriate to their age, needs, experience and backgrounds.
- The professional development needs of leaders and staff are identified and supported through a rigorous programme of professional development. There are opportunities to observe good practice and share the planning and delivery of worship through a teamwork approach.
- Collective Worship is part of the school's regular self-evaluation process but not all stakeholders are involved in this process.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

- 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.

1

2

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is outstanding.

- The Religious Education curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. It is evident through a variety of well-planned strategies and relevant resources which engage and motivate pupils. It provides good opportunities for, and impacts positively upon the pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils find it interesting and can explain why it is important: 'to learn about Jesus and to live like he wants us to'.
- Pupils apply themselves diligently and endeavour to produce their best work. Book scrutiny displays an interesting and varied range of activities where learning is planned across a number of lessons and progress is evident.
- Pupils are confident when talking about their learning and demonstrate very positive attitudes. Pupils are increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge, skills and understanding are developing well in relation to their age and ability. They are developing a range of skills well and can apply these skills to their everyday life.
- Excellent relationships exist in the school between pupils and staff. Pupils display very good behaviour for learning and their mature attitude was evident in the quality of their oral responses in the lessons observed.

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

- Teaching is consistently good with some outstanding practice observed. As a result pupils are achieving well over time. A range of teaching styles, good questioning techniques, clear explanations and a high level of challenge 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 the pupils. Support staff are effectively deployed and contribute positively to pupils' learning.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, which inspires and promotes confident learners. Teachers skilfully enable pupils to make links in their learning.
- Effective use of information communication technology (ICT) inspires and motivates pupils, as observed in a year six lesson where pupils were involved in research about stewardship and sustainability, making links with the environment and what God expects of us.
- All staff have high expectations and make learning interesting, which impacts positively on pupils' enjoyment, engagement and motivation.
- Teachers mark work regularly and the quality of feedback given to pupils is positive and supportive. Pupils are given the opportunity to respond to teachers' feedback and do so consistently. Pupils are not aware of the level at which they are working in Religious

Education and therefore not clear about how to improve their work or achieve a higher level.

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

- Assessment and monitoring procedures are good and now give a clear and accurate picture of pupil progress and attainment. Leaders and teachers use this information to good effect, ensuring continuous improvement.
- The Religious Education coordinator has a very clear vision and sense of direction for what is needed to move the school forward. She is highly effective in promoting the high profile of this subject amongst staff.
- The school makes effective use of professional development opportunities in-house using the lesson study model, as well as through the diocese and the local authority.
- Tracking systems enable the school to ensure that different groups of pupils achieve equally well. This information is used to good effect by teachers to set targets for improvement.
- Staff and governors are kept informed of the priorities identified to bring about further improvement. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are committed to the development of the school working with the headteacher and senior leadership team.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and is given a high profile throughout the school, contributing very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

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.

2

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

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:**1**

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

1

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

1

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Benet's RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108837
Local authority	Sunderland
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.	
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