

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr Michael Manton

Chair of Governors: Mrs Jane Routh

Section 48 Inspector: Mrs Angela Pye

Date of Inspection: 26th November 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

Pupils attending Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. 50% of the school population score E/E* on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (lowest 40% of schools nationally) with 46% scoring C/D (40%-60% of schools nationally). The school is a smaller than average sized primary school. The majority of pupils (82%) are from Christian backgrounds 64% being Catholic. There are an increasing number of pupils from Eastern European backgrounds at the early stages of learning English. 17% of pupils are in receipt of free school meals, which is in line with national averages. 15.6% of pupils are on the school's register for children with Special Educational Needs, which is also comparable to national averages. The school serves the parish of St. Mary's. Due to a variety of reasons, the number of pupils on roll has fluctuated in the past but now appears to be increasing. On leaving St Mary's Catholic Primary School, the majority of pupils transfer to Morecambe High School. Of those transferring to a Catholic high school most go to Our Lady's Catholic College, Lancaster.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	148
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics	64%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	18%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0.7%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	18%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	21%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	16%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	5
Part-time teachers:	4
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	77%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	60%

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. The Good Shepherd and St Mary's, Morecambe.

Overall Effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

Saint Mary's is a good school. Total commitment to its mission and the mission of Catholic education permeates this community. The school is a welcoming and friendly community with a strong family ethos. Staff work well together as a team and are committed to providing a quality education for the pupils. Continuous improvement in outcomes for pupils is a constant aim. Pupils show respect for each other and relationships are good. They are justifiably proud of their school. Parents have a high opinion of the school and are confident that their children are happy and well educated.

The school's leaders and managers are effective in forming links with other organisations, particularly the Catholic cluster group, to improve provision. The school is outward looking and works hard to ensure that pupils gain knowledge, understanding and an open attitude towards other cultures and faiths. The membership of the Governing Body has seen significant changes in the past two years but recently appointed governors are ready and willing to fulfil an active role.

Teachers and the subject leader monitor attainment and progress carefully to ensure that pupils achieve well. The curriculum provides well for pupils' moral and spiritual development and meets all external requirements. Parents and carers are encouraged to provide active support for their child/ren's learning and faith development. Pupils show reverence and respect during acts of worship and enjoy opportunities to take a leading role.

Capacity for sustained improvement

The school has undergone a great deal of change in senior leadership posts since the last inspection. It has been of paramount importance to maintain stability for the whole community whilst improving outcomes for pupils. Improvement targets from the last RE inspection are complete. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and succinct. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- To develop provision in the daily act of worship by using stillness and silence to give pupils an opportunity for private prayer and reflection
- To develop the role of the recently formed Governing Body by:
 - extending their present role of monitoring and evaluating the School Development Plan to include identifying priorities and defining success criteria;
 - providing challenge and support to the school's leadership in order to be more effective in their role as 'critical friend'.

PUPILS

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

2

Most pupils enjoy Religious Education and achieve well. They speak enthusiastically and have positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils can talk about how religion, belief and spirituality affect their daily lives. From low starting points on entry to school, all pupils make good progress through Foundation Stage and enter Key Stage 1 with attainment only slightly below national expectations. Good progress continues through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and inspection concurs with the schools judgment that standards in curriculum RE are good at the end of these educational phases. The school's comprehensive tracking of pupils' attainment shows good, steady progress and achievement within Key Stages also, with no groups under performing.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and obtain much benefit from it. Older pupils spoke with enjoyment about a recent pilgrimage to the Cathedral in Lancaster. For many pupils the school is their introduction to being a part of the Catholic community and they embrace this and play their role in furthering its development. They understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people. They show interest in the religious life of others and could draw parallels between this and their own beliefs and actions. They are considerate towards others and responsive to the needs of people beyond the school. One of the older pupils was able to discuss how thinking about fairness and justice in an RE lesson in school had resulted in persuading her parents to buy Fair Trade goods at home. Another Key Stage 2 pupil referred to the Samaritans Purse 'Shoe box' appeal as being a good example of living his faith. Pupils understand the need for forgiveness and know right from wrong. They understand that there are consequences for inappropriate behaviour and rewards for good behaviour.

