

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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**School:** St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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**School URN:** 112358

**Headteacher:** Mrs N Rielly

**Chair of Governors:** Mr M Smith

**Section 48 Inspector:** Mrs F Wygladala

**Date of Inspection:** June 24<sup>th</sup> 2011

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 Mary's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The school serves the parish of St Mary of Furness in Ulverston. It is a smaller than average sized primary school. Most pupils are of white British heritage, with a small percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups. There are currently 121 learners on role of whom approximately 60% are baptised Catholics. Since April 2010, the school has been led by a headteacher from a neighbouring school for half the week and both schools are consulting about hard federating with one headteacher and one governing body. At the end of year six most pupils transfer to Ulverston Victoria High School with a few attending St Bernard's Catholic High School.

## **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll:	121
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	17
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics:	60%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	19%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	2%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	18%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	9%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	13%

### **Staffing**

Full-time teachers:	4
Part-time teachers:	3
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	86%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	57%

### **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:**

St Mary of Furness, Ulverston

**Overall Effectiveness**

2

**Capacity for sustained improvement**

2

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

St Mary's is a good self-evaluating school. Outcomes for pupils and the school's capacity for sustained improvement are good. All staff are totally committed to the ethos and mission of Catholic education. After a period of instability and the appointment of a new leadership team, rigour has been introduced to the monitoring, assessment and tracking system to enable the standard of attainment to improve for all groups of learners. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support in RE and make good progress.

All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily and the school is continuously striving to improve standards. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is good because of the stability of leadership and the accurate self-evaluation leading to clear targets and appropriate priorities.

Pupils are happy to come to school which results in them having a positive attitude to learning. Outcomes for pupils are good; most pupils make good progress from below average starting points. Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Their participation in the prayer and liturgical life of the school is outstanding. The school provides a good Catholic education and the promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is excellent.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education are good which enables the vast majority of pupils to make good progress. Parents and carers are kept well informed with regular curriculum updates. 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, introduced and developed since the last inspection, have had a positive impact on pupil attainment and progress. The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities, with pupils, staff and governors benefiting from collaborative work.

The staff are good role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities.

### **Capacity for sustained improvement**

The school's ability to self-evaluate, coupled with strong leadership and management, indicate that the school has a good capacity to improve.

The governing body, together with the leadership team are committed to raising standards. All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily.

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

- Develop constructive marking in RE, giving oral or written feedback to pupils to inform them of the next steps in learning, in order to raise standards and improve progress.
- A *Fit for Mission* audit and action plan needs to be revised with staff and governors, enabling canonical responsibilities to be understood and met.
- Produce a termly report to governors on the school's performance in RE to give them an accurate picture of how well all the pupils are achieving and the progress of groups of pupils with different needs and abilities.

## **PUPILS**

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

2
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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 including effective baseline data and work scrutiny are all evidence of this. Standards of attainment in RE are above average at Key Stage 2. Most pupils' standards of attainment in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) are good. Pupils in all key stages make good progress. From below average starting points on entry to school in Foundation Stage, standards rise to being broadly in line with national norms at Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and support is carefully adapted to meet them. Pupils are eager to do well in RE: they apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace; they discuss their faith confidently and are able to think spiritually.

Prayer is central to the Catholic life of the school and pupils act with reverence and are eager to participate in the many different types of worship offered: they join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. Music is an important part of praise at St Mary's and pupils respond joyfully and enthusiastically, for example the choir and everyone singing in the VIP assembly. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence and respect, from their earliest years, in a variety of

gatherings. They are able to write their own prayers, use actions, drama and religious artefacts as well as more traditional prayers during worship. Pupils understand the importance of key celebrations in school and the parish community throughout the liturgical year.

Pupils act in a manner consistent with their beliefs and show respect for each other; they display a strong sense of belonging to their school, Church and local community; 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 the harvest festival and during Lent also in their responses to planning and leading worship during assemblies 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 the Year 6 Fairtrade evening where they showcased and sold lots of fairtrade products and artwork produced by pupils from every class for Barnardo's charity. Recently they have supported many local, national and global charities including CAFOD, Air ambulance, World vision, Operation Christmas Child and the local hospice. At a local festival the choir sang to raise money for the flood victims in Cumbria.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

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

<b>2</b>
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The school's leaders and managers 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.

