



St Agnes Catholic Primary School

Rosedale Road, Crawcrook, Ryton, NE40 4UN

School Unique Reference Number: **108390**

Inspection dates:	22 - 23 November 2018
Lead inspector:	Jill Burgess

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

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Agnes Catholic Primary School is an outstanding Catholic school because:

- It is a harmonious, faith-filled community where all involved speak of the positive ethos which encompasses all elements of school life and extends into the local community.
- Catholic Life is outstanding as pupils confidently recognise the role the school plays in helping everyone become the person that God wants them to be.
- The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding as significant progress has been made ensuring pupils are given wide ranging opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship independently.
- The quality of Religious Education is good as pupils are given opportunities to explore and deepen their knowledge of the curriculum through a range of activities.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Agnes Catholic Primary School is an average-sized school situated in the west of Gateshead.

The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is below average.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is low.

The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average.

The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is below average.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher were appointed in September 2018 – both were already working in the school.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Further develop the quality of the teaching and learning process by:

- ensuring regular and robust internal moderating systems are in place to enable confident and accurate assessments.
- clarifying expectations of marking and feedback in line with the school's own policy.

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 is a vibrant and cohesive unit where everyone understands the important contribution they make within their 'school family' and beyond. As a result, positive relationships are evident with every interaction. Pupils, staff, governors and parents speak about the school, and all those connected to it, with the utmost respect and affection. As one governor commented, 'It is a pleasure to be part of this school [...] everyone goes that extra mile'.
- Pupils demonstrate high standards of behaviour and care towards each other.
- Pupils benefit from extensive opportunities to develop morally and spiritually. The mission statement Micah 6:8, 'Act justly, love tenderly, walk humbly with your God,' is known, understood and followed by all.
- High on the school's agenda is the need to support more vulnerable members of communities and the response to charitable initiatives is extremely positive. Pupils talk with a sense of pride about their entrepreneur days for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) and the school's fundraising events for The People's Kitchen, Macmillan, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) and Children in Need.
- Within this school, pupils appreciate their voice will be heard. They embrace roles of responsibility such as: school councillors, house captains, sports leaders and buddies, with confidence and enthusiasm whilst always recognising their core purpose is, 'to show kindness'.
- Pupils benefit from close liaison between school and church. Pupils are regularly involved in parish Masses and diocesan celebrations and the parish priest maintains strong links through weekly visits to school.

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

- The importance given to the development of Catholic Life by the school's leadership is evident in every exchange within school. The school has established its ethos by forging positive relationships across the extended community with energy and enthusiasm.
- Pupils talk of their readiness to resolve issues independently, before staff need to intervene. When staff do become involved in pupil disagreements, they are seen as role models. Pupils say, 'They always explore reasons and give you a chance to explain'.
- The physical environment of the school is a celebration of faith. Signs of the school's Catholic character are evident in the range of focal and prayer points, artefacts and thought-provoking displays.
- The school chapel is used to excellent effect and is timetabled for every class to access weekly. It is recognised as a place for quiet prayer and reflection. All members of staff respond positively to the invitation to pray together.
- Clear structures are in place to explore personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) throughout school with a focus on the diocesan programme, 'Nurturing Human Wholeness – Statements to Live By'.
- The relationships and sex education programme is currently under review and staff training has recently been completed. The timetable for parental consultation and whole school implementation is in place for this academic year.

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

- The newly formed school leadership team is highly respected throughout school and, whilst maintaining existing outstanding practices, has immediately demonstrated a willingness to look outwards and work with other local schools to share good practice regarding Catholic Life. Involvement in liturgies and celebrations across the local community serves to reinforce these positive relationships.
- Self-evaluation highlights a level of monitoring which incorporates the views of a range of stakeholders. One parent commented, 'Standards are really high but never to the detriment of the whole child [...] all achievements are fully celebrated'. Governors talked of the, 'great trust teachers have in one another', demonstrating that the school is equally attentive to the pastoral needs of members of staff.
- The school's leadership has recently placed an emphasis on democracy, respect for other faiths, rights and responsibilities and individual liberty, as part of an overall exploration of 'British Values'.
- Governors demonstrate a deep commitment to moving the school forward. As active participants in school life, they are able to offer support when needed, whilst recognising the need to provide challenge stating, 'We must never be complacent'.
- The school is enthusiastic in its response to diocesan policies and initiatives and actively promotes the Bishop's vision for the diocese throughout school.

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.

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

- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education (RE) lessons and feel they are challenged in their thinking stating that it can be one of the most challenging lessons. They value opportunities to explore RE in different ways and they appreciate the chance to, 'give opinions and express our imagination'.
- Behaviour for learning is impressive and high levels of engagement ensure pupils maintain concentration well. Pupils are often given opportunities to discuss ideas in pairs or small groups and interactions are focused and on-task. Pupils are always respectful and cooperative when working in group situations.
- Cross-curricular links in RE lessons are becoming more established and high expectations are evident, although these need to be applied more consistently across school.
- School data illustrates that pupils attain at least in line, and often higher, than diocesan averages at the end of Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6, although cohort tracking of progress shows more inconsistency. More regular opportunities for moderation, within school, will support confident and accurate assessments of pupils' work.
- Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities progress well from starting points and additional adults are deployed appropriately to offer support, where necessary.

