



St Augustine's RC Primary School, Darlington

Beechwood Ave, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7HP

School Unique Reference Number: **139531**

Inspection dates: 15 – 16 September 2014

Lead inspector: Carolyn Duffy

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Augustine's RC Primary School, Darlington is a good Catholic school because:

- St Augustine's is a welcoming Catholic school where the shared vision of the leadership is evident and the pupils have a deep sense of belonging to a Catholic community. The mission and ethos of Catholic education is at the centre of this school's work.
- Teaching overall is good. Pupils develop skills and knowledge which enable them to engage very positively with religious ideas.
- All pupils and staff enthusiastically embrace the demands made upon them as members of a faith community. They value deeply the Catholic tradition of the school and its place in the parish community.
- The behaviour of the pupils is very good. Pupils are fully aware of the need to work together in a community, be sympathetic and supportive to the needs of others and act with justice and inclusivity.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- The standard and consistency of marking and feedback varies between classes. Opportunities for pupils to accelerate progress by responding to teacher's comments are variable.
- Not all teachers plan to differentiate tasks for the most able pupils to enable them to achieve their potential.
- Teachers' skill in supporting pupils' planning and leading of Collective Worship is inconsistent across all key stages.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- St Augustine's is part of a multi academy trust (MAT), the Carmel Education Trust. The Trust has an overall Chief Executive Officer, Miss M Regan, and a head of St Augustine's School, Mrs M McCollom. This arrangement has been in place for approximately two and a half years as a result of the governing body wishing to work more collaboratively with their education partners. The formal inclusion in the MAT was completed in April 2013.
- The school serves the parish of St Augustine's, Darlington.
- It is a single form entry school with 204 pupils on roll and 98.5% pupils are baptised Catholics.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium is very low and the vast majority of pupils remain in St Augustine's throughout their primary schooling.
- The proportion of pupils with a special educational need is below the national average.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Raise Standards in Religious Education ensuring that more able pupils are appropriately challenged by:
 - Planning differentiated tasks that are sufficiently challenging and engaging for pupils to attain the higher levels
 - Ensuring time is regularly allocated to allow pupils to respond to constructive feedback after marking
- Develop the leadership of Religious Education by:
 - Ensuring the senior leadership team support the recently appointed Religious Education coordinator in monitoring, supporting and improving teaching to eradicate inconsistencies in teaching across the key stages.
- Improve pupils' skills in leading Collective Worship by:
 - Increasing opportunities for all pupils to lead a variety of Collective Worship across a range of audiences including parents, parishioners and governors.
 - Improving teachers' own knowledge and understanding in assisting pupils in planning creatively and using an increasing range of resources.

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.

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

- Pupils have a deep sense of 'belonging' to a 'school family' and staff, parents and governors speak about the importance of this nurturing environment where pupils make a contribution to the Catholic Life of the school from a very early age. This is evidenced in pupils' responses in forums, questionnaires and photos of charitable work around the school.
- Pupils of all denominations are encouraged to share their experiences of church and family celebrations. All pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how they live their lives and how they treat others and are very aware that respect is earned through actions and is to be valued.
- Pupils are at the very centre of school celebrations and, through strong parish links, take an increasingly prominent role in the parish church at two annual school Masses and more frequently and regularly through the recent 'Learning to Lead at Mass' project.
- They willingly and confidently take on positions of responsibility and leadership within the school community, nominating and organising a variety of fundraising initiatives to support others such as a school in Uganda, fun days such as Comic Relief/Sport Relief etc.
- Behaviour is exemplary and the behaviour policy is rooted in the gospel. 'Firm, Fair and Forgiving' are the key themes to positive behaviour and pupils talk about the need to be honest, take responsibility and show forgiveness. They are articulate about the role of adults in the school in dealing with inappropriate behaviour such as in the rare cases of bullying and are clear that everyone has a 'new start if they are prepared to behave differently'.
- Pastoral support is highly effective. The school supports families of pupils with special educational needs or where there are difficult family circumstances with sensitivity and compassion.
- Parents speak positively about the school describing a strong sense of 'achieving something worthwhile' because pupils are 'taught a sense of responsibility and pride and not to take things for granted'.

