

DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education
Collective Worship
and
The Catholic Life of the School



School: St George's R.C. Primary School

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Headteacher: Mrs Roseleen Mazza

Chair: Mrs Patricia Holder

Date: 27th and 28th September

Inspector: Mr Anthony Hay

INTRODUCTION

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school. The Inspection reviews, evaluates and plans further improvements in the school's witness to the Catholic faith and Curriculum Religious Education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation. The Inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisors.

What Inspection Grades mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding Catholic school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a Catholic school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory Catholic school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate Catholic school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St George's Primary School is a smaller than average 3 to 11 school that lies close to the centre of the City of York and serves a large and diverse parish. The children's cultural and ethnic diversity is reflected in the schools higher than average number of pupils with English as an additional language and a number of both Muslim and Hindu pupils. Some 60% of pupils are baptised Catholics. There is a higher than average pupil turnover as the school also serves an area of temporary housing and a number of traveller, service and university families. Attainment on entry to Foundation Stage is broadly in line with national averages. Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs and those eligible for Free School Meals are both below the national average. There is a 26 place Nursery Class and one class for each of the seven year groups. There are between 20 and 29 pupils in each class. The Headteacher has been in post since September 2008 and there are a number of recently appointed staff.

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 200

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 30

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 60%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 15%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 6.5%

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 18.5%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 9.5% (National Average 19%)

Teaching Staff:

Full-time Teachers: 8

Part-time Teachers: 2

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 80%

Percentage of with or working towards CCRS: 70%

Support Staff:

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 4

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 5

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 44%

Percentage of learning time given to R.E:

10% in all classes.

Parishes served by the School:

St George's Parish

1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St George's Primary School is a good Catholic school with a welcoming, family centred ethos. There is effective leadership at all levels and a real commitment to living out the school's mission on a daily basis. Progress is good and standards of attainment are rising due to good, and some outstanding, teaching that is well planned and matched to the needs of pupils. A lively approach to the teaching of Religious Education is maintained throughout.

Worship is well planned, varied and delivered with flair and commitment. Good moral and spiritual development is nurtured through Religious Education, the use of the 'Nurturing Human Wholeness' Programme and informally by all the adults in the school through the positive, caring relationships and the way in which the daily challenges in the life of the school are dealt with. The school has a calm but purposeful atmosphere and pupils feel strongly that they enjoy school, that their contributions are valued and they are listened to, especially when there may be difficulties. Pupils are lively, show good manners and feel proud of their school. Their behaviour is very good in class and when moving around the building.

The displays, artefacts and regular opportunities for prayer make explicit the Catholic life and mission of the school to all who enter it. St George's School welcomes and serves its varied community well because it knows that community well and is a very important part of it. Due to its effective self-evaluation the school knows which are the necessary areas of development and its priorities are clear.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- To further refine assessment and move the more able pupils to higher attainment levels by embedding the newly introduced Religious Education Scheme through the moderation of work arising from the new scheme across the school, and with other schools.

- To improve teaching of Religious Education still further by
 - a) regular monitoring of lessons and pupils' work arising from the introduction of the new Religious Education Scheme.
 - b) sharing the skills of those teachers who are outstanding with the rest of the teaching staff.

- To use learning objectives from lessons more extensively in the marking of resultant work to show how children can further their learning.
- To give opportunities to all pupils to devise and participate in regular classroom based liturgies.

2. PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.

2

Children enter the school with broadly average attainment and an increasing number leave at the end of Key Stage 2 with above average attainment despite a fairly high turnover of pupils, some inconsistency in the standard of teaching in earlier classes and the number of pupils with a considerable variety of needs. This pattern is sustained in Religious Education as it is clearly viewed and treated as a core subject along with English, Mathematics and Science.

All groups of pupils make good progress, relative to their starting points, increasing in religious understanding and skills at all stages. They enjoy their learning, showing interest and enthusiasm, due to the good teaching they receive. The quality of pupils' work, as seen in lessons and observed in completed work, was satisfactory in all classes and good when the more able are given the opportunity to excel by being set challenging tasks. This was most evident in the teaching observed in Years 5 and 6 where expectations were set high. This bodes well for the standard of work of these pupils on their transfer to secondary school.

From discussion with the children, it was clear they appreciate, value and generally participate fully in the Catholic life of the school. They understood the Christian mission of the school in their own terms and showed a genuine capacity for giving and receiving praise, thanks and forgiveness. This was evident in the manner in which they spoke of and treated each other.

The children showed interest, engagement and reverence during both class prayers and school based Collective Worship. They have some knowledge of a variety of prayer styles. This was amply demonstrated in an imaginatively planned and delivered class-based Act of Worship for the whole school and parents on The Rosary in preparation for the month of October. Due to the presence in the school of pupils of other world faiths, all children have been given the opportunity to appreciate prayer and ritual different from those with which they are familiar. Although pupils often participate in delivering whole school Acts of Worship, there are not yet enough opportunities for the children to independently prepare, organise and lead worship in classrooms and for the whole school.

