

DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

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



School: St Benedict's RC Primary

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Chair: Mr Adrian O'Shea

Date: 22nd & 23rd January 2013

Inspector: Mrs Susan Fall

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 Advisers and Inspectors.

What Inspection Grades mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
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| 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 Benedict's Catholic Primary School is a small rural school with a strong Catholic tradition serving a number of parishes. The school has strong links with Ampleforth College. The large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, but the proportion of pupils on the school's SEN register is average. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 are organised into three mixed-age classes. 62% of pupils are baptised Roman Catholic. The headteacher joined the school in September 2011.

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll: 100

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: 15

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: 62%

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: 31%

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: 0

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: 7%

Percentage of pupils with special needs: 13%

Teaching Staff:

Full-time Teachers: 3 plus headteacher

Part-time Teachers: 2

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: 50%

Support Staff:

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: 2

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: 2

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: 50%

Percentage of teachers with CCRS: 20%

Percentage of learning time given to R.E: 10%

Parishes served by the School:

Our Lady & St. Benedict's, Ampleforth, St. Aidan's, Oswaldkirk, Our Lady & The Holy Angels', Gilling, St. Mary's, Helmsley, St. Chad's, Kirkbymoorside and St. John the Evangelist's, Easingwold.

1.OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Benedict's is a good Catholic school with many outstanding features. Pupils flourish because of the strong Catholic ethos and caring, supportive family atmosphere. There is a strong sense of community spirit within the school as a result of sharing common values and expectations. The school Mission Statement is placed at the centre of all that the school does and shared by all: it is reviewed on an annual basis by Governors and all stakeholders are involved.

Pupils are proud of their school and recognise the importance of prayer and Religious Education as a focal part of school life. Collective Worship observed was effectively delivered using visual material to illustrate the theme and engage the interest of pupils.

St Benedict's school provides a good Catholic education. Teaching and learning in Religious Education is effective in engaging pupils and ensuring that they make good progress. The Religious Education curriculum meets the needs and interests of the pupils and the Bishop's requirements. Assessment, monitoring and tracking procedures are impacting positively on attainment and progress; and outcomes for pupils are good.

Governance of the school is outstanding. Governors are highly committed to the Catholic ethos of the school. There are excellent links with the local parish through the support given to the school by the parish priest who is on the governing body and who is a frequent visitor to the school.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

- Continue to lead, encourage and support all staff (teaching and support) and pupils in embedding the recently introduced Religious Education Scheme 'Come and See' into day to day classroom life.
- In line with the above, continue to embed rigorous systems of monitoring and evaluation, including target setting and moderated assessments of pupil Religious Education work, to ensure the accuracy of staff judgements of pupil work based on the new Religious Education scheme.
- Develop the use of 'I can' statements throughout the school and provide opportunities for greater pupil involvement in self-assessment using the 'I can' statements.
- Provide more opportunities for all pupils, particularly younger pupils, to develop the skills they need to plan, prepare and lead collective worship.

2. PUPILS

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

2

Outcomes for pupils are good. Most groups of pupils make at least good progress. Pupils are keen to do well. In all lessons observed pupils applied themselves diligently. The pupils endeavour to produce their best work and are interested and enthusiastic in Religious Education lessons. During inspection pupils sometimes showed a deeper understanding orally than their written work reflected. They are able to express their own beliefs with some confidence and can say how their faith impacts on their lives.

Pupils are becoming increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge, skills and understanding are developing well according to their age and capacity. They reported that they found Religious Education “fun but hard work sometimes”. Learning could be accelerated by using ‘next step’ statements alongside the use of positive marking strategies enabling pupils to assess their own work more efficiently.

Standards of attainment in Religious Education are good, with most pupils achieving Level 4 or above at the end of year 6 and a large majority of pupils achieving Level 2 at the end of year 2. Inspection findings show little variation in progress between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported.

St Benedict’s is a prayerful community where pupils’ response to and participation in collective worship seen during inspection was very good. They have a good grasp of what worship is about and some are developing independent skills in preparing prayer and worship. Pupils are involved by doing readings and prayers and they enjoy collective worship most when they can contribute, for example, through power point presentations as in an Advent Liturgy prepared for parents.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic Life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take advantage of the many opportunities offered to them and can articulate how the school is helping them to become better people. Pupils say they feel valued and are able to articulate the importance of Gospel values within their school community expressing the view that this is what Jesus asks of us. Pupils speak of a sense of belonging and being a ‘big family’. Within the school, pupils have good opportunities to work and play together in a variety of groupings and this contributes to attitudes of tolerance and respect in the whole school community. Behaviour is outstanding as is the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Older pupils take their responsibilities seriously and see their role as mentors and school councillors as important because it is about looking after people as Jesus asked us to do. They confidently express their own views and feelings and are aware of the needs of others: ‘We know everybody’s name and we all play together’.

