

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Patrick's Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 132835

Headteacher: Mrs Emma Jackson

Chair of Governors: Mrs Rita Edge

Section 48 Inspector: Mr Gerard McKeivitt

Date of Inspection: 22 March 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 Patrick's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school situated in Cleator Moor, Cumbria. The school mainly serves the parish of St Mary, Cleator in an area of some socio-economic deprivation. There are currently 215 children on roll of which 180 (84%) are baptised Catholic, 31 (14%) are from other Christian denominations and 0% are from other faith backgrounds. The school has an above average number of pupils with special needs (27%) and a low number of pupils from other ethnic groups (3%). At the end of Year 6 the vast majority of pupils go on to attend St Benedict's Catholic High School.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	215
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	42
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics	84%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	14%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	2%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	3%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	27%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	8
Part-time teachers:	5
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	69%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	15%

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 Mary's, Cleator

Overall Effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School rightly deserves its high standing and reputation within its community as it truly promotes and demonstrates its mission 'to love and respect everyone'. The Headteacher, staff and governing body rigorously strive to fulfil this mission so that everyone can reach their full potential within a happy and secure learning environment.

Most pupils come into the school with a low baseline of religious understanding and experience yet make good progress so that by the end of the Key Stage 2 they are operating at above the national levels of attainment. This consistent good progress can be attributed to its firmly embedded self-evaluation procedures, the intervention strategies in place to support pupils with special needs and the common desire to enable all pupils to achieve their full potential. The school now aims to raise attainment further, particularly for more able pupils, at the end of each key stage.

The school's provision for Catholic education is outstanding. Teaching and learning in Religious Education (RE) are at least good and often outstanding which enables the majority of pupils to make good progress. Assessment procedures are a real strength of the school and their consistent practices are a key component to the raising of standards of attainment. Staff are deployed effectively to meet the varying needs of its pupils and as such pupils with special needs make good and often outstanding progress.

Every effort is made to make sure that the school is a stimulating, calming and productive learning environment which is adapted to suit the needs of its learners and makes good use of a variety of resources, such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and role play. Every pupil knows what their strengths are and what it is to be a "St Patrick's Learner." As a result the pupils concentrate well, respond enthusiastically and are eager to participate and learn in their lessons.

The quality of Collective Worship has a considerable impact on the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils. The staff and older pupils work hard to promote moments of peace and calm within the busy school day and all pupils respond in a meaningful and appropriate manner. Pupils from an early age are given the opportunities to be proactive in Collective Worship from setting out artefacts to planning fully and leading acts of worship.

Leaders and managers in the school make a highly significant impact on the provision for Catholic education for the pupils in their care. The Governing Body plays an active role in supporting and challenging the school continually to improve its provision. The school has the strong support of parents as reflected in the very positive parent questionnaire responses.

Capacity for sustained improvement

The school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement through the strong leadership of the Headteacher, the RE Subject Leader, the staff, the Governing Body and the strong support of parents. Since the last inspection the school has a wealth of evidence to show that rigorous self-evaluation and tracking procedures are in place regularly and consistently across all key stages. The Headteacher and RE Subject Leader are committed to ensuring these strategies move the school forward and raise standards of attainment in religious education for all pupils.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- To provide opportunities for staff to increase their knowledge, skills and expertise to enable more able pupils achieve the higher levels of attainment in order to further raise the standards of attainment throughout the school.

PUPILS

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

2

Inspection judges that the standards of attainment and the progress of learning in RE for pupils are good.

The pupils of St. Patrick's are able to express their own views and beliefs with confidence and are knowledgeable about the teachings of Jesus and other key religious figures such as their nominated class saints. They are immensely proud of their background, our Catholic faith tradition and its strong links with the parish community. The pupils understand the importance of religious and spiritual values and show respect and reverence to religious objects and artefacts. They confidently express what it is to be a 'St Patrick's Learner' and what skills they offer the school community. They have a good understanding of right and wrong and the need to forgive and to be forgiven.

Most pupils enter the school with a low understanding and experience of religion yet there is strong evidence to show that most pupils make good progress through the key stages. At the end of the Foundation Stage most pupils, given their starting points, make good progress so that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupil attainment in RE is in line with national expectations. This trend continues so that by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above national expectations and above their results in English. This shows the good progress made by the majority of learners across the key stages.

The good progress of pupils can be attributed to the firmly embedded self-evaluation procedures that exist consistently throughout the school. These practices have made staff aware of the differences in the standards of attainment between some groups of learners, such as the level of higher achievers at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The school has already begun to address this issue by modelling good teaching to staff and placing a greater emphasis on its moderation procedures. In addition to this it aims to address the underachievement of boys in lower Key Stage 2 with greater emphasis on practical activities in RE such as drama. Pupils with special needs are very well supported by teaching assistants who work hard to meet their needs through a range of strategies such as small group work and class support. As a result special needs pupils make good and often outstanding progress.

