

Sacred Heart RC Primary School

Convent Road, Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9XZ

School Unique Reference Number: **108504**

Inspection dates: 23 – 24 March 2017
Lead inspector: Nora Hughes

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| 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

Sacred Heart RC Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- Sacred Heart RC Primary School is a warm and welcoming community where everyone feels accepted and valued. The mission and ethos of Catholic Education shines in the school building and community.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding because the well-being, personal and spiritual development of staff, pupils and their families is a priority in everything the school does. Pupils fully engage with all school led fundraising activities and are proactive, seeking to support people locally, nationally and globally.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding and is central to the life of the school. Staff and leaders model quality acts of worship. This has resulted in pupils gaining the necessary skills to lead age appropriate acts of worship throughout the school and they thrive on this responsibility.
- The quality of Religious Education is good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. They are rapidly becoming confident in using assessment consistently and effectively to raise standards throughout the school. Progress is evident in lessons and over time. Children express and demonstrate an enjoyment of Religious Education lessons and their behaviour is exemplary.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

- Sacred Heart Primary School is an average sized school.
- Whilst most pupils are from white British backgrounds a significant proportion of pupils are from a variety of cultural backgrounds and speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils eligible for premium is in line with the national average.
- The number of special educational needs children is below the national average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are baptised Roman Catholics.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Improve standards in Religious Education, by:

- Ensuring quality marking is embedded so that pupils are consistently given focused specific points for improvement.
- Ensuring a greater level of challenge is reflected in marking prompts and pupils respond to advice given by their teachers in more in-depth targeted ways.
- Continuing to increase teacher confidence in accurately levelling work by sharing expertise among staff.

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 school benefits greatly from being part of the Sacred Heart network of schools which was founded by St Madeleine Sophie Barat. Links are promoted between all schools in this network; pupils have pen pals in the Sacred Heart school in Rome and visits have taken place to the school there. St Madeleine Sophie was instrumental in founding the Sacred Heart order and links continue today with the nuns in Newcastle.
- The mission statement of the school comes from the words of Madeleine Sophie, 'be humble, be simple and bring joy to others.'
- Annually, year six pupils choose their own personal mission and these are embroidered on their uniform. This year they proudly wear the words, 'Let us leave acts, not words – no one will have time to read us'.
- The school supports numerous charities such as Comic Relief, Year of Mercy water appeal, Crisis, CAFOD, 5p bus, Children in Need and the West End refugee service. Individual pupils also enjoy fundraising for charities they wish to support. Parents say cupboards and purses are frequently emptied, but children are keen to give generously.
- Numerous opportunities exist for pupils to become involved in leading the Catholic Life of the school through school council, eco warriors, Mini Vinnies, and play leaders. They enthusiastically embrace these opportunities to influence the work of the school.
- The behaviour of almost all pupils is exemplary at all times. There is a culture of mutual respect and success is routinely celebrated by all, resulting in an environment where everyone feels valued.
- Almost all pupils are involved in supporting each other in school through playground buddies and play leaders. Pupils say, 'If you fall over you wouldn't be down five seconds before everyone came to help, not just your friends – everyone!'.
- All pupils, including those of other faiths, are proud of their own religious identity and beliefs. Families of other faiths are happy to share their customs and beliefs to support the school in its teaching of world faiths.
- All pupils participate enthusiastically in events at parish and diocesan level, irrespective of their own faith backgrounds.

