

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 112339

Headteacher: Julie Burn

Chair of Governors: John Noake

Section 48 Inspector: Chris Wilkins

Date of Inspection: 23rd February 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

This is a smaller than average size Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Mary, Cleator and St Joseph, Frizington. 80% of pupils are baptised Catholics and 18% are from other Christian denominations. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is considerably higher than the national average. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.

Most year six pupils move on to St Benedict's High School. All teachers, including the headteacher, have taken up post since the last inspection.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	57
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	12
Percentage of pupils baptised RC:	80%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	18%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	2%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	5%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	33%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	2
Part-time teachers:	1
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	33%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	0%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

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

Parishes served by the school:

St Mary's and St Joseph's

Overall Effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Joseph's is a good school that is improving rapidly. The school has developed very strong links with the parish and with the local community. The headteacher has maintained the progress made by her predecessor and begun to make further improvements supported ably in this by the school staff. Governors are committed to developing the Catholic life of the school and to supporting and encouraging staff to work towards the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) qualification. There is a strong prayer life in school with firmly established routines where all pupils are supported in planning and leading prayer services. These are evaluated and well documented.

Pupils begin their school life with a knowledge of RE which is below expectations, but benefit from the good provision for learning in RE in the Foundation Stage and by Year 2 have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding for their age and ability. With good teaching continuing across the school many pupils are attaining standards above national expectations. Pupils are motivated, sustain their concentration well in lessons and they enjoy their work. They talk enthusiastically about their Religious Education lessons.

Throughout their school life pupils are encouraged to consider and treat all members of the school community as family and this has developed a strong and tangible feeling of a united community. The staff work hard to develop and maintain positive relationships with the parents and the supportive questionnaires are evidence of their success.

Capacity for sustained improvement

The headteacher and RE subject leader are self evaluative and make sound judgements about the school's achievements and areas for development. There has been a significant change in the development of RE across the school in the last year and school leaders have quickly and effectively established a realistic programme for progression and development. The supportive governing body is well placed to monitor and evaluate the progress of these actions.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Support all teachers in the teaching of Religious Education by enabling them to undertake the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies as indicated in the School's Development Plan.
- Ensure that more challenging tasks and activities enable more able pupils at all key stages to achieve higher levels of attainment.
- Plan opportunities to increase pupils' tolerance and understanding of people from other faiths and cultures in order to prepare them for life in a multi-cultural society.

PUPILS

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

2

Outcomes for pupils are good. Assessments on entry to the school show that pupils enter with a low knowledge of the Catholic Faith. They make good progress over the course of their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good and by the time they leave Year 6 most pupils have developed knowledge and understanding above national expectations showing very good progress over the course of their time at the school.

Pupils are very positive about their Religious Education and talk enthusiastically about the interesting way in which they are taught. They are clear, and inspection confirms, that the variety of approaches to lessons enriches their education. They talk proudly about the work in their books and the variety of recording methods, including photographs and use of ICT, provide a good record of their progress. Every lesson is focused on a specific and sequential learning objective. Pupils are able to talk about their progress, in each lesson and over time, and are involved in conversations that form part of the marking of their work. Work scrutiny and interviews with pupils show that more able pupils across the school are capable of making even better progress and attaining even more. This is an area for improvement that the school is aware of and committed to.

Parents' replies to the questionnaire show that they are happy with the progress that their children make in Religious Education. Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) make good progress because they are very well supported in their work by skillful teaching assistants and through differentiated work. The caring way in which this is done is a

strength of the school. An example of this is enabling a child to stay at the school into Year 7 to support their transition to High School. Good use is made of adult help around the school.

Pupils participate well in Collective Worship opportunities. During the inspection a whole school act of Collective Worship was observed where pupils were fully involved and interested in learning more about CAFOD's water appeal. They read, sang and prayed with reverence and enthusiasm. Pupils are used to preparing and leading acts of Worship from Reception class onwards, and are supported well in this through a whole school structured approach. Each class has a class saint and pupils are knowledgeable about each one. All classes attend Mass in church on a regular basis and are involved in leading the congregation in aspects of prayer.