Pupils' response to and participation in Collective Worship is good. They act reverently and are keen to take part in prayer and liturgies. Pupils were able to discuss past celebrations of important feasts of the liturgical year. They spoke with enjoyment about going to church during Advent and Lent. Acts of worship in school use candles, poems, bible stories, hymns, drama and both formal and informal prayers to engage the interest of the pupils. During a Key Stage 2 assembly, pupils considered what God's kingdom is like. One pupil responded, "God's kingdom is everywhere (indicating the room we were in), open to everyone," and another, "We make the kingdom." These replies showed a pleasing depth of spirituality for primary age pupils. During inspection, acts of worship observed had quite a fast pace that did not give pupils time for stillness and quiet reflection. To use silence to create an opportunity for pupils to talk privately to God would enhance prayer opportunities. Collective

Worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

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.

School staff and the Governing Body monitor and evaluate School Improvement Plan priorities. High quality staff training has ensured an awareness and understanding of, and commitment to, the very strong Catholic ethos.

Pupils know that they attend a Catholic school and appreciate its Christian character. The parish priest, always a welcome visitor, is active in promoting the Catholic life of the school. The monitoring and evaluation of curricular provision for Religious Education is good and impacts positively on attainment and progress. The RE co-ordinator is committed, knowledgeable and enthusiastic; she is supported by the school's Senior Leadership Team. She has planned a calendar of activities to engage pupils in the 'Year of Faith' that uses fresh, creative approaches underpinned by sound Catholic values.

The work of the Governing Body is satisfactory. They dispatch their statutory and canonical duties with care. Many changes to the membership of the Governing Body over the past two years have resulted in quite a new team of governors who are presently lacking in experience, but not commitment and enthusiasm. They are fully aware of the need to develop their role as 'critical friend' to the school's leadership team and to provide suitable challenge and support, as necessary. Governors monitor the school's performance in Religious Education and are well led in this by the RE governor who is also the parish priest. Thus, they have a developing awareness not only of present strengths but also of future actions to improve provision. They acknowledge that their role needs to be developed. As they become more experienced they should involve themselves directly in the setting of appropriate priorities for improvement alongside the monitoring and evaluation role that they presently fulfil.

Leaders and managers effectively develop partnerships with other providers and organisations. Partnership activities within the local Catholic cluster of schools make a useful contribution to furthering curriculum developments in RE and developing leadership roles in the school. Links with CAFOD promote an awareness of global needs for pupils and a vehicle for demonstrating the Christian virtues of caring, sharing and living their faith.

Leaders and managers promote community cohesion well. The school is an inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and a strong sense of belonging. It has many links with organisations beyond its gates that serve to help its pupils to learn and grow. An annual 'multi-cultural week' and a 'mission week' provide opportunities for pupils to explore other faiths and cultures. A link with a primary school in Africa also helps to develop an understanding of a different lifestyle and culture. Pupils demonstrate a strong commitment to serving others within the school and those they perceive as being in need. The inclusion of all is at the heart of the school's ethos.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

2

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. Marking acknowledges the strengths in pupils' work but does not consistently lead to clearly indicated improvement prompts. All pupils working at national curriculum levels would benefit if teachers' marking of their work indicated the next steps in learning. Pupils should also be taught to self assess their work against marking ladders; this would help them to understand what they can do and what they need to do next to improve. Oral feedback is effective in helping younger pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further. Appropriate levels of challenge are evident in pupils' workbooks. Whole school and individual professional development have resulted in improving the knowledge, skills and confidence levels of teachers; this, in turn, impacts positively on teaching and learning.

Well-established assessment procedures give a clear and accurate picture of pupils' progress and attainment. Leaders and teachers use this information to good effect, ensuring continuous improvement. The school has successfully introduced the principles and practices of Assessing Pupil Progress (APP) in line with diocesan assessment guidelines.

The school provides a good quality Religious Education curriculum and ensures that this meets the needs of all pupils. It ensures that teaching and learning equips pupils with the necessary knowledge and skills, and adequately prepares them for the next stage of learning, whatever their capabilities. The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development. In addition, it meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales with respect to the time given to RE.

The school provides good opportunities for Collective Worship that reflects its Catholic character. Pupils show reverence and respect during acts of worship. Worship is inclusive and well planned enabling pupils to take an

active part. By using a good range of resources, including technology, school staff ensure that they engage the interest of pupils. The school has a 'sacred space' that is very atmospheric – an ideal room for prayer and reflection. Pupils spoke appreciatively about using this room. The school invites parents and carers to share in prayer and liturgies; take up tends to be stronger where younger pupils are involved. In sending home the Wednesday Word each week the school keeps parents informed on the liturgical year. These pamphlets also provide an effective home, school, parish link. The school and church work hard to provide pupils with opportunities to celebrate key liturgical seasons and feasts together.

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?	2
PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?	2
• 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?	2