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

- The aims of the Sacred Heart school as a Catholic school are expressed in its mission statement 'Be humble, be simple and bring joy to others.'. All staff are fully committed to living out this mission and encouraging children to do the same.
- School is a harmonious place with a tangible sense of community at all levels. Mutual respect and support are evident in all relationships.
- Staff enjoy high levels of support and are provided with quality continuous professional development both in school and at diocesan level.
- Displays in school, in the Sacred Heart room and on the school website are beautiful; they are an effective sign of the school's Catholic character.
- Policies and procedures are in place providing the highest levels of pastoral care to all pupils. Ruby, the school pet goldendoodle is always available to offer support to pupils in need or simply to listen to readers; there is pupil to pupil support at all levels. Parents say the care for children is, 'off the scale'.
- Every September, year six present a candle to reception children and commit to 'lighting their way' through their first year at school; these candles are returned at the end of the year as the children leave to move on to their secondary school.
- The school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of members of staff and ensures individual's needs are catered for. They describe themselves as, 'a tight knit team'.
- The school sets high expectations for the behaviour of their pupils and policies are rooted in gospel values. The message is consistently applied by every member of staff and clearly understood by all pupils.

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

- Leaders throughout the school are instrumental in ensuring that the Church's mission is held dear by all connected with the school. They have a clear vision for Catholic education and are inspirational in communicating this to others.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for the school and for all its pupils. The headteacher, Religious Education coordinator and parish priest are excellent role models. They are successful in motivating pupils and staff to be a strong team, 'authentic examples of God's love'.
- The Catholic Life of the school is given the highest possible priority by all leaders. The self-evaluation carried out is a true reflection of the school, based on rigorous monitoring and continual self-challenge.
- Leaders are creative in their thinking and committed to continual self-improvement, where everyone plays a part. Governors are highly visible in the school, working with senior leaders to create a positive, caring, inclusive atmosphere.
- Highly successful strategies are adopted to engage all parents. They say that they enjoy opportunities to participate in prayer events held in school and joint parish/school events. Parents appreciate the open door approach, knowing they are always welcome and supported.
- The governing body provides very effective challenge and support for the Catholic Life of the school. The link governor ensures they are well informed.

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.

- Sacred Heart school is a deeply prayerful community. The beautiful sacred spaces created by staff and pupils create a calm, peaceful atmosphere which is reflected in the excellent behaviour demonstrated by all pupils.
- Collective Worship takes many forms: class worship led by pupils and staff and whole school worship led by senior leaders and the parish priest. They participate reverently and enthusiastically.
- From the earliest age pupils lead Collective Worship, initially using the Cardiff scheme moving on to the Respond booklets with increasing independence.
- Pupils select hymns appropriate for the time in the Church's year. Music resources are continually updated, to ensure that an excellent range of traditional and contemporary hymns are sung.
- Prayer files are in each class, designed to share traditional prayers and encourage pupils to initiate prayer. Pupils enjoy many forms of prayer including liturgical dance and 'Espacio' resources for silent prayer times.
- Acts of Collective Worship reflect the Catholic character of the school but also consider the different faith backgrounds of pupils and their community. Pupils learn about events from different faiths over the course of the year and visit places of worship, such as the local Mosque. As a result of this, the children have a good understanding of, and respect for, other faith traditions.
- Adults act as excellent role models for pupils; this is evident in the reverence and respect shown when pupils lead their own liturgies.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- Opportunities for Collective Worship are varied, daily and central to the life of the school. They are linked to the liturgical year and the statements to live by in the nurturing human wholeness programme. All pupils and staff are actively involved.
- Prayer files are used in every class and are continually added to. Pupils are confident in accessing resources to plan their own liturgies.
- Staff prayer is equally prominent in the school; there are staff prayer opportunities each Monday led by the headteacher and each Friday in Lent by the parish priest; prayer is an integral part of all meetings.

- Families are regular visitors to Collective Worship gatherings over the course of the year. Parents expressed the belief that the school is a beacon where faith is nurtured and grown.
- The parish priest visits school each Wednesday to work with pupils throughout the school.
- Class teachers are skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality acts of worship. They are supported in developing their skills through training offered by the Religious Education leaders and the diocese.