The pupils acknowledge that they are ‘listened to’, their views are valued, and their reasonable suggestions and requests are ‘adopted’. This is exemplified in the achievements of the School Council who readily identify the impact of specific improvements made when their peers, parents and staff have taken on board requests they have made.

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| • 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> | 2 |
| • To what extent do pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school? | 1 |
| • How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship? | 1 |

3. PROVISION

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How effective the provision is for Catholic education

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good overall. The lessons which were observed, together with the work presented for scrutiny, supports the school's judgement that the majority of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and children are keen to learn and are provided with a range of activities to meet different learning styles. An example of this was seen in Early Years where Reception children completed a variety of activities linked to the theme of 'Celebration'. Using the props in the different areas children celebrated baptism, marriage and the birth of Jesus.

Teachers use a variety of questioning styles and encourage children to reconsider answers, and at times are able to encourage children to develop higher level thinking skills. However, too often teachers provided the answers without giving pupils time to reflect. Where teaching is at its best there are effective cross-curriculum links and the creative use of Information Technology to enhance teaching and learning. An example of this was the work being carried out in Class 4 where children were asked to devise a mission statement for a charity they would like to manage.

Planned lessons build on prior learning and meet the varying needs of pupils. Those pupils identified with special educational needs are supported appropriately and make good progress given their starting points. Visual presentations and talking partners are used well to promote interest and develop confidence in ideas. Opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each other through activities such as Godly Play. Following the teacher's input pupils were invited to comment on 'Who is our neighbour?' which related to the Religious Education theme 'Community'. This effective strategy afforded the pupils with opportunities to fully engage in prayerful activities and share their own beliefs.

There is some evidence that feedback, both orally and through written comments, is beginning to support the next steps in learning. However the 'I Can' statements are not used consistently throughout the school and teachers' marking does not always provide information to pupils about the next steps in their learning.

Assessment procedures are in place and are used to support planning for teaching and learning thus improving outcomes for pupils. Monitoring and tracking pupil progress are being developed and are under review to ensure progression and improvement.

The Religious Education curriculum meets the needs and interests of the pupils and fulfils the Bishop's requirements. Extra curricular activities are varied and are much enjoyed.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is good. Masses, liturgies and assemblies are regular and planned on a termly basis. Older pupils regularly prepare and lead worship in a variety of gatherings and settings. There are some opportunities for younger pupils to lead worship but the school recognises that not all pupils are yet skilled in planning and preparing worship. Pupils sing joyfully and

they know the difference between traditional prayers and making up their own private prayers.

The provision for the Catholic Life of the school has the highest priority. The highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour are promoted through the school's expectations. The school places the unique nature of the child, the realisation of his/her potential, and the development of harmonious relationships, as central.

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| • The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education | 2 |
| • The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education | 2 |
| • 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 | 1 |

4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

1

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

The strength of St Benedict's school lies in the leaders and managers and their effectiveness in developing the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher joined the school in September 2011 and he is deeply committed to building on the many strengths and successes of his popular and long-serving predecessor in taking the school forward and the indications are that he is having a very positive impact on the life of the school.

Monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education are good. The subject leader is focused on raising standards, has a clear sense of direction and understands how to bring about improvement. She regularly attends co-ordinator meetings and in service training and disseminates to staff. Appropriate staff training is developing staff confidence and competence in the implementation of the new Religious Education scheme, 'Come and See'.

Governance is outstanding. The Governors are committed, dedicated and extremely supportive of the school. They discharge their canonical duties extremely effectively. They monitor the school's data and information, review the school's work and act upon their findings. They are very well informed; place the well-being and all round development of pupils at the heart of their work. They are extremely supportive of staff but are also confident in questioning in their approach. They have a good understanding of stakeholder views and know what needs to be done to raise standards further. The Governing Body is very well led by the Chair of Governors who explained how they worked closely with the headteacher acting as 'critical friends'. The self evaluation documentation is reviewed regularly, is up to date and is used to identify priorities for the coming year.

Parents speak highly of their school and value the commitment of staff and the good pastoral care given to their children. Very good home, school, parish and wider community communications are promoted through regular school newsletters and the weekly Wednesday Word.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities. A very strong sense of the common good and global responsibilities are promoted in the school. The school actively promotes pupils' initiative in learning about and supporting charities at local, national and global levels and the response is repeatedly generous. The school supports projects such as the Shoe Box Appeal, Mission Together and CAFOD which ensures the pupils have an understanding of working for the common good. They have links with other Catholic schools in the area, a school in Hull and a school abroad and are planning a link with a school in China.

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| <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 | 1 |
| <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 | 1 |
| <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

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St. Benedict's has an excellent capacity to improve. A strength of the school is that it has a very clear, accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. This has resulted in a detailed improvement plan shared by staff and Governors with parents. This vision and drive for continuous improvement makes the school's capacity to improve outstanding.