

# DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

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



**School:** St Charles' R C V A Primary School

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**Headteacher:** Mrs Lynda Hoyle

**Chair:** Canon Michael Loughlin

**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010

**Inspector:** Mrs Katherine Snape

## 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
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 Charles' R C Primary School is located in the centre of Hull and serves the parishes of St Charles and Corpus Christi. It is situated in an area of high unemployment and financial deprivation. The proportion of pupils with a minority ethnic heritage is considerably above average and over 41% of the school population is Polish with most of these children arriving in school speaking no English and many experiencing formal education for the first time. The school recently experienced sudden change when the percentage of pupils with English as an Additional Language (EAL) rose rapidly from 12.7% to 50%. There are over seventeen different languages spoken by pupils at home. The mobility of pupils is higher than the Local Authority average and considerably higher than the national average; when pupils leave they are quickly replaced by pupils who have EAL or no English. There are 246 pupils on roll of whom 60% are baptised Roman Catholic, an increase of 14% Catholic since the last Diocesan inspection was

completed. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is average at 19%, though the proportion of pupils with a statement of SEN is above average. There are eleven teachers including the headteacher of whom 63% are Catholic. There are twenty-two part-time classroom support members of staff of whom 37% are Catholic. One teacher holds the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) and another member of staff is currently undertaking the CCRS. The school has appointed a part-time Chaplaincy co-ordinator.

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll: **246**

Planned Admission Number of Pupils: **30**

Percentage of pupils baptised RC: **60%**

Percentage of pupils from other Christian Denominations: **16%**

Percentage of pupils from other World Faiths: **6%**

Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: **18%**

Percentage of pupils with special needs: **19%**

### **Teaching Staff:**

Full-time Teachers: **10**

Part-time Teachers: **1**

Percentage of Catholic Teachers: **63%**

Percentage of Teachers with CCRS: **9%**

### **Support Staff:**

Full-time Classroom Support Staff: **0**

Part-time Classroom Support Staff: **22**

Percentage of Catholic Classroom Support Staff: **37%**

### **Percentage of learning time given to Religious Education:**

10% in all year groups

### **Parishes served by the School:**

St Charles and Corpus Christi

# 1. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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## MAIN FINDINGS

St Charles is a good school with very many outstanding features. The school is led by a deeply committed Headteacher who communicates her vision highly effectively. The Governing Body positively promotes and supports the outstanding Catholic life of the school.

The Mission Statement:

*In the worshipping and learning community of St Charles' School, we welcome, respect and tolerate everyone as a unique creation of God. Our relationships, high expectations and aspirations are built on Gospel values and rooted in prayer.*

is evident through the many welcoming, celebratory and reflective wall displays but is especially evident in the highly nurturing relationships which are the foundation of the day to day life of the school.

All members of staff work very positively and effectively, both in their individual roles and as a team, to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes towards learning. Pupils enter school with knowledge and skills well below those expected of pupils of that age and in recent years many have had very little or no English. The inclusive and effective Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) ensures that all pupils gain a sense of security and self-worth. This continues through Key Stages 1 and 2 where an emphasis on developing speaking skills promotes self-expression and encourages co-operative work. Whilst standards of attainment in Religious Education may be below expectations for Y6 pupils, the progress which pupils make during their time at St Charles is at least satisfactory and in many cases is very good, given the difficulties in teaching and assessing such a high percentage of pupils with EAL and a pupil population with such a high degree of mobility.

Both pupils and parents affirm the very high level of pastoral care within the school and the way that the school prepares its pupils for life beyond primary education. Pupils feel that they learn well because 'our teachers make it fun'.

**What the school needs to do to improve further:**

The school needs to:

- build on recently developed expertise in assessment and tracking to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in Religious Education that they can.
- share its effective strategies of restorative practice and chaplaincy work with other schools.

## 2. PUPILS

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

Outcomes for pupils are good and pupils enjoy their work in Religious Education because teachers take care to plan lessons which employ a variety of teaching techniques, which are mostly well-paced and suited to the varied needs of the learners, and in which pupils can work co-operatively. Tasks are structured effectively so that even pupils with very little English can participate well. Pupils respond very well to the wide range of cross-curricular links, generally apply themselves diligently and take pride in presenting their work – especially in plenary sessions. Behaviour is very good and the ethos of respect for all is securely embedded. Consequently learning outcomes for all groups of pupils are good.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 is below expected national levels but the school's circumstances (high percentages of minority ethnic pupils, of pupils with EAL and of mobility) support a judgement of at least satisfactory progress for most pupils with good progress for the majority.