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

- The headteacher, Religious Education leader and parish priest set a very high standard for Collective Worship in the school. They are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. They lead by example, often working with individual staff as part of their induction to ensure their skills develop quickly. They ensure that all staff have access to quality training in school and from the diocese.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and at the heart of every school celebration. The themes chosen reflect the liturgical year and follow the nurturing human wholeness programme.
- There is clear evidence of the quality of Collective Worship being monitored and evaluated. There are regular observations and visits followed by evaluation which feeds in to the school improvement plan. It is given the highest possible priority by all leaders.
- Surveys are regularly carried out by the Religious Education leader to determine the opinions of all stakeholders regarding Collective Worship and this feeds in to the school improvement plan.
- The governors are actively involved and have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for further development in Collective Worship. They provide very effective challenge and support.
- Leaders are committed to ensuring that funding is available to provide staff with the best training and resources available.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- 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.

- Pupils obviously enjoy their Religious Education lessons and take part enthusiastically. They say they enjoy being able to develop and express their own opinions. In observations pupils could express their thoughts articulately for example: describing the poor of Fiji as the genuinely rich people because they gave everything they had to be kind.
- All pupils concentrate well in lessons, creating an atmosphere conducive to learning.
- Observations and Religious Education books evidence good progress within lessons and over time for all groups of pupils. The school tracking system monitors standards and progress rigorously.
- Pupils all know how well they have done through regular feedback from the class teachers. They know their targets and work towards achieving these.
- Pupils are regularly given opportunities to improve their work but the challenges set could be more closely linked to their individual targets to make outstanding progress.
- Pupils are developing and applying skills well. They can reflect and evaluate their own learning and are practised in doing so.
- Historically standards of attainment have often been below diocesan averages but gaps are closing rapidly.

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

- All teaching is at least good and some shows outstanding features.
- Quality resources are used to engage pupils effectively and they learn very well. Pupils describe learning as 'fun'.
- Staff have developed their skills in accurate levelling of pupil's work and the use of 'driver' words to say what has been done well. Through marking and feedback pupils are encouraged to improve the work they do, however this needs to be more closely linked to their personal targets to improve standards so that they are in line with the diocesan average.
- Teachers demonstrate confidence in planning and teaching Religious Education. New staff are supported well through induction to promote good learning
- Assessments are regular and the school has developed a rigorous tracking system which means underachievement can be recognised and tackled. The accuracy of levelling of pupil's work has been a focus of the school and is now much more consistent.

- Pupils are regularly involved in evaluating how well they have done through use of 'I can statements'. Indeed, there is an 'I can' attitude fostered throughout the school.
- All pupils were able to explain their role in assessing their own work.
- Success is celebrated throughout the school through the house system, named after the sisters who founded the Sacred Heart order: Madeleine Sophie Barat, Janet Erskine Stuart, Philippine Duschene and Mabel Digby.

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

- Monitoring and evaluation of the provision for the Religious Education is rigorous and robust. It has enabled leaders to plan effectively for rapid progress and this is now evidenced in the work being produced by all pupils.
- Leaders are relentless in their desire to improve both teaching and learning across the school and in inspiring the staff and pupils to share their vision. As a result, Religious Education has a very high profile in the life of the school. Clear steps for improvement are detailed in the school improvement plan and are impacting on standards.
- The Religious Education programme is delivered by staff imaginatively to give quality experiences of the Catholic church and of other faiths. The school's links with the Sacred Heart network of schools impacts favourably on the Religious Education delivered. The society is built upon five goals: faith, intellect, community, personal growth and social awareness. Each year the school focuses on one of these goals in the Religious Education curriculum.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Sacramental preparation is delivered well and in accordance with diocesan policy.
- Governors regularly visit the school and are actively involved in monitoring and evaluation activities. They offer outstanding support and challenge to the school.

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.

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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.

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

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SCHOOL DETAILS

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| School name | Sacred Heart RC Primary School |
| Unique reference number | 108504 |
| Local authority | Newcastle |
| 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 | Mr Dave Harrison |
| Choose School Leadership Type | Mrs Barbara Brown |
| Date of previous school inspection | July 2012 |
| Telephone number | 0191 2746695 |
| Email address | admin@sacredhprim.newcastle.sch.uk |