

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

School: St. Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School
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School URN: 112310
Headteacher: Paula Holden
Chair of Governors: Fiona Paisley
Section 48 Inspector: Mia Barlow
Date of Inspection: 19th June 2012

The inspection report is produced for the Rt. Reverend Michael Campbell O.S.A., the Bishop of Lancaster (c.f. Code Canon Law, 804, 806), and for the Governing Body of the school (Education Act 2005, Section 48). 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.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Cuthbert's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The school mainly serves the parish of St. Cuthbert. The school is situated in the small market town of Wigton in Cumbria. There are currently 123 learners on roll of whom approximately 16% are baptised Catholics. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. The school has experienced significant disruption in staffing since the last inspection. Pupils are taught in five classes, Nursery and Reception, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 with Years 5 and Year 6 in two single-age classes.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	123
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	22
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics	16%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	60%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0.02%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	22%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	0.02%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	22%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	4
Part-time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	67%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	67%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

R	10 %	Yr 4	10%
Yr 1	10%	Yr 5	10%
Yr 2	10%	Yr 6	10%
Yr 3	10%		

Parish served by the school:

1. Saint Cuthbert's

Overall Effectiveness

3

MAIN FINDINGS

St. Cuthbert's is a very welcoming school, where everyone is loved and valued and the mission and ethos of Catholic education are at the heart of all that the school does. There is a clear vision for this Catholic school in the heart of the community. Staff, pupils and governors are rightly proud of the relationships, dedication and commitment to the shared vision they have for their school. Pupils are well cared for and from an early age they learn about treating each other with respect.

Pupils are happy to attend St. Cuthbert's and have positive attitudes to learning. The limited assessment data available indicates that pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Pupils are usually well supported in lessons but more effective monitoring and evaluating of progress would ensure that challenging targets are set for individuals and groups.

Leaders and managers work hard to develop the Catholic Life of the school and their work has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils enjoy RE lessons and engage in a wide range of learning activities. With new systems now in place St. Cuthbert's is in a position to improve considerably as the systems are embedded.

Governors are actively involved in the school community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school: they regularly lead the prayer and liturgical celebrations. Pupils from a young age are able to lead Collective Worship and respond with reverence and respect.

Parents are supportive of the school as shown in the responses to questionnaires and there is a good relationship with the parish. Communication is effective between the school and the Parish, and parents and parishioners are included in both school and Parish events.

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Staff absence has had a significant effect on school improvement. However senior leaders are now in a good position to address any remaining areas of weakness. Governors and staff are committed to raising standards in RE and there are good relationships between school, parish and parents. Staff are hardworking and ready to take the next steps in raising standards in religious education.

Some priorities for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed and the others are continuing.

- A focus on teaching and learning in RE has clearly had an impact on quality of teaching with a variety of teaching strategies being used in lessons.
- Assessment, including self and peer assessment has been further developed along with 'next steps' marking to help children develop their learning.

Continuing action for improvement since the last inspection includes:

- Developing tracking to focus on how well all pupils are doing.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Continue to develop as a whole school the new assessment and tracking system to monitor the attainment and progress of every pupil throughout the year. This will enable leaders and managers to monitor and evaluate progress and standards across the school.
- Seek support to develop appropriate assessment tasks to ensure that every child's learning is accurately assessed every term, so this can be used to set challenging targets.
- Provide governors with more regular information on standards to enable them to monitor attainment and progress in curriculum RE.
- Ensure that higher levels of work are moderated both in school and at the RE subject leaders meeting each year.

PUPILS

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

3

School leaders report that the RE attainment of pupils is low on entry to the school. On entry assessment information in the current year and from 2009/10 supports this judgment. From the limited data available it is evident that progress from Year 1 to Year 2 is good this year with attainment having risen from low on entry to broadly average by the end of Key Stage 1. However, insufficient evidence was available to make firm judgments on the progress of pupils through Key Stage 1, other than in the current Year 2 class.

In Key Stage 2, the current Year 6 pupils have made good progress over the last 3 years; they entered Year 4 with attainment that was well below average and attainment is now in line with national norms. Due to a lack of current and historic assessment data there was insufficient evidence of attainment and progress in other Key Stage 2 classes.

