

DIOCESE OF **Hexham & Newcastle**  
— DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION —



**S48 Report  
St Mary Magdalen RC  
Primary School  
Seaham**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

**on**

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

**School:** St Mary Magdalen RC Primary School

**Address:** Denehouse Road  
Seaham  
County Durham  
SR7 7BJ

**Telephone Number:** 0191 5813055

**Email address:** seahamstmary@durhamlearning.net

**School URN:** 114236

**Headteacher:** Mr Kevin J Rhodes

**Chair of Governors:** Fr T Burke

**Lead Inspector:** Mrs Nora Moffatt

**Date of Inspection** 6 - 7 March 2013

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is an average-sized Catholic primary school which serves the parish of St Mary Magdalen in Seaham. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium government funding is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action, school action plus or with a statement of Special Educational Needs is below the national average.

### Pupil Catchment

Number of pupils on roll:	225
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	38
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	71.6
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	22.7
Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths:	0
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	5.7
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	1.8
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	14.2

### Staffing

Full time teachers:	9
Part time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	91
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	27

### Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education

FS	10%
Year 1	10%
Year 2	10%
Year 3	10%
Year 4	10%
Year 5	10%
Year 6	10%

**Parishes served by the school**

St Mary Magdalen, Seaham.

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

**2**

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

**2**

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

**1**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**2**

## KEY FINDINGS

- St Mary Magdalen's is a good Catholic school. It is a very inclusive and welcoming community with a strong family ethos. Whilst both the Catholic Life of the school and Religious Education are good, Collective Worship is outstanding. 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. They are a dedicated staff who are working well together as a team, committed to raising pupils' attainment and progress. The headteacher has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and areas identified for development are included in the school improvement plan.
- Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed and developments are on-going.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Teaching across the school is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. As a result pupils throughout the school are challenged to achieve high standards and so their progress is good, particularly so in years five and six. The headteacher and Religious Education subject leader have accurately identified the school's need to share best practice to bring about improvement and move to outstanding.
- The staff who have leadership roles in promoting the teaching and learning of Religious Education have a strong commitment to improvement.
- The Catholic Life of the school is good. Pupils are keen to participate in the varied opportunities provided to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from them. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place and are beginning to have a positive impact.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding. Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding because from the earliest years in the school there are opportunities for pupils to plan and prepare worship. Leaders and managers' promotion, monitoring and evaluation are outstanding.

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

To improve further the school needs to:

- Continue to improve outcomes in Religious Education for pupils by:
  - ensuring tasks are appropriately differentiated consistently so that all pupils make rapid progress.
  - developing appropriate and regular homework to contribute to and consolidate pupils' learning.
- Continue to improve the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education by:
  - ensuring that leaders' outstanding practice is shared so that teachers' marking consistently provides information to pupils about how to improve their work.

## THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

2
---

- 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.

2
---

2
---

2
---

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic Life of the school. Pupils are actively involved and take on responsibilities very enthusiastically, for example by being a school councillor. Pupils confidently express their own views and feelings, demonstrate a deep understanding of how important it is to forgive and be forgiven and are aware of the needs of others. They respond willingly to the needs of those beyond the school and can articulate their views with confidence, explaining the purpose of fundraising for various charities such as Grace House and the Walk for Water project. They take full advantage of the many opportunities offered to them and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people. The school is very much engaged in caring for the needs of children elsewhere in the world, especially through CAFOD fundraising activities. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year both in school and the parish community and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people. Good behaviour is underpinned by very good moral, social and cultural development.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is good. The school's mission Statement, "The family of St Mary Magdalen centres on Christ to create inquisitive individuals who feel empowered to engage in the world in which they live" permeates throughout the school ensuring that Christ is at the centre of all that takes place at St Mary Magdalen's. Staff, governors and pupils have all been involved in the review of the mission statement and are all totally committed to its implementation across the whole curriculum. There is a strong sense of community at all levels as evidenced by the quality of relationships and sense of unity that exist both among and between staff and pupils. Effective training, staff commitment and quality resources are used well to support the on-going development of the Catholic Life of the school. The religious artefacts and icons on display around the site mark the school as distinctively Catholic. Pupils wore purple ribbons with pride to act as a reminder of their Lenten promises.

The leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school is good. The headteacher along with the senior leadership team successfully promote a welcoming and caring ethos, which reflects Gospel values and the mission statement of the school. Together they have a clear vision which is supported by the whole school community. The Catholic Life of the school is given a high priority and Catholic values and principles are promoted very well. The headteacher and senior leadership team have a deep commitment to the Church's Mission in education; personal development and high quality care are paramount. They are very good role models, providing very clear direction for improvement. They ensure that opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development are frequent and these have significant impact. The headteacher has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and the areas for improvement. Systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place and are now having a positive impact on outcomes for pupils. The school is beginning to develop strategies for engaging with parents more effectively. The good leadership of the Catholic Life of the school ensures that all pupils are well cared for and nurtured in this happy, caring, safe and supportive environment in which high expectations of behaviour are communicated to all pupils. The governing body fulfils its

role well with regard to the Catholic Life of the school and discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities well. They are very supportive of the school and work well with the headteacher to drive improvement. They are totally committed to upholding the strong, caring, inclusive ethos that fosters the excellent relationships which exist between the school and the parish family.



# COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

## THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1
---

- 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.

1
---

1
---

1
---

All pupils are extremely positive about their Collective Worship. They take part with enthusiasm, whether it is with a deep and prayerful silence, or joyfully singing some of their favourite hymns. There is a tangible sense of joy and reverence on such occasions. From the very youngest to the very oldest, pupils play an active and meaningful role in both leading and preparing their Collective Worship. They have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical celebrations and use scripture, religious artefacts and liturgical music with confidence and ease. As a result, the prayer opportunities they create engage their interest and enthusiasm, and there is a clear sense of their enjoyment in the variety of methods they use. Pupils display a deep sense of respect for different faiths. Those pupils taking part in the school's sacramental development programme are fully appreciative of the opportunities it provides them to further their own spiritual development.

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and a key part of school celebrations. Parents are regularly invited and welcomed into them. Key staff are very skilled in helping pupils both plan and deliver Collective Worship, and they support their colleagues well to develop their skills to a similar level. They have a deep understanding of the Church's liturgical heritage and see it as an essential part of their mission to share this with the pupils. They use their skills well to enable pupils to choose appropriate and personal themes for their worship, such as when older pupils worked with the headteacher to focus in their liturgy on the Prodigal Son to help them towards an experience of reconciliation. The outstanding subject leader oversees a carefully planned programme which progressively enables the pupils to develop both expertise and confidence in preparing liturgies of the highest quality. The school provides pupils with a good range of opportunities for Collective Worship, in class, as a whole school and in Church and works very effectively in partnership with the parish and parents in the delivery of the Sacramental Preparation programme.

Leaders and managers of the school have an excellent understanding of how to deliver very high quality examples of Collective Worship. They have a deeply rooted understanding of the Church's liturgical year, it's seasons, rites and symbols, and as a result, the pupils are receiving a very secure and relevant grounding in high quality Collective Worship, and their response to this is outstanding. The headteacher, along with other staff, leads very high quality Collective Worship, and gives the pupils and staff an excellent model to inform their own planning and delivery. Daily staff prayer promotes an excellent sense of team spirit and demonstrates the importance placed on Collective Worship in the school. Leaders and managers review Collective Worship regularly and informally. They talk to both pupils and staff about the quality of what they provide. The school is committed to playing a full and active role in the delivery of quality Sacramental Preparation in accordance with diocesan policy.

# 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 monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

2
---

2
---

2
---

The pupils' quality of learning and progress in Religious Education is good. Outcomes for pupils overall are good. Pupils start school with knowledge and skills that are expected for their age and make good progress throughout the early years foundation stage and key stage one (KS1) with standards being slightly above Diocesan averages. Good progress continues in key stage two (KS2) and by the end of year six standards are above Diocesan averages. Those pupils identified as having a special educational need make good progress as they are well supported by effective teaching assistants. Pupils demonstrate good levels of enjoyment and enthusiasm for Religious Education and have positive attitudes to learning. They are becoming increasingly religiously literate and many are very articulate and reflective in their oral responses. Across the school there is an increasing sense of purpose about learning in Religious Education and pupils respond well to the praise and recognition they receive for good effort.

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is consistently good overall and outstanding in upper KS2 and as a result pupils achieve well over time. Pupils' learning is better in classes where teachers have high expectations of pupils, set the right level of challenge for the more able and help them improve by careful marking and advice to help them move on. Pupils need to be encouraged to reflect on their learning at home and to be given tasks to investigate at home which contribute to and consolidate their learning in Religious Education. Relationships between children and teachers are warm and constructive and contribute successfully to their obvious keenness to learn. Assessment is used effectively throughout the school by teachers in setting targets for improvement. The best marking and feedback is outstanding, however good practice needs to be shared to ensure consistency of approach throughout the school. The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement in Religious Education. It has developed a rigorous tracking system which impacts positively on standards and progress providing a firm basis for appropriate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for further development.

The leadership and management of Religious Education is good and improving. The Religious Education coordinator and senior leadership team have accurately identified the school's main strengths and put in place action to bring about improvement. The staff, who have leadership roles in promoting the teaching and learning of Religious Education, have a strong commitment to improvement. As a result, teaching across the school contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school improvement plan provides clear direction for the work and future developments in Religious Education. Both the headteacher and the senior leadership team give good leadership, clearly focused on raising achievement. Together they have a clear vision and sense of direction and understanding of what is required to bring about improvement and they share this with staff. Their dedication and commitment are instrumental in the drive to provide high quality teaching and learning in Religious Education. The governing body fulfils its role well with regard to Religious Education and offers a high level of support to the school. They ensure that all statutory and canonical responsibilities are well met.

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

HOW EFFECTIVE THE SCHOOL IS IN PROVIDING CATHOLIC EDUCATION.

2

CATHOLIC LIFE

2

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

2

The quality of provision for 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.

2

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

2

	Pupil Outcomes	Provision	Leadership and Management	
Catholic Life	2	2	2	2
Collective Worship	1	1	1	1
Religious Education	2	2	2	2
	2	2	2	2