



St James' RC Primary School

Solway Road, Hebburn, NE31 2BP

School Unique Reference Number: **108723**

Inspection dates: 30 November – 01 December 2017
Lead inspector: John Hattam

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

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

- Catholic Life at St James' is outstanding. The headteacher, senior leadership team, all staff and governors have high expectations and share a vision with regard to the Catholic mission of the school.
- Collective Worship is outstanding. High quality Collective Worship is central to the life of the school with children and staff proclaiming their school to be 'Gospel rich'.
- Religious Education is good. Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of religious education which they communicate effectively to pupils.
- Parents, children and staff, value and respect the Catholic traditions of the school and the very strong bonds that tie them to their community.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- The school is similar in size to most primary schools nationally with 209 pupils on roll.
- 99% of the pupils on roll are of white British heritage.
- 15% of the pupils on roll receive special educational need support which is slightly higher than the national figure.
- 0.5% of pupils on roll have an Education Health and Care Plan, which is below the national figure.
- 54% of pupils on roll are baptised Catholics.
- The percentage of children from disadvantaged backgrounds is declining but is still above the national figure.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve standards in Religious Education by:
 - Ensuring that staff new to Catholic Education or those new in post have a high level of confidence and expertise both in terms of their specialist knowledge and their understanding of effective learning in Religious Education.
- Improve the quality of Collective Worship by:
 - Involving parents more regularly in acts of Collective Worship which are celebrated in school and thereby creating an even greater sense of welcome and belonging in this faith community.

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.

- The extent to which all pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding and is at the heart of everything the school does.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and recognise that it is a special place to learn, declaring that 'We are surrounded by God's unconditional love and we breathe our faith in each day'.
- Pupils who are new to the school or visitors, are welcomed into the community with open arms and encouraged to share in the joy of daily life at St James'.
- Pupils enjoy and respond positively to the many opportunities the school offers them to engage in leadership of the Catholic Life of the school. They relish the role of school councillor and special friend because they know what a difference it can make to school.
- Pupils are overwhelmingly supportive of the many charities the school supports including collections for the local foodbank, Marie Curie, hats for the homeless, Cafod and the shoe box appeal.
- Through the development of philosophy across school children are encouraged to ask 'Big Questions'. As a result they are keen to challenge inequality in school and make positive personal choices, which lead to improvements in school life, the lives of people locally and globally.
- Pupils are fully engaged in the life of the school and the parish; they enjoy attending mass, taking active roles as servers and members of the choir on special occasions including supporting the recent 50th anniversary of the parish church.

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

- The school's mission statement is evident in all areas of school life and touches all those who form part of the school community; children, parents, staff, parish and diocese. 'Every member of our school community is a gift from God and we want everyone to do their best.'
- All staff are fully committed to the school mission and seek, through the regular sharing of the Gospel to 'treat each other as Jesus teaches us' and to be living examples of the Gospel.
- St James' is a prayer filled community with a strong sense of family which can be seen in

the quality of relationships between all members of staff and children.

- St James' is a joyful community where great care is taken to celebrate the many successes that both staff and pupils enjoy.
- Great care is taken to ensure that there are concrete signs of the school's Catholic character both in school and in the wider community, a recent example being the whole school experience dedicated to learning about the signs, symbols and meaning of pilgrimage. Pupils followed their own shell-lined pilgrimage route to church to celebrate their patron saint, St James.
- Clear policies and procedures are in place in school to ensure that all members of the school community are treated justly. There is a clear commitment to ensure that the most vulnerable and needy are supported appropriately and that uneven distribution of wealth or resources will not be a barrier to any child experiencing the fullest range of experiences on offer at St James'.

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

- As a direct result of the inspiration provided by the headteacher, the school's wider leadership team is deeply committed to the church's mission in education. The authentic Catholic ethos at St James' is nurtured and sustained by leaders at all levels in school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher are exemplary role models and are highly successful in motivating staff and pupils to be the best they can be.
- All leaders in school including the highly effective Religious Education coordinator and the governing body have high expectations for the promotion and continuing development of the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school's self-evaluation of the Catholic Life of the school is given the highest priority by leaders and is a reflection of planned monitoring, analysis and self-challenge.
- The school is well supported in the development of Catholic Life through the work of the recently appointed parish priest who offers support and challenge during regular visits to school which are greatly appreciated by pupils, staff and parents.
- The governing body provides very effective challenge and support for the Catholic Life of the school. They are passionate about St James' and are actively involved in delivering the school's mission and evaluating the impact of the senior leadership team.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- 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.

- Acts of worship are engaging and inspiring. Pupils respond to prayer in a variety of ways and are able to eloquently articulate how prayer makes them feel. One pupil described how she felt after Collective Worship saying, 'I feel a warm glow inside of me and I am surrounded by God'. Another pupil described feeling 'refreshed'.
- Pupils enjoy communal singing and sing regularly during acts of worship in school and in church.
- Pupils are confident in leading the prayer life of the school; they are skilled in matching resources and artefacts to particular themes so that all pupils can experience prayer in an appropriate way. Older children design beautiful prayer stations or focal points and support these with effective and engaging use of multimedia resources.
- Pupils' responses to acts of worship designed by their peers is heartfelt and authentic, one pupil described how he felt after a service of reconciliation saying that, 'Being able to forgive someone makes you feel good about yourself'.
- Pupils' behaviour during acts of Collective Worship is exemplary; they act with reverence and respect, responding with confidence using the prayers of the church as well as offering their own prayers.
- Although St James' is overwhelmingly Christian, pupils have a deep sense of respect for other faiths and have enjoyed learning about how other children worship through visits to a local synagogue and mosque.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Carefully designed, age appropriate acts of Collective Worship are woven into the fabric of St James' and form a framework of worship upon which school life rests.
- Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff and is based on the Gospel readings. Highly skilled staff are able to carefully interpret the Gospel in an age appropriate way.
- Well-resourced liturgy planning toolkits are found in every class to support and develop all pupils' ability to plan and lead acts of Collective Worship.
- Resourcing Collective Worship is given high priority in the school development plan. It is

funded generously by governors particularly in respect of opportunities for staff training and development. Staff who are new to Catholic education attend all diocesan training events.