Pupils value the caring attitude of their teachers and classroom support assistants. Pupils of all abilities make progress with their learning. Pupils are unfailingly considerate of others as a result of the very high standard of pastoral care which is an outstanding strength of the school.

Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. All activities are underpinned by the strong Catholic ethos which encourages them to understand what makes them who they are. They have a strong sense of personal worth and their place in creation. This was especially evident in dialogue with pupils and in observation of their written work about their Paxwold Retreat. In proportion to their years they show a good capacity for praise and celebration, an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They treat others with respect and know that their behaviour always has consequences. They enjoy and make very good use of the chaplaincy provision.

Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in acts of Collective Worship in which they sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers with heartfelt confidence. Pupils prepare and lead worship in a variety of gatherings. The feasts of the liturgical year are celebrated with enthusiasm. Collective worship which often skilfully includes the use of circle time and restorative practice has a very positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education?</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</i></li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress in Religious Education</i></li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>pupils' attainment in Religious Education</i></li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent do pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school?</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship?</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>

### 3. PROVISION

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#### How effective the provision is for Catholic education

The provision for Catholic education is good with some outstanding strengths in teaching. However a few weaknesses in assessment still need to be effectively addressed. Nearly all teaching is effective in ensuring that pupils are consistently interested in their learning and are making good progress. Teaching in outstanding lessons in Religious Education ensured that all activities were well paced; that there was a mix of whole class, group, partner and individual work; that imaginative links were made with other areas of the curriculum and that pupils' skills in these areas could be effectively employed to demonstrate their understanding of learning objectives in Religious Education. Pupils in EYFS had a good understanding that treasured objects are something special and can help recall treasured memories. One young pupil commented that a treasured toy animal was 'special because he likes everyone'. KS1 pupils made appropriate connections between treasures and God's love of His creation saying 'God is looking down on us, loving the planet Earth'. Younger KS2 pupils engaged in learning about wonders of the world, both natural and man-made, showed excellent understanding of how God made or inspired these. Older KS2 pupils, who were engaged in textual scrutiny of the creation story from Genesis, understood the notion of stewardship and protecting what is good.

In all lessons observed, teachers took care to explain appropriate vocabulary related to Religious Education so that pupils became increasingly religiously literate. In the best lessons teachers demonstrated strong subject knowledge, awareness of varied learning styles, classroom management techniques and effective use of resources. They employed these skills to inspire, challenge and support their pupils. Pupils were less engaged in their learning in those few lessons where objectives and tasks were less well pitched to meet their needs and where teaching lacked inspiration or the pace of work slowed.

The school has a broadly accurate picture of pupils' achievement. Generally pupils need to be better informed about their progress and how to improve. This can be done through better marking strategies and dialogue with adults. Pupils are sometimes involved in assessing how well they are achieving but this assessment can appear

perfunctory at times. Where teachers have gained more confidence through termly moderated assessment procedures, appropriately challenging learning targets are set and pupils' progress is more reliably tracked. However, the difficulties of assessing significant numbers of pupils with EAL and tracking pupil progress in a school with high mobility should not be minimised.

The Religious Education curriculum meets the external requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The school successfully seeks to improve on the coherence, relevance and excitement of the well-planned Religious Education curriculum which has been extended through enrichment activities, the use of the Every Child Matters agenda and collaboration with other schools. Priority has been given to training and mentoring in the delivery of Religious Education and resources including vibrant artefacts, Bibles, Religious Education books and ICT programmes have been extensively provided. Consequently pupils have the opportunity to be enthusiastic learners and this greatly benefits their development.

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and the themes reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission. Prayer opportunities for staff and pupils are planned in a manner that attracts attendance. Rosary groups meet regularly with the school chaplain and a prayer group meets weekly. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer. Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned and shows progression.

