

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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

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**School URN:** 119620

**Headteacher:** Mrs Juliet Walling

**Chair of Governors:** Mrs Victoria Ashfield

**Section 48 Inspector:** Mrs Frances Wygladala

**Date of Inspection:** June 14<sup>th</sup> 2013

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 Joseph's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The school serves the parish of St Joseph in Lancaster. It is an average sized primary school. The school is situated in a residential area of significant deprivation. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and 42% of pupils are entitled to free school meals; this figure is significantly above the national average. There are currently 224 learners on role of whom approximately 39% are baptised Catholics. The school has recently experienced a period of unsettled staffing with sickness and high staff absence. The majority of pupils transfer at the end of year six to Our Lady's Catholic College, Lancaster.

## **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll:	224
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholic:	39%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	31%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	30%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	11%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	14%

### **Staffing**

Full-time teachers:	9
Part-time teachers:	1
Number of Catholic teachers:	3
Classroom support assistants	15
Number of Catholic teachers:	3
Number of teachers with CCRS:	2

### **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. St Joseph's, Lancaster

## **Overall Effectiveness**

2
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## **Capacity for sustained improvement**

2
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## **MAIN FINDINGS**

St Joseph's is a welcoming Catholic school, where everyone is respected and valued. It is a good self-evaluating school that has a realistic view of where it is now and has ambitious plans for the future. There is a clear vision for this Catholic school, which is at the heart of the community, that is shared and understood by all stakeholders.

Pupils are happy to come to school which results in them having a positive attitude to learning. Outcomes for pupils are good with most pupils making good progress from well below average starting points. Pupils benefit from the range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. The school provides a good Catholic education and the promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's mission.

Teaching and learning in RE are good which enables the vast majority of pupils to make good progress. The RE curriculum provided is varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and on raising standards. An accurate baseline assessment on entry to the school allows pupil's progress to be accurately judged and celebrated. Staff provide good role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities.

The level of pupil participation in prayer and in the liturgical life of the school is good; pupils respond with respect and reverence in Collective Worship which has been a recent focus for improvement. In the Year of Faith there have been many opportunities for staff and pupils to reflect on their faith and to deepen their spirituality e.g. through each class organising a community event to reflect the study of a corporate work of mercy and choosing a saint for inspiration.

Most aspects of leadership and management of the school are good and parents are supportive of the school and the relationship with the parish is a strength of the school. Communication is effective through newsletters, ensuring parents and parishioners are kept up to date with news and planned Masses, liturgies and assemblies.

### **The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

St. Joseph's has become a good self-evaluating school. Most priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the others are on-going.

Teaching and learning have been monitored more rigorously since the last inspection and good practice shared, impacting on standards. The Governing

Body has welcomed new members and presently has only one vacancy. It is now functioning more effectively, providing leadership with challenge and support.

All staff have commitment to the ethos and mission of Catholic education. An emphasis on improving parish links has brought about effective partnership work and is appreciated in both the parish and the school.

With a full governing body and a more settled staff the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

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

- Use of 'Assessment for Learning' strategies needs to be further developed and next steps marking used consistently in every class to continue to improve learning and progress.
- Ensure that teachers plan differentiated activities in all classes for RE, so pupils are given more challenging tasks and opportunities to achieve appropriate levels throughout each topic. This will enable pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment.
- Integrate the whole school RE outcomes into the current assessment and tracking system to monitor the attainment and progress of every pupil throughout the year. This will enable underachievement to be addressed immediately and standards in RE to rise.
- Ensure that standards in curriculum RE are monitored systematically by governors. This should be formalised termly with a curriculum report from the subject leader, comparing standards in RE with those in English. This would increase governors' effectiveness.

## **PUPILS**

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

<b>2</b>
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The school's evaluation of outcomes for pupils' in Religious Education is good and evidence found during the inspection supports this judgment.

From well below average starting points on entry to school, pupils make good progress and standards rise to being broadly in line with national norms by the end of Key Stage 1. In 2012, standards in RE at Key Stage 2 were low but pupils have made significant improvement and outcomes are now in line with attainment in English. This good progress has continued through 2013 and standards remain in line with English although no pupils are yet assessed at level 5 in KS2. Inspection confirms that pupils are capable of higher levels of attainment in upper Key Stage 2 and the school recognise that assessment opportunities are now a priority.

The majority of pupils enjoy RE. They speak enthusiastically about their lessons and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Assessment data, pupil

tracking systems, work scrutiny, pupil questionnaires and pupil interviews are all evidence of this. Observation of lessons during inspection confirmed that, although standards of attainment in RE are low relative to national norms, pupils are making good progress from very low baselines and this improving trend is maintained on current evidence.

The standard of work in the pupils' RE books is good, but use of 'Assessment for Learning' strategies needs to be further developed by staff and next steps marking used consistently in every class to make a positive impact on further learning and progress. Teachers need to plan activities appropriate to each pupils needs and abilities in all classes for RE, so pupils are given more challenging tasks and opportunities to achieve appropriate levels throughout each topic. Continually assessing pupil progress will enable pupils to achieve higher levels of attainment.