Planning is founded on sound evidence and data, tackling key areas of weakness systematically and building on areas of strength. Consequently there is substantial evidence that through lesson observations, sampling work, monitoring plans and talking to pupils and staff, standards of attainment have risen.

Governors provide effective challenge and support for the Catholic life of the school. They play an active part in planning for continuous improvement, showing determination in challenging and supporting the school in order to address areas of development. They are well informed on issues relating to Religious Education and to the Catholic life of the school. However, if they were provided with a regular report on pupils' performance in RE, they would have a more accurate picture of pupils' progress and how well different groups of pupils within the school are achieving.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of leaders and of the staff team. They are actively involved in the school community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff. The role of the RE link governor is key in the partnership between governors, staff, parents, pupils and parish.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a wide variety of partnership activities locally. These provide excellent value for money because pupils achieve highly and develop exceptionally well in a number of areas which the school alone could not provide. The vision of the governors and senior managers is to continue to work effectively with partners to bring about improvements in outcomes for pupils, staff and governors. An example of this can be seen in the shared professional development and leadership opportunities with Our Lady's, Dalton and many other local schools. During the inspection, upper Key Stage 2 pupils enjoyed visiting a 'Bibleworld' interactive display in Ulverston that was funded locally by Churches Together and the Roger Sawrey Trust.

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 very good relationships with pupils and parents. Pupils have a sense of the wider world, other peoples' beliefs, cultures and needs. They co-operate well with each other. Year six pupils recently organised a food festival, celebrating the cultural diversity of the school; this was very successful and well attended, with CAFOD benefiting from money raised on the evening. Parents are kept informed about what is happening in school with weekly newsletters.

The home, school and parish partnership is strengthened by the distribution of the Wednesday Word to every family.

Strong links exist with the parish of St Mary's. The parish and school work collaboratively on delivering the sacramental programmes for Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Relationships among pupils are positive. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each other through, for example, the effective school council.

## **PROVISION**

### **How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**

<b>2</b>
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Teaching is a strength of the school. A range of teaching styles, clear explanations, well paced lessons and good use of ICT ensure that all pupils are consistently interested in their learning and almost all make good progress. Effectively planned lessons build on prior learning and meet the needs of the majority of pupils. Teachers have strong subject

knowledge, which inspires and promotes confident learners. Staff make learning interesting which impacts positively on pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation. R.E. displays of children's work around school are of a high quality and pupils have worked with artists in residence to create beautiful work together, displayed in the hall.

Support staff are effectively deployed to meet the needs of the pupils. The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement but pupils need to be provided with detailed feedback, both orally and through marking to inform them of the next steps in learning.

The school has developed the assessment and tracking system to monitor attainment and progress throughout the year enabling underachievement to be addressed and standards to be maintained with very different cohorts of pupils.

The Religious Education curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of most pupils. It is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well-planned strategies and relevant resources, which engage and motivate the pupils. The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for, and impacts positively on, pupils' spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference well. A *Fit for Mission* audit and action plan needs to be revised with staff and governors, enabling canonical responsibilities to be fully understood and met.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding; prayer is central to the life of the school and is a key part of every celebration. It is fully inclusive, reflective and well planned enabling pupils to take an active part. 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. Attendance by parents, other family members and parishioners is facilitated and encouraged in services in church and in school. Parish clergy play an important part in sharing prayers, liturgies and Masses, both in church and school. Pupils, parents, staff and governors work hard to strengthen the home, school and parish partnership.

# SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**Key for inspection grades:**

Grade 1 **Outstanding**

Grade 2 **Good**

Grade 3 **Satisfactory**

Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>PUPILS How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</b>	<b>2</b>
• how well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education?	1
❖ 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?	1
• how well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship?	1
<b>LEADERS AND MANAGERS How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School?</b>	<b>2</b>
• 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?	1
• 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?	1
• how effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion?	1
<b>PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?</b>	<b>2</b>
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in?	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?	1