

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

---

**School:** St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

**Address:** Holden Road  
Salterbeck  
Workington  
CA14 5LN

**Telephone Number:** 01946 830833

**Email address:** [stmarys.sch@btconnect.com](mailto:stmarys.sch@btconnect.com)

**School URN:** 112338

**Headteacher:** Mrs Catherine Pearson

**Chair of Governors:** Mr E Byrne

**Section 48 Inspector:** Mrs Mia Barlow

**Date of Inspection:** 18<sup>th</sup> October 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. The school mainly serves the parish of St. Mary, Harrington. There are currently 142 learners on role of whom approximately 21% are baptised Catholics. The vast majority of pupils transfer at the end of year six to St. Joseph's Business and Enterprise College. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or a disability is slightly below average.

## **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll:	142
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics	21%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	72%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	7%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	0%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	14%

### **Staffing**

Full-time teachers:	5
Part-time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	75%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	16%

### **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:**

St. Mary's within Christ the Good Shepherd

**Overall Effectiveness**

**1**

**Capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

St. Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school, where the mission and ethos of Catholic Education are at the heart of all that the school does. There is a very strong sense of community in the school. Staff, pupils and governors are justifiably proud of the relationships, dedication and commitment to the shared vision they have for their school. Pupils embrace the Catholic mission and are keen to participate in the Catholic life of the school.

Pupils make excellent progress as they journey through the school developing knowledge, understanding and skills at every stage. The pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and are offered a wide variety of learning experiences in Religious Education (RE). There is a rigour and thoroughness to everything that the school does.

The commitment of the governors and senior managers is a great strength of the school. The head teacher is a powerful driving force within the school and leads with passion and determination.

An extensive range of Collective Worship opportunities are offered to engage pupils of different ages and abilities in praise, thanksgiving and silent reflection.

### **Capacity for improvement**

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is excellent. The school has continued to improve since the last RE inspection, with standards in RE rising. Leaders and managers have high expectations of staff and pupils and work tirelessly to promote the clear vision they have for the school. The whole school is united in its commitment to the pupils and the community. There is a very strong work ethic and a shared vision throughout the school. The team work as one to ensure high standards are maintained and that the school continues to move forward providing the pupils with the very best that they can.

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

- Continue the development of the new tracking system to to make it easier to show evidence of progress in different groups of pupils.
- Maintain the rigour and impact of monitoring procedures.
- Continue to seek out opportunities for pupils to collaborate with people from different backgrounds.

# PUPILS

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

1

Pupils enjoy Religious Education (RE). They speak enthusiastically about their lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils describe RE lessons as 'exciting' and report that they enjoy learning through talking together and with the teacher.

Learning and progress are outstanding. Pupils enter the Foundation Stage with attainment well below national expectations in RE. From this baseline, pupils make very good progress and by the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is in line with expectations. As pupils move through Key Stage 2 this very good progress continues so that by the end of Year 6, attainment in RE is above expectations. Pupils in receipt of free school meals make good progress, as do those with special educational needs and disabilities. The standard of work in pupils' books is excellent and is an indicator of the high expectations that both children and staff have in RE. Teachers monitor pupils' progress at an individual level against all the attainment strands and high standards are evident across both attainment targets.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils benefit greatly and this shows in the positive relationships that exist within the community. Responsibilities include preparation and participation in Masses and liturgies, school and class pupil councils, 'buddies', playground leaders and fund raising activities. Older pupils support infants through both formal and informal opportunities. This is evident throughout the school; examples include older pupils supporting infants in their Collective Worship and in the Rosary group where they spontaneously help pupils in Key Stage 1. Pupils appreciate and value the mission statement, which they devised, and talk confidently about their contributions to the Catholic life of the school through everyday activities, special events and fundraising.

Prayer is central to the life of the school, pupils respond with reverence in both class and whole school Collective Worship and are eager to participate. The evidence of pupils' eagerness to participate is seen in the very high attendance at Rosary group during lunch break and in their desire to add their own prayers to the prayer tree in the hall. Vibrant acts of Collective Worship engage all pupils. In Class 1, pupils select candles and other religious objects for their class Collective Worship. Teacher led acts of worship in the reception class lay the foundations for the development of outstanding pupil led Collective Worship throughout the school. The whole school Collective Worship led by class 2 was engaging

for all pupils, incorporating music, dance, drama, reflective silence, spontaneous and traditional prayers in an inspirational way. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to develop their skills in planning and leading class Collective Worship. The worship observed in class 5 inspired thoughtful and heartfelt responses from other pupils and created an atmosphere of spiritual reflection.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

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

<b>1</b>
----------

Leaders and Managers are deeply committed to promoting the Catholic Life of the school. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all that they do and is clearly lived out in the way staff and pupils support each other. As the head teacher states, "St. Mary's is alive with God's presence". Staff are rightly proud of their school family and describe the school as "one big family where we all support each other". Teachers describe the head teacher as an inspiration and excellent role model in promoting the Catholic life of the school.

The monitoring of Religious Education is rigorous and leads to further improvements in RE provision. The head teacher uses lesson observations to identify and share good practice and to highlight areas for development. She also carries out work scrutiny for every child and uses this process to identify strengths and areas for further improvement. The regular and challenging monitoring along with the very high expectations at St. Mary's are outstanding features of the school and are crucial in the exceptional achievement made by pupils as they journey through the school.