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

- The school mission statement, 'I have come that they may have life and life to the full.' (John 10:10) is central to the work of the school, with a clear focus on ensuring the best possible outcomes for all pupils. This Mission Statement is reflected in every aspect of the school's work, which all parts of the community have been involved in shaping.
- The school is a prayerful community and all are welcomed. Parents commented on the opportunities they have to pray with their pupils and on the value of 'statements to live by' which they receive regularly and can then discuss with their child.
- Excellent relationships exist within the school community and all stakeholders are fully committed to ensuring the school is the best it can be. Governors know the school very well and are fundamental in shaping both policies and practices.
- St Augustine's is committed to Catholic tradition and ethos. The pupils have been involved in the creative displays evident throughout the school and there are pieces of religious art work marking significant times in the school's Catholic heritage, for example, a structure which includes the names of all the pupils and staff on the school's anniversary and a large mosaic of St Augustine created by the pupils working with an artist.
- Clear policies and practices, including a member of staff who is a trained counsellor, are in place to reflect the Catholic Life of the school for both pupils and staff.
- The Sex and Relationships Education programme (SRE) is well established and delivered effectively at age appropriate levels following the diocesan model.

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

- Staff and governors are committed to the Church's mission in education. They have a very clear understanding of the vision of Catholic education and the role of the Catholic school in the mission of the church.
- The head of school, Religious Education coordinator, chair of governors and parish priest are excellent role models in the school and are both enthusiastic and highly motivated about the journey and direction in which the school is travelling.
- The school's self-evaluation is given high priority and the leadership team have established a range of monitoring activities to provide clear and accurate evidence about the strengths and weaknesses within the school.
- Governors are highly visible in both the school and parish community and regularly monitor the work of the school through discussions, visits, reports etc. Governors are very supportive of the school and convey high expectations through their continued dialogue with staff and parents. They give their time generously and have been instrumental in securing the Catholicity of the school for the future.

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.

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

- St Augustine's is a prayerful community where pupils and staff engage in a variety of prayers, liturgies and reflection times regularly throughout the day and week.
- Pupils are keen to be involved in a range of acts of Collective Worship. They sing and pray with reverence, listen intently and respond confidently in whole school, class or key stage liturgies.
- Many pupils prepare and lead worship in school at an appropriate level depending upon their age. They talk knowledgeably about themes and resources and are able to use a variety of approaches to prayer including music, candles, religious artefacts and other visual prompts. Pupils also use Information and Communications Technology creatively to prepare liturgies.
- The involvement and skill of pupils in leading worship is inconsistent across the school.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the Church's year, liturgical feasts and seasons and this is reflected in their planning sheets.
- Pupils are able to respond to the needs and sensitivities of those of other faiths or Christian denominations.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good.

- Prayer is a key part of the school's life and is given the highest priority by the leadership team. Staff pray together at the beginning of the staff briefing each day and model prayer and Collective Worship for the pupils throughout the day. This prayerful atmosphere impacts upon the school community and parents commented that they find it easier to pray with their children because of the provision in school.
- Collective Worship is carefully planned and resourced using 'statements to live by' and the liturgical year. Parents, parishioners and governors are invited to join the pupils for some liturgies at key points throughout the year.
- Not all staff are completely skilled in supporting pupils to lead Collective Worship.
- There is a Collective Worship policy which provides a clear structure for staff to ensure there are a variety of opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together regularly.
- A budget is set aside each year to ensure that there is an increased range of appropriate and good quality resources for staff and pupils to use in their liturgies.
- Prayer traditions have a high profile in school and families are increasingly involved through sharing the travelling crib during Advent, designing prayer booklets for use in school or parish celebrations, creating prayers and supporting the school's sacramental celebrations.

