

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Begh's Catholic Junior School

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School URN: 112354

Headteacher: Mrs Louise Northern

Chair of Governors: Fr Matthew Carney OSB

Section 48 Inspector: Mrs Frances Wygladala

Date of Inspection: 18th November 2010

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 Begh's is a Catholic voluntary aided junior school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The school serves the parishes of St Begh and St Benedict in Whitehaven, Cumbria. The school is situated in a residential, urban area and most pupils are of white British heritage. There are currently 268 learners on role of whom approximately 85% are baptised Catholics. The vast majority of pupils transfer at the end of Year 6 to St Benedict's Catholic High School. There has been significant change in leadership since the last inspection with a new headteacher appointed in September 2010.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	268
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	76
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics:	85%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	14%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	0%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	0%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	18%

Staffing:

Full-time teachers:	7
Part-time teachers:	7 FTE 11
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	76%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	43%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

Yr 3	10%
Yr 4	10%
Yr 5	10%
Yr 6	10%

Parishes served by the school:

1. St Begh's
2. St Benedict's

Overall Effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Begh's is a school community that is able to self-evaluate effectively. Outcomes for pupils are satisfactory and rapidly improving. All staff are committed to the ethos and mission of Catholic education. With the newly appointed headteacher, rigour has been introduced to the monitoring, assessment and tracking systems to enable the standards of attainment to improve for all groups of learners.

Standards of attainment at Key Stage 2 are broadly average. Most pupils' standards of attainment in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and the ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) is average. At the end of KS2 a large majority, 69% attained Level 4, with 10% attaining a Level 5.

Pupils make the progress expected, given their starting points but some throughout the school need to be given more challenging activities to enable them to achieve higher levels of attainment. Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Their participation in and leading of the prayer and liturgical life of the school are good. The promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is good and pupils are happy to come to school which results in them having positive attitudes to learning.

Although parents and carers are kept well informed through the link publication shared between the school and parishes it serves, the school recognises the need for more detailed and informative reports on their children's attainment. The Religious Education curriculum provided is varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and raising standards. Assessment, monitoring and tracking systems, which have recently been updated, are beginning to impact positively on pupil progress.

The quality of Collective Worship is good: it is well defined within the school day and pupils participate with respect and reverence. The staff are good role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities. The recent introduction of a prayer room has enhanced the prayer life of the school. The RE displays in classes and around the school are of a high quality and pupils enjoy artwork and cross-curricular writing in RE.

Capacity for Sustained Improvement

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily and the school is striving to improve standards. The leadership and

vision of the new headteacher, supported by a challenging governing body are already adding rigour and enthusiasm to the management of the school. The process of accurate self-evaluation leading to clear targets for improvement and appropriate priorities are key to these improvements.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Continue to develop as a whole school, the new rigorous assessment and tracking system to monitor progress throughout the year for every child, enabling underachievement to be addressed and standards to rise.
- Ensure that more challenging tasks and activities are provided to enable pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment throughout the school.
- Strengthen the transition between KS1 and KS2 for an accurate baseline and shared moderation of levelled assessments across the two schools.
- The existing good practice in RE teaching needs to be shared across the year groups to ensure consistency and improve standards. Observation of RE lessons will improve monitoring of standards in teaching and learning and help the subject leader work with SLT and governors on evaluating provision.
- Strengthen parental engagement through the virtual learning environment and improved annual reports to parents, commenting on standards and progress in curriculum RE.

PUPILS

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

3

The majority of pupils enjoy Religious Education (RE). They speak enthusiastically about their lessons and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Assessment data, pupil tracking systems and work scrutiny all provide evidence of pupils' continuous improvement.

Pupils make the progress expected, given their starting points, but some throughout the school need to be given more challenging activities to enable them to achieve higher levels of attainment. Standards of attainment at Key Stage 2 are broadly average. Most pupils' standards of attainment in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and the ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) are average. At the end of KS2 a large majority, 69% attained Level 4, with 10% attaining a Level 5.

Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Their participation in and leading of the prayer and liturgical life of the school is good as observed during the assembly and class mass.

Prayer is central to the Catholic life of St Begh's; pupils act with reverence and are eager to participate in all of the many different types of worship offered at

school. Older pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm. This is shared throughout the school, so that pupils in lower school are becoming more confident in leading their own Collective Worship.