The provision for the Catholic Life of the school has the highest priority: the learning environment is attractive, well ordered and clearly of a Catholic nature. The highest standards of moral and ethical behaviour are promoted through the school's expectations. The Mission Statement underpins all school policies and procedures. The school places the unique nature of the child, the realisation of the child's potential and the development of harmonious relationships as central. Visual reminders of this are evident throughout the school with highly motivational messages such as 'You are all God's works of art' and 'know that you are needed and loved' as well as key words such as 'respect', 'caring', 'compassion'. These, in combination with a culture of restorative practice and learning to say 'sorry' ensure that the dignity of the human person and issues of justice and peace are extensively promoted.

• The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
• The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	<b>3</b>
• The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	<b>1</b>
• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	<b>1</b>
• The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school	<b>1</b>

## 4. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

The leadership and management of the school are extremely good with very many outstanding features. The school's leadership is energised by the missionary task of Catholic education in the broadest sense. The Headteacher is an outstanding source of inspiration for the whole community. There is unequivocal and explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is a priority along with the spiritual and moral development of each pupil. This is reflected in the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation forms, the school's policies and other documents. An extensive and reflective range of monitoring and self-evaluation activities spear-headed by the Senior Leadership Team leads to well-targeted and creative action planning with key partners. The chaplaincy provision is exceptionally well developed and makes a highly significant impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development giving them the confidence to reflect deeply, to ask searching questions, to have fun and enjoy faith activities and to share in wider community activities such as residential retreats and The Big Sing Liturgy Thing. All members of the school community have a high regard for the Catholic Life of the school and pupils are keen to be actively involved in shaping and supporting it.

Leaders and managers, especially the Headteacher who is also the school's Religious Education subject leader, conduct a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes for Religious Education. Their analysis provides a good basis for diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses in this area. The stepped action plan for Religious Education has been effective in securing the confidence of teachers in planning and delivering this subject and in developing assessment skills. Teaching staff have started to have termly assessment interviews with the Religious Education subject leader. However the school has not yet fully developed sufficiently confident expertise in assessment and tracking to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in Religious Education that they can. Throughout the school there is a high level of imagination in the teaching of Religious Education incorporating many links with other curriculum areas. This encourages pupils to respond very positively to learning tasks.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. Some attend

governors' training and all the governors receive good feedback from these. They are increasingly involved in evaluating the school's work and have developed clear systems for seeking the views of parents and pupils. They have mechanisms for acting on these particularly with regard to the Catholic Life of the school. A greater insight into the effectiveness of the Religious Education curriculum and a more robust dialogue with the school with regard to pupils' progress in this area will positively influence pupil outcomes. Governors have recently developed a Policy for Monitoring the School which, when fully implemented, will provide a means for appropriately challenging pupils' progress and attainment in curriculum Religious Education.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities. The role of parents as the primary educators of their children is nurtured; the values of the school are fully shared with parents who appreciate the good information they receive about school and about their children's learning and well-being. Many parents help in school and frequently share in Collective Worship. Parents from all backgrounds, including those with little English, and especially parents who feel insecure in an academic environment, are welcomed: their views are sought and contribute to the school's action planning, translation and family support work provision is made, and EYFS parents share weekly in reading, choosing and circle times.

The inclusion of all is a central goal and a shared vision. Within school there is concern, respect and hospitality towards the other. There is ample evidence that pupils' friendship bonds cross cultural and faith boundaries. The school is highly effective in promoting knowledge of the global community through its curriculum which includes work on other faiths and through its charitable fundraising work. The school forms excellent links with other schools in the local area, the wider regional area and the global community.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How effectively leaders and managers promote and develop Community Cohesion</li> </ul>	<b>1</b>

## 5. THE SCHOOL'S CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

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The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good because, despite the high mobility of pupils, there is a sense of a stable, confident and purposeful school community compared to three years ago when the school was threatened with closure. The school is over-subscribed. Members of staff clearly relish their work and are extremely well supported by the visionary Headteacher who makes the school a happy place in which to work. Governors fully appreciate the work of the Headteacher and support her well. Action to overcome areas for development, particularly in addressing the needs of pupils with little or no English and also in establishing ongoing professional development despite the lack of diocesan training in recent years, has been concerted and effective. A focus on providing a safe, healthy, happy and fun environment for learning has ensured that classrooms and corridors are bright and that outdoor play areas are amply provided with equipment. Realistic and challenging plans are grounded in detail and accurate analysis.