Governors challenge and support the school and are very important in ensuring the high profile of the Catholic character of the school. They have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and are eager to ensure that staff maintain the high standards. Governors have a high profile and are involved in well-documented monitoring visits. The RE governor is well informed and is able to speak confidently about developments at St. Mary's. They are eager to support and develop community cohesion. Governors seek to ensure that the school has all the necessary resources to ensure the best for each individual pupil. They are rightly proud of the staff and leadership team and encourage good relationships, which include not just support but also challenge.

Leaders and Managers have developed effective partnerships with other providers, organisations and services such as the local community centre,

children's centre, family support workers, community police, representatives from other religions, Cafod and the Rising Sun Trust.

Parish links are good and add to the Catholic Life of the School. The Parish priest, along with the two other priests in the parish, visits the school regularly, sharing lunch with staff every week. Mass is held regularly in the school for the parish and school community. Pupils also visit the church for Mass and other liturgical celebrations.

The leaders and managers are strongly aware of the need to promote community cohesion. Pupils and staff share a very strong sense of belonging and positive relationships were noticeable during the inspection in all three Key Stages. Pupils involved in group activities were keen to ensure that everyone was involved and treated one another with great respect. Every opportunity is taken to work with others beyond school to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to learn about people from different backgrounds and, whenever possible, to collaborate with people from different cultural and faith backgrounds. The school uses visits to other places of worship e.g. a Mosque and a Buddhist temple, to promote awareness of differences but also the similarities between all groups. The school makes good use of their wealth of resources to support global awareness and community cohesion. Local, national and international residential visits reinforce the pupils' sense of belonging to our wider world and a respect and appreciation for others. Good use is made of the school curriculum to develop awareness of God's family everywhere. Parents attend whole school and class led Collective Worship. Each class also holds a special parents lunch where the pupils serve the food. These meals end with a sharing of learning and prayer. The high level of attendance at these events clearly demonstrates the good relationships between the school and parents.

## **PROVISION**

### **How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**

<b>1</b>
----------

The provision across the school for Catholic Education is outstanding. In lesson observations during inspection, teachers challenged, supported and engaged pupils very well in their learning. Pupils report that they enjoy RE lessons and find them challenging and exciting. In the Year 3 class, effective use of resources to stimulate questions helps pupils to understand challenging ideas about tolerance. In Class 4, after sharing the Canticle of St. Francis, pupils worked independently and enthusiastically to write their own canticle about creation. The work produced by these pupils was remarkable. Pupils in Class 5 worked together looking at social dilemmas using discussion and role-play; they

linked this to The Fall in the story of Adam and Eve. Pupils across the school are confident, knowledgeable and highly motivated. They are able to work in groups, showing great skills in working together, taking turns, listening to each other and co-operating in shared tasks. This co-operation was evident in all classes visited. The school makes good use of visitors including the local parish priests and charity workers, to add meaning to the learning and to make it purposeful to the pupils. Work is adapted through planning for different groups and the good use of teaching assistants to support learning, meet pupils' needs and provide appropriate learning opportunities. Teachers use assessment well to provide pupils with next steps in learning through oral and written feedback. Effective use is made of ICT to engage pupils. Planning for lessons includes adapting work to meet the needs of all pupils; teachers remove barriers to learning for any individuals or groups. This enables all pupils to access learning and produce high quality work.

Termly and half-termly assessments of pupils' work provide a clear picture of how well individual pupils are achieving. Teachers track pupils' progress on an individual level, and use assessment to set next step targets. They share this information with pupils so that they know how to improve. Pupils report that teachers help them to improve and are "always, always there to help them in their learning." Senior managers are developing whole school tracking systems to make it easier to show evidence of progress in different groups of pupils. Leaders and Managers are already tracking this progress on an individual level and have a very good awareness of the progress of all pupils but are keen to improve the effectiveness of existing systems.

The RE curriculum provided by the school meets the needs of the pupils and is in line with the Bishops' Conference requirements with respect to curriculum time. The school structures the RE curriculum around the scheme, "The Way the Truth and the Life" and learning is enriched by using creative opportunities to engage pupils.

Staff training and resources for Collective Worship are a given a high priority and this reflects their importance to staff and to governors. There is a wide range of quality Collective Worship resources for each class, which are age appropriate and treasured by the pupils. Teacher led worship is used to develop pupils skills and knowledge. The provision for Collective Worship is outstanding and as pupils journey through the school, they become increasingly skilled in planning and leading worship. By the time pupils reach upper Key Stage 2 they are able to select appropriate scripture readings and traditional prayers, lead their peers in reflective silence and inspire spontaneous prayer. Teachers also provide pupils with the opportunity to evaluate their own and other pupils' Collective Worship. Pupils, parents and staff celebrate the key Catholic celebrations in school.

# 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>1</b>
<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUPILS How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups?</b>	<b>1</b>
• How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education?	1
❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
❖ pupils' attainment in RE	1
• 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
<b>LEADERS AND MANAGERS How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School?</b>	<b>1</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?	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?	1
• How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and wellbeing?	1
• How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion?	1
<b>PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?</b>	<b>1</b>
• 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?	1