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

- The head of school and Religious Education coordinator have a well-developed knowledge of Collective Worship and set a high standard in school with well-planned liturgical experiences. They lead by example ensuring that pupils and staff develop a thorough appreciation of the rites, symbols, traditions and seasons of the church's year.
- Parents are informed regularly about provision for Collective Worship and this is provided in school newsletters and parish newsletters on a regular basis. Parents welcome this information.
- The head of school and Religious Education coordinator have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in provision for Collective Worship as a result of the monitoring programme. They use these findings to plan for improvement and are committed to ensuring that time, training and resources are provided to staff to support their spiritual and liturgical development.
- Leaders have sought the views of pupils and parents in an evaluation of Collective Worship. These responses are highly valued and have been used to inform the future development of Collective Worship.

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.

2

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2

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

- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education and are very keen to do well. They are interested, concentrate well, display very positive attitudes, work diligently and at a good pace.
- Behaviour is very good and there is little evidence of disruption.
- Outcomes for pupils are good. Pupils make good progress over time in all key stages and books evidence a large amount of work which is of a good standard although there are some inconsistencies across classes.
- Opportunities exist for pupils to experience their own traditions as well as those of other faiths in interesting ways. For example, a number of different year groups visited a mosque when studying Islam and learned about this faith through a range of 'hands on', practical experiences. Pupils were able to describe the enjoyment they felt when learning in this way.
- Through evidence in pupils' work and in conversations, they are able to demonstrate effective use of prior knowledge particularly in key stage two when making links between religious ideas and using scriptural references accurately.
- Due to the state of transition in level expectations across all diocesan schools, the current averages for attainment and progress are not reliable benchmarks. Therefore, no judgement will be made in this report against diocesan averages for either attainment or progress.

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

- Teaching is good overall. In the best lessons, pupils are set challenging tasks which are well matched to their learning needs and which ensure achievement at the highest levels. In these lessons, teachers systematically check understanding throughout the lesson and intervene appropriately.
- In some lessons, activities are insufficiently differentiated to meet the needs of learners or to enable them to work independently.
- Teachers use the 'Come and See' scheme of work to plan lessons and use time and resources effectively to engage pupils with a range of experiences. For example, in a lesson about 'unconditional love', the pupils were engaged in 'hot seating', note taking, role playing and formulation of questions.
- Relationships are very good between all staff and pupils and this is a real strength of the school. Support staff are used effectively to reinforce learning and to engage pupils with

specific learning difficulties very effectively.

- The standard of marking and feedback in books is variable. The vast majority of work is marked and in the most effective examples, teachers provide constructive feedback to improve pupils' knowledge, skills or understanding. However, opportunities for pupils to respond to the feedback are infrequent.
- Religious Education assessments are regular and the school has developed a rigorous tracking system. Teachers moderate work regularly to ensure consistency of judgements as a result of the monitoring by the leadership team.

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

- The head of school, governors and leadership team are ambitious for the school and committed to ensuring that pupils achieve the very best they can.
- A range of regular monitoring activities has been introduced to ensure the leadership team has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of teaching and learning in RE. All aspects of Religious Education are evaluated through observation, discussion, data analysis and questionnaire and the findings used to plan for improvements. The recently appointed Religious Education coordinator has a clear view of strategies to support improvements in teaching. As a result governors are kept informed with up to date information about strengths and progress towards improvements.
- The Religious Education curriculum is rich and varied providing a range of interesting activities and imaginative teaching to enable all pupils to make good progress. The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Opportunities exist for pupils to experience their own traditions as well as those of other faiths. For example, a number of different year groups visited a mosque when studying Islam and learned about this faith through a range of experiences.
- Sacramental policy is in line with Diocesan guidelines. There are very strong links with the parish community with parents, governors and catechists extremely supportive of their work with the pupils.
- Governors are regular and frequent visitors to the school who both support and challenge the school. They are extremely supportive and knowledgeable and discharge their statutory and canonical duties well.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION:

2

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:

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:

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

2

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Augustine's RC Primary School, Darlington
Unique reference number	139531
Local authority	Darlington
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 schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.	
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CEO of Carmel Trust MAT	Miss M Regan
Head of School	Mrs M McCollom
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