- Staff are passionate about ensuring pupils experience high quality Collective Worship. They are very well supported in developing their skills through expert training and guidance offered by the Religious Education coordinator.
- Although parents, family members and parishioners are regular visitors to school it is hoped that new initiatives will encourage greater participation in and attendance at acts of Collective Worship in school.
- The parish priest and prayer partner are regular visitors to school which pupils and staff appreciate, they are able to offer support and advice that enhances provision for Collective Worship even further.

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

- The headteacher regularly leads Collective Worship and sets a very high standard. He is able to engage all groups of children in carefully crafted, thought provoking acts of worship.
- Senior leaders in school are role models of excellent practice and are passionate about ensuring high quality Collective Worship. They have a thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year, its seasons, rites and symbols and are able to lead the school in a deepening appreciation of these traditions, in a way that is relevant to pupils in a contemporary context.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that staff have the best resources available to promote Collective Worship in school.
- There is clear evidence that the quality of Collective Worship is monitored regularly and the analysis of this monitoring is fed back to all staff in staff meetings and training events.
- The governing body are actively involved in the monitoring of Collective Worship. As regular visitors to school they have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in Collective Worship.
- Leaders regularly seek the views of pupils, staff and parents/carers regarding the quality and significance of Collective Worship in school and are quick to respond to these findings in a systematic and thorough way.

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.

- Almost all pupils recognise the importance of Religious Education and enjoy it. They demonstrate enthusiasm and enjoyment in their learning. Most pupils are religiously literate and many are very articulate and thoughtful in their oral responses.
- Pupils said that learning in Religious Education often involved lots of writing and was most enjoyable when their teachers made learning fun. Behaviour for learning in lessons is very good with pupils concentrating very well and displaying positive attitudes towards learning.
- Most pupils make good progress over time across a range of skills and are developing well in terms of their knowledge and understanding. Pupils' ability to interpret sources and symbols, the ability to reflect and evaluate and the ability to engage with religious ideas is strongest where staff have very secure specialist subject knowledge.
- Pupils make most progress towards the end of key stage two as a result of high quality teaching and teachers having a clear understanding of how pupils learn effectively.
- Outcomes for pupils are good overall but have been inconsistent in recent years due to changes in staffing across school. With targeted interventions from skilled support staff children with special educational needs make progress comparable to the progress of other pupils.

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

- Teaching is mostly good with some examples of outstanding teaching. In the best lessons pupils are set challenging tasks which are well matched to their learning needs and which successfully engage all pupils.
- In a minority of lessons a lack of specialist subject knowledge means that activities are not always best matched to pupils' abilities or fail to engage all groups of learners.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are a real strength at St James'. Support staff are used effectively to reinforce learning and to support and extend pupils of different abilities.
- Assessments are regular and the Religious Education coordinator has developed a rigorous tracking system which clearly indicates where the strengths and areas for development are across school. The Religious Education coordinator is aware that teaching is weaker in some classes and is taking steps to address this with planned support and a comprehensive training schedule.

- In the best lessons teachers systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding throughout lessons, anticipating where they need to intervene and do so with notable impact on the quality of learning.
- Marking and constructive feedback is evident across school but it is still not being used consistently in all classes. There are some excellent examples of focused marking and feedback in some classes which pupils' appreciate. They said 'The Gospels can be difficult to understand but the teachers really help us when they show us the next steps'.

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

- The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is rigorous and robust and it enables leaders in school to plan effectively to deliver the best outcomes for all pupils. Searching analysis carried out by the Religious Education coordinator clearly identifies strengths and the key areas for improvement. These areas for improvement are detailed in the school improvement plan which is shared with governors.
- Leaders are relentless in their desire to improve teaching and learning in Religious Education across school. As a result of this teaching is at least good across school and in some cases outstanding.
- Leaders in school have a clear and inspiring vision for Religious Education which is clearly communicated to all staff, pupils, parents and the wider community.
- Sacramental preparation is a real strength at St James' as it ties the school to the parish community in a unique way which benefits all concerned. Parents value the opportunity to be involved directly in their child's faith journey, describing the experience as 'the highlight of our time here at St James'.
- Governors are regular visitors to school and are deeply involved in the life of the school and as a result are well placed to monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education. They are knowledgeable about standards in Religious Education and are able to support and challenge the leadership team effectively.
- Religious Education is well resourced and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

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

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

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

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St James' RC Primary School
Unique reference number	108723
Local authority	South Tyneside
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.	
Chair of governors	Mrs Sharon Grewcock
Headteacher	Mr Martin Clephane
Date of previous school inspection	January 2013
Telephone number	01914832672
Email address	info@stjameshebburn.co.uk