Pupils from the earliest age are actively involved in acts of Collective Worship to which they respond with a sense of reverence and empathy towards others. An observed act of worship during the inspection in Year 2, 'This is a Wonderful Place', showed that the pupils are highly skilled in acting appropriately in moments of public and private prayer, they listen and contribute with reverence, they act with integrity when praying and sing joyfully. The pupils also show a good understanding of the main religious feasts and saints of our Catholic tradition as well as of other faith traditions. The contribution of Collective Worship is evident in the way the pupils treat each other and it makes a considerable contribution to the spiritual, social and moral development of the pupils.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

Leaders and managers of the school make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. The Headteacher inspires everyone with a determined sense of purpose to drive the school community to achieve their full potential in a secure and happy learning environment. She is supported by an able school leadership team and staff who have established a robust and rigorous culture of self-evaluation in RE. The RE Subject Leader has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and

weaknesses and actions are in place to improve standards of attainment particularly at the higher levels.

The Governing Body discharges its statutory and canonical duties effectively. All governors are involved in the school's established self-evaluation programme and in formulating the School Improvement Plan. Governors have the responsibility to monitor and evaluate a specific area of the improvement plan and as such are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The Governing Body is confident in its role as 'a critical friend' to support and challenge the school, such as in policy review, in order to bring about necessary improvements. The Governing Body has set up systems to seek regularly the views of parents and pupils and ensures that their findings are acted upon.

The Governing Body and the leadership team excel at promoting community cohesion at school, local, national and international levels. Leaders and managers are very proud of their place in the local community and work hard to give the pupils a strong sense of belonging through established links with local schools and businesses. The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school and the pupils regularly attend Mass at the parish church and participate in inter-denominational services. In addition to this, parish members run the Sacramental Programme. As a rural community, leaders and managers are acutely aware of the need to equip the pupils for our diverse society by taking part in the National Rock Challenge, links with a school in Tanzania and the celebration of Black History Week. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths is mainly developed through cross curricular topics such as Africa and India. Pupils also participate in a range of charity activities at a local and international level such as fundraising for local flood victims and CAFOD. Such contributions to community cohesion are evident in the very positive relationships that exist in the school and as reflected in the very positive parent questionnaire.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

1

The quality of teaching is at least good and at times outstanding. This is effective in ensuring that pupils are consistently interested in their learning and making good progress given their starting points.

The school has adopted a creative curriculum and uses a cross curricular approach to teaching and learning in order to engage fully the needs and interests of its learners. In an observed Year 6 lesson about 'The washing of the feet of the Apostles' excellent use was made of Assessment for Learning strategies (eg Talk Partners) which was also supplemented with other areas to engage the interests of pupils such as the use of ICT and

drama (freeze framing). The teacher was highly skilled at asking appropriate questions to engage and challenge differing ability learners. The pupils speak warmly of the learning opportunities afforded to them as a Year 2 child loved researching about saints and a Year 6 child enjoyed the 'hot seating activities'. The additional support given by teaching assistants also enables groups of pupils, in particular SEN pupils, to make good and at times outstanding progress.

Teachers' planning is of a consistently high standard as it builds upon previous learning, shows the use of a range of teaching and learning styles, has plenty of assessment opportunities, and activities suitable for individual needs in order to stimulate effective learning.

The school's robust self-evaluation cycle is a strong feature of the school and ensures that no stone is left unturned when it comes to the on-going assessment of pupils' attainment. A range of strategies, e.g. lesson observations, book and planning scrutinies, pupil interviews, are employed to ensure each pupil is given every opportunity to reach their full potential. Pupils are aware of what they need to do in order to improve their attainment through their use of detailed level descriptors. In addition to this, consistent and effective marking provides the pupils with the necessary next step advice to improve further and they are given the opportunity to reflect and rectify this. These procedures are also supported by the Governing Body.

The school environment plays a considerable role in producing an effective teaching and learning culture. Every effort is made to inspire the pupils that they can achieve, and their needs and interests are served through stimulating and inviting areas of display and interest. As soon as you enter the school it is obvious that this is a school which is visibly proud of our Catholic faith tradition as evident in the use of display and artefacts. In addition to this, each class has its own altar area and pupils are knowledgeable about their nominated class saint.

The quality of Collective Worship plays an important role in meeting the needs and interests of its learners. Prayer is central to the life of the school and pupils are actively involved in all areas of Collective Worship. Teachers in the Foundation Stage invite the pupils to compose their own 'Start the day prayers' and choose songs. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to plan and lead worship for their class and by the end of Key Stage 2 they have full ownership in planning and leading class worship. The pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities given to them for private prayer and reflection as in the prayer meetings in the Quiet Room and in the use of the Intentions board.

The provision for Collective Worship has a considerable impact on the high quality of relationships and the spiritual, social and moral development of the school community.

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	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?	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?	1
• 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?	2
PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?	1
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE?	1
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education?	1
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs?	1
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school?	2