The standard of work in the pupils' RE books is generally good and use of Assessment for Learning strategies have been developed by staff. There is evidence of 'next steps' marking being used effectively in Key Stage 2 to impact positively on pupils' learning.

Pupils enjoy having responsibilities within school, for example participating in the pupil council, helping to design the 'garden of reflection' and involvement in a buddy system for children beginning school. Year 6 pupils report that they like having responsibility within the school and that they feel they, 'have a responsibility to be role models for younger children.' Pupils contribute to the Catholic life of the school through preparation and participation in Masses and in liturgies and fund raising activities. Pupils can express their own beliefs and this was illustrated in discussion when a Year 2 pupil said, "One of the most important things is that we forgive each other and love one another as Jesus loves us". A Year 6 child added to this saying, "Yes, and you have to love your enemies too".

Pupils respond well to opportunities to support each other and also to support others in the wider community e.g. CAFOD, Fair Trade and shoe appeals for Kenya. Prayer is important in the life of the school and each class has a prayer area where they can write their prayers in books. Pupils across the school take responsibility for planning and leading Collective Worship. In the Foundation Stage, children choose religious objects and songs. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils plan and lead the worship independently: examples of plans for this show how important this involvement is to the pupils. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 confidently join in with traditional prayers and also demonstrate great reverence when saying their own personal prayers. During their Collective Worship, pupils in Key Stage 1 described faith as something that, "you feel in your heart and in your soul". Pupils understand the main celebrations in the liturgical year and celebrate them within their parish community. They show a sense of consideration and justice, which is demonstrated by the good relationships shared within the whole school and parish family.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

3

The school self-evaluates leadership and management as satisfactory and inspection largely confirms this judgement. Leaders and managers promote the Catholic life of the school well. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all that they do and is clearly lived out in the way staff and pupils support each other. A Year 6 pupil commented that, "At St. Cuthbert's, you will always find comfort when you need to be comforted." Staff are proud of their school family and describe the school as a place where the staff support each other in working to get the best for pupils. The School Development Plan sets appropriate priorities including 'Fit for Mission' targets and pupils' moral and spiritual development; this is at the heart of school improvement. Curriculum leadership is currently provided by a temporary subject leader covering for the long term absence of the experienced RE subject leader. Staff, governors and pupils speak with great pride of their involvement in the Catholic life of the school. School leaders provide a satisfactory range of professional development opportunities in RE for staff. One teacher is currently studying for the Catholic Certificate of Religious Education (CCRS) and the school invests in sufficient resources to develop the Catholic life of the school and curriculum RE.

Day to day monitoring of teaching and learning is being carried out through observations and scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' plans. This has continued under the temporary RE subject leader and the impact of this can be seen in improved classroom assessment for learning, 'next steps' marking and planning. However, formal, whole school assessments have not been used to evaluate overall attainment or to identify areas of strengths and weakness or the progress of groups or individuals across the school. Therefore leaders cannot be confident that they are able to identify whole school issues or to tackle key areas of weakness: this results in them not been able to act on them. Leaders are aware of this and have recently introduced a tracking tool. Once this is embedded it will be useful for monitoring provision and planning for improved outcomes for pupils. Plans are also in place to ensure that external moderation of pupils' work is extended to include higher levels of achievement.

Governors provide support regarding the Catholic life of the school. They are involved in school in a number of ways, for example: visits to school as class governors and attending assemblies and liturgical celebrations. Their role in both supporting and challenging the work of the school in some areas has already begun to develop. They are informed on issues relating to Religious Education and to the Catholic life of the school and now need to develop a greater understanding of the school's performance to ensure continuous improvement in standards. Governors discharge

their statutory and canonical duties satisfactorily and are supportive of leaders and of staff, taking pride in both the high standards of behaviour of pupils and the welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, both of which were clearly evident during the inspection. However, standards in curriculum RE need to be more rigorously monitored by governors through regular reports from the subject leader. This is an area that the chair of governors is now eager to develop through working with other governors and senior leaders. It is important that the governors continue to celebrate the many strengths of the school.

Leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers and organisations. The school engages in a good range of partnership activities which impact on pupils' well-being and on the Catholic life of the school, these include: links with local schools, including the local high school and the parish of St Cuthbert's, the local Methodist church, local residential home for the elderly and alzheimer's group. Leaders describe how the local partnerships they have developed have an impact on deepening the respect pupils' have for older members of the community. There are good parish links and the new parish priest is developing these further through regular visits to the Foundation Stage classroom as well as attending some acts of Collective Worship.

There is a strong sense of belonging amongst staff and pupils in the school and all have a high regard for its Catholic life. Staff are good role models for pupils and have good relationships with pupils and parents.

Leaders and managers' promotion of community cohesion is good. Ethnic diversity is promoted and opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge of other world faiths are offered through curriculum time, assemblies and visits e.g. pupils have visited a Hindu temple and a Jewish synagogue. They also work with other local churches in the 'Churches together carol service'. School leaders ensure that the focus is always about celebrating similarities and differences and finding common ground. Pupils are developing an understanding of the common good and a commitment to their local, national and global responsibilities. Leaders and managers show a great awareness that, as the school community is predominately White British, it is very important to develop community cohesion and an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity and similarities.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

3

School leaders evaluate teaching and purposeful learning as satisfactory and inspection supports this judgment. Pupils enjoy RE, speak enthusiastically about their lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning: a pupil in Year 6 described RE lessons as both, "Fun and hard work."

Scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils and teaching observed during inspection show that the quality of teaching and learning is often good but is not consistently built on previously assessed needs. Pupils' work in RE demonstrates that teachers use a range of different learning styles to motivate pupils and promote effective learning. In a lesson observed during the inspection the teacher used questions to encourage deeper thought and clearly built on pupils' prior learning. The pupils were interested and attentive, settled quickly to task and behaviour was very good. Plans and scrutiny of books show that lessons are often adapted to meet the needs of pupils based on the teacher's knowledge of individuals or groups within their class. Recently developed tracking of pupil progress across the school will enable the setting of challenging targets to ensure that pupils make good progress.

Whilst termly assessments are carried out, these are not usually used to provide a clear picture of how well pupils are progressing, to evaluate the impact of school improvement plans or to identify areas of strength and weakness. By using the outcomes of termly assessment data, target groups of pupils would be identified to guide their learning more effectively. School leaders are aware of this and have recently put systems in place to ensure that in the future termly assessments are used to monitor progress and to provide both support and challenge for all pupils.

The RE curriculum is structured around the scheme 'The Way the Truth and the Life'. It is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well-planned strategies and relevant resources, which engage and motivate the pupils. The lessons are often adapted to meet the needs of individuals. Consistency of assessment practices is yet to be developed across the school. The time given to curriculum RE provides opportunities for, and impacts positively on, pupils' spiritual and moral development. The RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales with respect to the time it is given.

The quality of Collective Worship is a good feature of the school. Pupils are given opportunities to lead worship at class and whole school assemblies and they enjoy the responsibility. Observation of Collective Worship in Key Stage 1 shows that it is fully inclusive and reflective. The worship was planned and led by pupils and provided an opportunity for both traditional and spontaneous prayer: pupils demonstrated attention and reverence during the worship. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer and pupils eagerly and confidently share prayers in class and in school liturgies. Pupils learn about the Church's seasons and about important feasts through class worship and other guidance. Attendance by parents, other family members and parishioners is facilitated and encouraged in services in church and in the school hall. Prayer is central to the life of the school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding** Grade 2 **Good** Grade 3 **Satisfactory** Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

Overall effectiveness	3
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	3
PUPILS How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	3
• how well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education?	3
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
❖ pupils' attainment in RE	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
LEADERS AND MANAGERS How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School?	3
• how well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils?	3
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils?	4
• 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?	3
• how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well being?	2
• how effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion?	2
PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?	3
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE?	3
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education?	4
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs?	3
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school?	2