• How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education?	2
❖ <i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</i>	2
❖ <i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress in Religious Education</i>	2
❖ <i>pupils' attainment in Religious Education</i>	3
• To what extent do pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school?	2
• How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship?	2

3. PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education

Lesson Planning and preparation are good in all classes as the teachers base the next steps to be taken on the children's prior learning, a very varied range of teaching approaches and effective use of time to ensure real pupil engagement, enjoyment and progress. Good questioning, appropriate pupil grouping and imaginative use of resources, particularly the interactive whiteboards in each classroom, ensure quality learning takes place. The children often informally assess their own understanding of what they have learned or are informed as a group or class of how well they are doing but are not always sufficiently informed about the progress they are making or the marking of their work is not linked closely enough to the individual lesson's learning objective.

There are good assessment, tracking and monitoring systems in place, but these have not yet been revised and extended in relation to the new Religious Education scheme introduced this term to ensure the quality of assessment used to guide pupils and to secure standards.

Carefully targeted teaching, matched to the children's abilities, ensures activities and given tasks are relevant to their needs and promote achievement. The Religious Education curriculum contributes well to the pupils' spiritual and moral development. This was particularly evident in the spiritual elements observed in Year 3's work on Baptism and the moral concerns addressed in Year 5 on man's work as Co-creator/Steward of God's world. The newly introduced scheme, 'The Way, the Truth and The Life' meets the Bishops' Conference requirements and provides a good basis for effective planning and coverage of pupils' Religious Education. Religious Education is extensively enriched by the use of role play. This was particularly well demonstrated in two lessons in Years 2 and 4 on the story of the early life of Moses. These lessons were notable for the extent to which the experiences given to the children were well customised to meet the needs of individuals.

The Collective Acts of Worship planned, and those seen, reflected well the Catholic character of the school and were very appropriate in both style and content. Worship is of a good standard because it is varied in delivery and in the approaches used. The linking of the weekly 'Nurturing Human Wholeness' topics to the children's behaviour and emotional development is particularly effective. Staff are skilled and resources well used in the provision of Worship but children do not yet have the opportunity and skills to plan worship in their own classes, and for the whole school, in order to help engage parents and the parish community to an even greater extent than at present.

The school's Mission Statement and Motto are displayed throughout and known to the children. The clear behaviour expectations and rewards systems support the good behaviour, relationships and attitudes. These are firmly established in the earliest classes. The displays of work connected to Religious Education are extensive and impressive. The 'sacred spaces' set up in each classroom are relevant and engaging. Concern for issues of justice, particularly in relation to the 'Third World' and sustainability, were evident and well dealt with and the unique value in which each individual is held is clear in all the school does.

• The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
• The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	3
• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2
• The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school	2

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

2

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school.

Due to the fact that the leaders in the school know the school's areas of strength and those in need of development, systems for monitoring teaching and learning are evidently good. This is shown clearly in the quality of the school's development planning and self-evaluation systems and in the current Religious Education Development Plan. Chaplaincy is well maintained through the extensive involvement of the Parish Priest. The provision of good in-service training in Religious Education and in Worship are both having a very positive impact on the quality of the Catholic life of the school. It is the careful monitoring of standards that led to the introduction of the new Religious Education Scheme.

The views of both parents and pupils about the school influence decisions made and this is particularly evident in the development of the Ethos and Communications Committee of the Governing Body which has been effective in making the mission and work of the school better known to the parents and the local community. The Governing Body provides both generous support and effective challenge to the school leaders by tailoring its skills well to the tasks in hand. It has the expertise to meet the school's needs but is open to the contribution of new members. The Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties very effectively.

The school's Parish, local community and school/local authority links add to the well being and achievement of the pupils. The school is well involved with serving the common good through its work with the local community and its link with its partner school in Ghana, through which pupils can gain skills of dialogue and collaboration with people who hold different beliefs and values, and gain a wider view of the world created for them.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school, including chaplaincy provision, and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How effectively leaders and managers promote and develop Community Cohesion	1

5. THE SCHOOL'S CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

1

The school has met the targets from the previous inspection and has already identified some further priorities through its R.E. Development Plan and the current School Improvement Plan. The school's self-evaluation is robust in its application and is well used to identify priorities for improvement, while seeking to consolidate the gains and successes made thus far, particularly in the development of the Catholic life of the school.

The school's current leadership is highly respected and effective in clarifying priorities for development and the means to fulfil the plans that result from that process. The committed and skilled Governing Body are set to continue to be a very valuable element in the strategic management of the school's work.

The school's strong leadership team-based structure copes well with staff change; and the ambitious, well communicated vision for the Catholic life of the school, is a firm basis to ensure the school continues sustained development and success in the future.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school's success in improving outcomes for pupils has been shown by its performance since its last inspection	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High quality self-evaluation enables the school to identify appropriate priorities for Catholic Life and Religious Education to consolidate success and secure further improvement	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaders and managers communicate an ambitious vision for the Catholic dimension of the school and to raise standards for all pupils	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school's effectiveness as a Catholic School is likely to be sustained by the current leadership and management	1