

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Clare's Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 119587

Headteacher: Mr Mark Purcell

Chair of Governors: Mr Paul Havey

Section 48 Inspector: Mrs Frances Wygladala

Date of Inspection: June 19th 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 Clare's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster. This average size primary school serves the parish of St Clare in Fulwood, Preston. Most pupils are of White British heritage but since the last inspection there has been an increase in the number of bilingual learners, although none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. There are currently 251 learners on role of whom approximately 79% are baptised Catholics. Pupils transfer to a number of High Schools, the majority to Our Lady's Catholic High School. Of the teaching staff, 11 out of 12 are Catholics.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	251
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	36
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics:	79%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	7%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	12%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	5%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	28%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	7%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	7
Part-time teachers:	5
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	95%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	95%

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%		

Parishes served by the school:

1. St Clare's, Fulwood, Preston
2. St Mary's, Fernyhalgh, Preston

Overall Effectiveness

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Clare's is an outstanding Catholic school. There is a shared ambitious vision, which promotes inclusion and high expectations for all members of the school community. The Catholic mission of the school underpins everything the school seeks to achieve. Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been acted upon and good self-evaluation procedures have ensured that planned improvements are appropriate. Good relationships between all stakeholders are a strong feature of the school.

Pupils are happy to come to St Clare's and they demonstrate pride in their school, which results in them having a positive attitude to learning. Pupils make good progress and there is no significant variation between the various groups of learners. Pupils benefit from the vast 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 an excellent Catholic education and the promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

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 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 the wider community benefiting from collaborative work.

The headteacher and Religious Education subject leader have a very clear vision for RE and for the Catholic life of St Clare's. They are aware of professional development needs of staff and RE is considered to be a priority for staff training and in-house moderation. The staff are good role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities. The governors provide excellent support and challenge for leadership; the chair and RE governors know the strengths of the school and the challenges that it faces.

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

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 outstanding because of the quality of leadership, the support of governors

and the accurate self-evaluation leading to clear targets and appropriate priorities to consolidate success and secure further improvements.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Continue to improve standards in curriculum RE to more closely match those attained by pupils in other core subjects.
- Evaluate the impact of the new RE scheme on standards with pupils, staff and governors.
- Continue to develop staff confidence with planning assessments to enable more able pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment, especially at Key Stage 1.

PUPILS

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

1

The vast majority of pupils enjoy Religious Education. They speak enthusiastically about their lessons and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Assessment data, pupil tracking systems and work scrutiny all give evidence of this.

Standards of attainment in Religious Education are above average and progress is good. Most pupils' standards of attainment in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) is good. Pupils in all key stages make good progress. From below average starting points in RE on entry to school in Foundation Stage, standards rise to being just below national norms at Key Stage 1 and above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards need to continue to improve in curriculum RE to more closely match those attained by pupils in other core subjects. 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 able to express their own views and beliefs with confidence and are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus and other key religious figures. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish and the wider community. They treat each other with high levels of respect and know acutely that their behavior always has consequences. Pupils are well behaved, considerate and reflective. They are proud of their backgrounds and beliefs, pupils from different faiths are celebrated with a mutual respect and understanding of diversity.

Prayer is seen as being central to school life and both pupils and staff experience a wide variety of opportunities to pray. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with enthusiasm and respect from their earliest years in a variety of gatherings. Classes work in pairs to enable the older pupils in Key Stage 2 to lead worship in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes as evidenced during the inspection when Class 7 paired with Class 2 in an excellent, interactive act of Collective Worship. Pupils are able to write their own prayers, use actions, a range of hymns, ICT, 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.