Pupils who have special educational needs or disabilities make good progress because their needs are identified and teachers adapt support to meet them. Pupils are becoming increasingly religiously literate and their knowledge, skills and understanding in RE are developing well in line with their age and capability. They are able to discuss their faith confidently and to think spiritually.

Prayer is central to the Catholic life of the school at St Joseph's. Pupils act with reverence and are eager and enthusiastic to participate in the many different types of worship offered at school. Most pupils join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils enjoyed working with staff from Castlerigg Retreat Centre for example, on a 'mini mission project'. Also Year 6 pupils enthused about their trip to Lancaster Cathedral in the Year of Faith. Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 plan and prepare a liturgy each term. Every class in Key Stage 2 has a termly Mass which is planned with the parish priest. In a whole school assembly observed during inspection, the parish priest led the worship, focusing on the gospel theme for the week and pupils joined in the prayers reverently and sang the hymns enthusiastically. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm in a variety of gatherings. Pupils understand the importance of key celebrations in school and in the parish community throughout the liturgical year.

All pupils act in a manner consistent with their beliefs and show respect for each other. 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 in Advent, the Year of Faith prayer opportunities and in liturgies during Lent, also in their responses to planning and leading Collective Worship during assemblies and Masses. Pupils are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They regularly work together to lead and to run their own fundraising activities for example a cake sale and sponsored swim and silence for CAFOD. The school has recently supported Children in Need and a school in Nepal.

# LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

The school's evaluation of leadership and management of Religious Education is good and evidence found during the inspection supports this judgment.

Leaders and managers are committed to the Church's mission in education; the head teacher has a clear vision for RE which is shared by all members of the school community. The staff team and governors work with the head teacher and share her 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.

The governing body has a significant number of new governors who provide good support regarding the Catholic life of the school. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are supportive of the leadership team and the staff. Standards in curriculum RE are monitored by governors through scrutinising both pupils' work in their books and teachers' plans; this could be developed further by the subject leader presenting them with a termly curriculum report comparing standards in RE with standards in English. Governors would deepen their knowledge of the Catholic life of the school by attending liturgies, assemblies and Masses when possible in support of pupils, parents, staff and clergy.

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 and have good relationships with pupils and parents as seen in the parent questionnaires. The Parish Priest has led staff development opportunities in school and supported RE in classrooms to further develop subject knowledge amongst staff; this is appreciated. The staff also have opportunities for professional development for example through the Catholic Partnership with local schools and by visiting an outstanding Catholic school, through their partnership work with a 'local leader of education'. The sacramental programmes for Reconciliation and first Holy Communion are very successful and parents enjoy working collaboratively with catechists and with clergy. Pupils co-operate well with each other, they respect their similarities and differences.

Strong links exist between the school and the parish and this has been a recent focus with the Parish Priest visiting school often during the week and leading a whole school assembly every Wednesday. Parishioners look forward to the whole school Masses on feast days and to class Masses in church, they regularly comment on the 'excellent behaviour and reverence of the pupils'. The RE curriculum mainly involves the study of Catholicism but since the last inspection has included the study of other world faiths for example a local Imam was invited into school to discuss his faith and several classes visited his place of worship. This has improved pupils' understanding of the wider world, of other peoples' beliefs, cultures and needs within their local community and further afield.

# PROVISION

## How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

2
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The school's evaluation of the provision made for Religious Education is good and evidence seen during the inspection supports this judgment. A range of teaching styles, clear explanations, well-paced lessons together with good use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ensures that most pupils are consistently interested in their learning and make progress that is broadly in line with their capabilities.

Teachers have good subject knowledge, which inspires and promotes confident learners. Staff make learning interesting and this makes a positive impact on pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation, for example some pupils enjoy drama, and 'hot seating' so these strategies are included in RE lessons. Displays of pupils' work around school and in the hall are of a high quality. There are prayer tables in every class that are a focus for worship, changing during the liturgical year.

Support staff are effectively deployed, to meet the needs of the pupils using their subject knowledge and awareness of individual pupils' needs. The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement which could be improved by providing more detailed feedback, both orally and through effective marking, to inform pupils of the next steps to take in their learning if they are to make the progress they are capable of at Key Stage 2.

The school now plans to integrate RE onto the established assessment and tracking system to monitor the attainment and progress of every pupil throughout the year, enabling underachievement to be addressed immediately and standards in RE to rise.

The RE 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. It has embraced the opportunities available in the Year of Faith to enhance the spiritual life of the school. 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 in full.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good; 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 encouraging 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 in school liturgies and Masses, this was evident during the inspection. Attendance by parents, other family members and parishioners is facilitated and encouraged in services in church and in the school hall. The Parish priest plays an important part in sharing prayers, Bible stories and experiences with weekly visits to school. Pupils, parents, staff and governors relate well to the parish priest who works hard to strengthen the home, school and parish partnership. The distribution of the 'Wednesday Word' supports this 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?	2
❖ 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	2
❖ pupils' attainment in Religious Education	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
<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?	3
• how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils?	3
• 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
<b>PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?</b>	<b>2</b>
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education?	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education?	3
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs?	2
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school?	2