All pupils act in a manner consistent with their beliefs and show respect for each other. Pupils display a strong sense of belonging to their school, their church and in local communities. They take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school beyond routine lessons and activities. This is seen through pupils' eagerness to take part in prayer activities such as during Lent, Remembrance and Advent prayer services and in their responses to planning and leading worship and Masses. Pupils are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They regularly work together to lead and run their own fundraising activities, such as for the flood victims in Workington, Children in Need, and for CAFOD. The school council decides which charities to support each year.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

The school's leadership and management promote the Catholic life of the school well. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision.

The rigorous monitoring and evaluation of provision for RE has recently been introduced and, given time, will impact positively on pupils' learning, progress and standards. This needs to continue to develop throughout the school to monitor the progress of every child regularly, enabling underachievement to be addressed and standards to rise.

Governors provide effective challenge and support for the Catholic life of the school. They play an active part in planning for improvement, showing determination in challenging and supporting the school in order to address areas of development. They are well informed on issues relating to RE and the Catholic life of the school, understand the school's performance in RE and know what needs to be done to ensure improvement of standards. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of leaders and staff. They are actively involved in the school community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff. The role of the RE link Governors is clearly defined with one having responsibility for monitoring the Catholicity of the school and the other to monitor the curriculum, standards and achievement. These roles are key in the partnership between governors, staff, parents and pupils.

There is a common sense of belonging amongst staff and pupils and all have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. Staff are good role models for pupils and have good relationships with pupils and parents. Pupils have a sense of the wider world, other peoples' beliefs, cultures and needs. National links are being developed with a school in a London suburb that has a culturally diverse population from India and Bangladesh. Global links are planned with the priest from St Benedict's being invited to school to share his missionary background in

Peru with the pupils and staff. During Lent each year there are fundraising activities for Fairtrade, this helps pupils to develop an understanding of the lives of others in developing countries.

Strong links exist with the parishes of St Begh and St Benedict. The parishes deliver the sacramental programmes for Reconciliation and the Eucharist and the school are supportive.

The school has recently developed further links with its infant school, St Gregory and St Patrick's, and its feeder high school, St Benedict's. All are seeking to work collaboratively to develop a joint mission statement and support the RE curriculum across the three phases to benefit the learners and their families who attend these schools and aid transition from one school to the next. A planned improvement is to strengthen the transition between KS1 and KS2 for an accurate baseline for RE and shared moderation of levelled assessments across the two schools.

Relationships among pupils are positive. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each others through, for example, the effective school council.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

3

The existing good practice in RE teaching needs to be shared across year groups to ensure consistency and improve standards. Pupils show interest in their work and make progress that is broadly in line with their capabilities. Effectively planned lessons build on prior learning and meet the needs of most pupils. However, more challenging activities and tasks are planned to enable pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment, in line with English.

Teachers' subject knowledge is secure which promotes confident learners. There is a good range of resources, including new technology to support learning in RE. Support staff are effectively deployed to meet the needs of the pupils, either in small groups or on an individual basis. Pupils are informed by teachers about how much progress they have made and how their work can be improved. They are given target sheets with child friendly 'I can' statements and their work is marked constructively.

The school has recently introduced more rigorous assessment and monitoring procedures: to give a clear and accurate picture of pupil progress and attainment. This ensures that underachievement is identified and acted upon throughout the year.

New tracking systems for RE have also recently been introduced into the whole school assessment system, which enables the school to focus on ensuring that different groups of pupils achieve equally well. All staff have a growing understanding of how to challenge pupils to attain higher levels.

The RE curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of most pupils. It is enriched through a variety of strategies and relevant resources, which engage and motivate the pupils. Long and short term planning ensures full coverage of the religious curriculum. The RE curriculum provides good opportunities for and impacts positively on pupils' spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference fully.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are well met. It is fully inclusive, reflective and well planned enabling pupils to take an active part. Prayer is central to the life of the school and this is reflected in the way the pupils use the prayer room and are given the opportunity to write their own prayers and share intentions in school. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer and pupils eagerly and confidently share prayers in class and school liturgies and school Masses. The parish priest is a regular visitor in school and he has a good working partnership with the school and the local community. During class masses he explains the parts of the Mass very clearly and encourages pupils, family members and the congregation to participate actively.

The school recognises the need to improve the annual reports to parents, reporting on standards and progress in RE as a core subject. Parental engagement is planned to be developed through the virtual learning environment, strengthening the home, school, parish partnership. This will enable parents to be more informed about their child's learning, allowing them to be more involved in the process.

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	1
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?	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?	2
• 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?	3
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education?	3
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs?	3
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school?	2