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, the May Procession and during Advent and Easter services, 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. Over the past three years the parish and school community have been heavily involved in supporting three schools in one community in Hodovo, Bosnia Herzegovina. Pupils regularly work together to lead and run their own fundraising activities, such as cake sales, pyjama days, raffles and sales of handmade gifts. They are supported by family members and parishioners in fundraising e.g. over a thousand miles sponsored bike ride around Cottam arena for Hodovo and the upper Key Stage 2 sleepover that includes a vigil in church. Other charities are regularly supported by pupils e.g. the Bishop's Fund, CAFOD and National Children's Homes plus many others at the request of pupils. A group of pupils from Year 6 recently visited and worked with the children in Hodovo, Bosnia Herzegovina and supported their community; this has had a major impact on their lives. They now empathise with their friends in Hodovo and are questioning the values we have in our secular world, and comparing them to the gospel values that the school and parish promote so effectively. The trip included joining St Clare's parish pilgrimage to Medjugorje.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

The school's leadership and managers promote the Catholic life of the school very well. The Headteacher has a clear vision, which is shared by all members of the school community. The senior management team and governors work closely with him and share his commitment to the Catholic life of the school. The 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.

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

The relatively new governing body make a highly significant contribution to the work and the Catholic dimension 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 the Catholic life of the school, they appreciate the termly update in the headteacher's report on the school's performance in RE. This gives them an accurate picture of how well all the pupils are achieving and planned developments.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of leaders and 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, parishioners, staff and pupils and he visits school each week and is key to the spiritual life of the school. Governors engage very effectively with stakeholders and are well informed about users' views of the school through parental and pupil questionnaires. These views are used to inform strategic priorities for development. An evaluation of the impact of the RE scheme on standards with pupils, staff and governors is planned.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a wide variety of partnership activities. 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 leadership and management is to continue to work effectively with partners to bring about improvements in outcomes for pupils, staff and governors, for example shared professional development and moderation exercises with local Catholic schools. 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 excellent role models for pupils and have good relationships with pupils and parents.

The inclusion of all is a central goal and shared vision. Leaders and managers work with others beyond the school to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to collaborate with people from different backgrounds e.g. link and visit to Hodovo, Bosnia. Pupils have a sense of the wider world, other peoples' beliefs, cultures and needs and they co-operate well with each other. Pupils and families of other world faiths in the community

are invited to share their beliefs with their friends in class to compare and contrast the different religions. Within St Clare's there is concern, respect and hospitality for each other.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

1

Teaching is consistently highly effective in enthusing pupils and ensuring that they learn extremely well. Teachers and other adults are acutely aware of their pupils' capabilities and of their prior learning and understanding, and plan effectively to build on these. Teachers are very experienced and have excellent subject knowledge. This, together with the introduction of the new RE scheme of work, has enabled pupils to be challenged and inspired and has led to an improvement in standards.

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 make progress that is in line with their capabilities. 'Teachers teach RE in a fun way' stated one pupil. Staff make learning interesting which impacts positively on pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation, e.g. pupils enjoy using ICT, so it is often included in RE lessons. An outstanding lesson was observed in class 8 during the inspection, it inspired the pupils and challenged their beliefs. RE displays of children's work in the hall and around school are of a very high quality and worship tables are well resourced. Support staff are effectively deployed to meet the needs of the pupils by personalising learning for individuals or groups of pupils.

The school has developed a rigorous assessment and tracking system to monitor attainment and progress throughout the year of every pupil, enabling underachievement to be addressed and standards to be maintained and improved with very different cohorts of pupils. Staff confidence continues to be developed with the planning of assessments to enable more able pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment, especially at Key Stage 1.

The Religious Education curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of all 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.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding. Prayer is central to the life of the school and 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 liturgies in church and in school. Pupils and staff are inspired by the fully interactive weekly assembly led by the RE subject leader. Parish clergy play an important part in sharing prayers and preparing pupils for liturgies and Masses.

Pupils, parents, staff and governors work hard to strengthen the home, school and parish partnership, sharing information on newsletters and the distribution of the Wednesday Word.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding**

Grade 2 **Good**

Grade 3 **Satisfactory**

Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

Overall effectiveness	1
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
PUPILS How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	1
• 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	1
❖ 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
LEADERS AND MANAGERS How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School?	1
• 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?	1
• 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
PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?	1
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in?	1
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education?	2
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs?	1
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school?	1