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

- 'Come and See' materials are used to good effect when planning. This allows pupils, at an age appropriate level, to make links between the study of religion, scripture and their everyday lives.
- Teachers ensure a good level of participation within lessons and ensure questions are differentiated and directed to a range of pupils.
- Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and have a good understanding of how pupils learn. As a result, pupils apply themselves well; they are well behaved and are rarely off-task. Sometimes, however, the pace slows and opportunities to provide greater challenge are missed.
- Good quality resources are evident and additional adults are used effectively to promote involvement and deepen understanding.

- Work is regularly marked, although inconsistencies are evident in terms of taking learning forward. School self-evaluation recognises greater clarity is needed in terms of expectations of the preferred method for marking and feedback in line with the school's own policy.

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

- The newly appointed headteacher is embracing the role of subject lead for Religious Education with enthusiasm. She ensures that Religious Education is seen as comparable to all other subjects in the curriculum.
- A detailed book scrutiny has recently been conducted and self-evaluation highlights an accurate understanding of strengths and areas for development in terms of teaching and learning experiences evident in Religious Education lessons. There is a clear sense of direction regarding what is required.
- Continuing professional development is given high priority. A newly qualified member of staff talked of how valuable this has been. Opportunities to share good practice across the school are also evident.
- Parents talk of strong communication between home and school. They value the Religious Education termly updates, school newsletters and curriculum information on the school's website. They also describe how pupils talk about what they are learning in Religious Education at home.
- Governors are kept well informed of developments in Religious Education and are keen to further develop their monitoring role. They have confidence in the school's leadership.
- Sacramental preparation is well embedded and in line with diocesan policy. The school and parish work closely to ensure the programme is delivered effectively.
- The Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference and contributes very effectively to the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

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.

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

- Collective Worship has been an immediate focus for the school's new leadership team, resulting in the provision of wide-ranging opportunities for prayer which inspire and engage pupils and staff. Contemporary themes are explored in order to promote tolerance and equality.
- Within the school community there is a great respect and enthusiasm for prayerful gatherings reflected in the range of appropriate responses: silence, reverent participation and joyful, communal singing. This is evident regardless of faith background and whether it is a member of staff or pupil leading the liturgy.
- Pupils want to lead worship and they view this aspect of school life as a privilege, which although taken seriously, should be enjoyed. The year 4 liturgy, which explored the theme of anti-bullying through the story of Joseph and his jealous brothers, highlighted how comfortable pupils are planning and leading gatherings including organising the prayer space.
- Pupils demonstrate extensive knowledge of the liturgical year and can fully justify their choices, regarding the use of scripture and religious artefacts, when independently planning Collective Worship. Clear progression of skills is evident throughout the school, culminating in year 6 adeptly utilising their information communication technology skills collaboratively to research appropriate readings and hymns for their liturgy 'commitment and devotion'.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship is outstanding.

- The school's leadership, including the governing body, recognise the value of Collective Worship. Consequently, it is promoted effectively throughout the school with a view to enhancing the spiritual and moral development of all pupils.
- Staff serve as role models throughout the school, ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences.
- Equal importance is given to staff prayer, which is well established. The opportunity to pray together regularly is viewed as a valuable experience and all staff are involved.

- Whole school Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and is used to introduce the weekly 'statement of the week'. This is revisited, as part of the end of week celebration assembly, to consider how this behaviour has been evident throughout school.
- Participation in Collective Worship is high from parents, family members and parishioners, who respond well to the invitation to attend a rich array of whole school and key stage gatherings during the course of the year. The school recognises that involvement could be further extended by inviting parents, on a regular basis, to more informal weekly Collective Worship.
- Parents talk positively about the extent to which prayer life extends into the home, through seasonal links such as the travelling crib. They are impressed at the extent to which pupils try to replicate experiences at home.
- The parish priest visits pupils on a regular basis to help enhance the prayer life of the school.

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

- It is clear that the school's leadership has extensive knowledge planning and delivering quality Collective Worship. Ensuring pupils have the relevant skills, as well as sufficient opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship, are seen as key priorities and are included in this year's school development plan.
- The school's leadership place a high priority on school self-evaluation. Significant emphasis has been placed in this area with positive impact. Staff-led Collective Worship is now being monitored throughout school in order to ensure the school has an accurate view of current provision.
- Collective Worship class portfolios have also been introduced to evidence the progression of skills, as well as range of prayer styles taking place.
- Pupils' views are sought through questionnaires, class discussions and feedback from the School Council. Responses highlight that pupils, 'feel close to God through prayer and worship'.
- School governors are kept well informed of developments and take the opportunity to review Collective Worship regularly during termly meetings.

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.

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

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

SCHOOL DETAILS

School name	St Agnes Catholic Primary School
Unique reference number	108390
Local authority	Gateshead
This Inspection Report is produced for the Rt Reverend Seamus Cunningham the Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle 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 P Garraghan
Head teacher	Mrs Joanne Woods
Date of previous school inspection	April 2014
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