

**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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School URN: 119625

Headteacher: Mr David Ramsay

Chair of Governors: Mrs Patricia Eastham

Section 48 Inspector: Mrs Frances Wygladala

Date of Inspection: March 27th 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 Mary's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster; it serves the parish of St Mary in Great Eccleston. It is a very small village primary school and the pupils are taught in two mixed age group classes, one for Foundation and Key Stage 1 pupils and the other for Key Stage 2 pupils. Most pupils are of white British heritage with a small percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups. There are currently 37 learners on role of whom approximately 54% are baptised Catholics; an unusually high proportion of pupils join the school in Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Some children transfer to local High Schools with a few choosing Cardinal Allen High School when they leave in Year 6.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	37
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	8
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics:	54%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	30%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	16%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	11%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	24%
Percentage of pupils with Statements of SEN:	0%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	1
Part-time teachers:	3 (FTE 2.5)
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	75%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	75%

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:

The parish of St Mary, Great Eccleston

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 have total commitment to the ethos and mission of Catholic education. A new Religious Education scheme of work has been introduced recently to enable the standard of attainment to improve for all groups of learners, especially the more able. Pupils with special educational needs are given effective support in RE and make good progress.

Pupils are happy to come to St Mary's and they demonstrate pride in their school, which results in them having positive attitudes to learning. Outcomes for pupils are good; most pupils make good progress in RE from below average starting points and there is no significant variation between the various groups. 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 good. Teaching and learning in Religious Education are good which enables the vast majority of pupils to make good progress. The Religious Education curriculum recently introduced is varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and raising standards in mixed age classes. Assessment, monitoring and tracking systems, introduced and developed since the last inspection, have had a positive impact on pupil attainment and progress.

The head teacher, who is also the Religious Education subject leader, has a clear vision for RE and for the Catholic life of St Mary's. The governors provide good support and challenge for leadership. The chair of governors knows the strengths of the school and the challenges that it faces.

Capacity for sustained improvement

Most priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily and the school is continually striving to improve standards. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is good because of the quality of leadership and governance and the accuracy of self-evaluation leading to clear targets and appropriate priorities by staff and governors.

What the school needs to do to improve further

Continue to raise standards in Religious Education by:

- Continuing to implement the new RE scheme of work in order to raise standards in RE, particularly for the more able.
- Developing planning, assessment, monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress with the recently introduced RE scheme to make sure every child achieves their full potential.
- Continuing to develop partnerships, e.g. small Catholic schools in Wyre, to enable staff, governors and pupils to work together collaboratively to bring about better outcomes for pupils.

PUPILS

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

2

The pupils enjoy Religious Education (RE) and have positive attitudes towards their learning. Year groups contain relatively small numbers from 3 to 7 pupils and as a result conclusions are based largely on individual outcomes. Standards of attainment in Religious Education are above average and progress is good. Most pupils' standard 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; assessment data, pupil tracking systems and work scrutiny are all evidence of this. From below average starting points on entry to school in Foundation stage, standards rise to being broadly in line with national norms at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. All pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and are well supported in their learning.

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. They show a sense of consideration and justice, which is shared within the whole school community, 'We look out for each other in our school and help when we can', said one pupil.

Prayer is central to the Catholic life of the School; pupils act with reverence and are eager to participate in the many different types of worship offered at school. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence, enthusiasm and respect from their earliest years, in a variety of gatherings, as seen in a Class 2 worship during the inspection. They are able to write their own prayers, use actions, a wide range of hymns,

drama and religious artefacts as well as more traditional prayers during worship. 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 enjoyed visiting world faith places of worship last year, travelling to Preston and Blackburn. Pupils display a strong sense of belonging to their school, the Church and to the 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 and family Masses, and also in their responses to planning and leading worship during assemblies. Pupils are considerate of others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They regularly work together to lead and run their own fundraising activities and recently they have supported many local, national and global charities including CAFOD and Fox Street Mission at harvest time. There is a drop off point in school for tins of food to be distributed by the Salvation Army to the needy in the local community which is very well supported.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

The school's leadership promotes the Catholic life of the school well. The head teacher, who is also the RE subject leader, has a clear vision which is shared by all members of the school community. The staff 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. RE is a priority in the School Development Plan with a renewed focus on planning, assessments, monitoring and tracking with the recently introduced RE scheme, to make sure every child achieves their full potential.

Planning is founded on sound evidence and the analysis of data, tackling key areas of weakness systematically and building on areas of strength. Consequently there is substantial evidence that through learning walks, lesson observations, sampling work, monitoring plans and discussions with 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 regular visitors and are well informed on issues relating to Religious Education and to the

Catholic life of the school. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of the staff team. They are actively involved in the school community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff.

The school is developing a wide variety of partnership activities locally. The vision of the leadership is to develop further work with partners to bring about improvements in outcomes for pupils, staff and governors, for example shared professional development with other small Catholic schools in the Wyre area. 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.

The school is a highly inclusive community that extends a warm and welcoming sense of belonging. Pupils are encouraged to collaborate with each other in the mixed age groups through the family atmosphere provided. They have a sense of the wider world, other peoples' beliefs, cultures and needs. Many pupils recalled visiting the Mosque in Preston and Blackburn Cathedral to compare and contrast other places of worship; they enjoyed the opportunity to learn and understand more about world faiths and tolerance of different people.

Strong links exist with the parish of St Mary and the parish priest visits regularly and celebrates Mass with the school community. Collective Worship promotes respect for those of other faiths and those of no faith background.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

2

The quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is good. A range of teaching styles, clear explanations, well paced lessons and good use of information technology (ICT) ensure that all pupils are consistently interested in their learning and make progress, as evidenced in Class 1 during the inspection. 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, e.g. pupils enjoy drama, so often role play is included in their RE lessons. R.E. displays of pupils' work around school are of a high quality. Foundation Stage pupils have developed an Easter garden in their outdoor provision; this is well used and pupils can tell the Easter story using the prompt cards displayed around the area. Support staff are effectively deployed by teachers with individuals and groups to

meet the needs of all pupils. Regular assessment in almost all areas ensures that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to improve. The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement but more able pupils need to be planned for in more detail to enable them to achieve their full potential.

The school is further developing the RE curriculum, after introducing a new scheme, so that it is relevant to all learners, especially to the more able. It is presently enriched with a variety of imaginative and well-planned strategies and relevant resources, which engage and motivate the pupils, e.g. hot-seating. The parental questionnaire responses were overwhelmingly supportive of the school's provision for RE and of the progress their children make in the subject. 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 fully.

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, during liturgies and Masses.

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?	1
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?	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?	1