On the basis of the evidence of their attitudes, values, relationships and commitment to the school community, pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. Pupils achieve a good standard in both attainment targets.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

Leaders and managers of the school make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. Rapid progress has been made by the headteacher and staff resulting in good standards, and this has stemmed from a shared sense of purpose and an enthusiastic commitment to the Catholic life of the School.

Religious Education has a high profile within the school, for example in the termly Curriculum newsletters that are sent to all parents and the Religious Education Newsletters that are regularly given to parishioners. The headteacher and RE subject leader provide a good quality curriculum and have secured external support in monitoring teaching standards and learning outcomes.

Rigorous monitoring and assessment of provision for Religious Education has included RE becoming a standing agenda item at staff meetings. A consistent format is used across the school for planning lessons and this ensures important aspects, such as key vocabulary, are not overlooked. Work trawls and internal moderation of work ensure that assessments are accurate and consistent.

Governors are committed to ensuring that the school provides a good quality education and are very supportive. They see the school as an integral part of the parish. There is regular involvement in the life of the

school by the Chair of Governors and the RE Governor, who is also the Assistant Priest of the parish. Governors know the strengths of the school and are clear about the challenges it faces. They are committed and have recognised the need to ensure that RE and the Catholic life of the school are discussed regularly at Governors meetings. The school meets the requirements for Religious Education of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

Leaders and managers of the school are focused on the school's Catholic mission and are developing a tangible sense of shared mission amongst the staff, parents and pupils. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's religious education as demonstrated by the regular and detailed information given to them.

Community cohesion is a priority for the school. They play an active part in the community through their initiatives, such as community lunches, and their strong links with the parish and the local Nursery school. A school residential visit to London serves to widen pupils' understanding of our multicultural country. There is a need to further develop pupil knowledge and experience of the wider world and the staff are fully aware of the need to seek more opportunities to collaborate with people from different backgrounds locally, nationally and globally.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education

2

The quality of teaching is good across the school and pupils make good progress given their starting points. There is ample evidence to show that teachers use a wide variety of approaches in lessons to keep them interested and motivated. In a Year 1/2 lesson, pupils were encouraged to explore friendship and compare this to the attributes of the disciples. In a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils engaged in group discussions to explore Jairus's decision to approach Jesus to ask for help.

Attractive RE displays, such as the one in the hall focusing on the school's mission, mark the school as distinctively Catholic. The quality of worship areas around the school, including the quiet reflective area in the playground, show the high priority given to the Catholic nature of the school. The clear mission statement is displayed throughout the school and pupils are able to articulate it well. Pupils across the school are given good opportunities to show their ability to lead class prayer services and take some responsibility for their prayer life.

Parents have positive attitudes towards the school in which they are partners in their children's learning. The Assistant Priest is a welcome and regular visitor to the school and takes an active role in school life. This has

included running an after school computer club and fulfilling his role as RE governor.

The school has identified the need to raise attainment for the most able learners in both key stages 1 and 2. The RE Development Plan has clear strategies in place to ensure this happens.

Collective Worship is good and is a strength of the school. Staff lead reverent acts of worship and pupils respond thoughtfully and enthusiastically. Pupils of all ages are deeply involved in the planning and evaluation of acts of worship and describe how they enjoy and learn from Collective Worship.

Pupils across the school speak enthusiastically about RE and how well they are taught: they enjoy acting in assemblies and learn through doing so. Pupils speak knowledgably about Oscar Romero and how he fought for justice and peace. Older pupils speak confidently about their self assessment in RE and how this helped them to learn more about God.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

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

Overall effectiveness	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
PUPILS How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
• how well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education?	2
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
❖ pupils' attainment in RE	2
• 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?	2
• 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?	2
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils?	2
• 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?	3
PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?	2
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE?	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education?	2
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs?	2
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school?	2