

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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**School:** Our Lady of the Assumption  
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**School URN:** 119596  
**Headteacher:** Melanie Haggerty  
**Chair of Governors:** Mrs Eileen Guerin  
**Section 48 Inspector:** Mrs Mia Barlow  
**Date of Inspection:** 26<sup>th</sup> February 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**

Our Lady of the Assumption is an average-sized Catholic primary school which serves the Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above average as is the number of pupils in receipt of free school meals. The school population currently consists of mainly White British pupils.

## **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll:	202
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics:	81%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	9%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	1%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	8%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	0%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	17%

### **Staffing**

Full-time teachers:	8
Part-time teachers:	3
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	62.5%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	29%

### **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:**

Our Lady of the Assumption

**Overall Effectiveness**

**2**

**Capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

Our Lady of the Assumption is a good Catholic school with outstanding features where the mission and ethos of Catholic education is central to all that the school does and the Catholic faith is lived out in daily life. There is a very strong sense of family: staff, governors and the parish priest all speak with great pride about the relationships, drive for excellence and high expectations that have led to improvements in the school. Pupils also show a deep sense of belonging and those in Key Stage 2 speak confidently about the role that they play in developing the Catholic life of the school.

Pupils make very good progress throughout the school and show excellent knowledge and understanding of both religious vocabulary and stories from the Bible. Attainment is good. They are enthusiastic about their learning and report that they enjoy Religious Education (RE) lessons which include a wide variety of learning experiences.

The commitment of governors, the parish priest and senior managers is a great strength of the school. The head teacher is described as an inspirational role model who leads by example. Staff see themselves as a large family where everyone "belongs" and where they all support each other.

A wide range of well-planned Collective Worship opportunities are offered to engage pupils of all ages who, as they journey through the school, are becoming skilled in planning and leading their own acts of worship. Opportunities include choosing Bible readings, prayers, music and using information technology (ICT) to enhance Collective Worship.

### **Capacity for improvement**

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. The school has continued to improve since the last RE inspection particularly in terms of standards in RE. High expectations are held across the school and leaders and managers have a clear vision for the school which is explicitly shared with all staff. Detailed action plans show how this vision can be achieved. School self evaluation is strong. School leaders, teachers and governors are deeply committed to achieving and maintaining the highest possible standards.

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

- Continue the development of the new tracking system to ensure that the progress of all pupils and groups in each attainment target can be easily monitored, and use this to further improve progress.
- Continue the development of assessment for learning to enable even more pupils to achieve the highest levels in RE.
- Develop community cohesion by providing more opportunities for pupils to work with other faiths and cultures in the local area.

## **PUPILS**

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

<b>2</b>
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Pupils enjoy RE lessons and are engaged by the wide variety of learning experiences. They quickly develop a good understanding of the themes they have covered. Pupils in Year 2 are able to identify, describe and explain the purpose of religious objects found in a Catholic church. One child explained that the consecration was the time in church when the bread and wine was changed into the Body and Blood of Jesus. Pupils in Year 5 can confidently explain how Fr. Damien and St. Bakhita demonstrate the kind of love that St. Paul described in the first letter to the Corinthians. They are also able to clearly explain concepts such as sacrifice and salvation.

Learning and progress are very good. Children enter the Foundation Stage with attainment well below national expectations in RE. From this baseline, pupils make very good progress through Foundation Stage and by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is in line with national expectations. As pupils move through Key Stage 2 this good progress continues so that by the end of Year 6, attainment in RE is at least in line with and sometimes above the standards expected of them. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress across the school, as do those in receipt of free school meals. Whilst the standard of work in pupils' books is good, their ability to talk about their learning in RE is for some pupils outstanding. Pupil progress is monitored at individual, group and class levels and is good throughout. Progress is recorded against all the attainment target strands and senior leaders are developing a tracking system that will facilitate easier monitoring of achievement in individual strands.

Pupils clearly enjoy taking on responsibilities and older pupils confidently talk about how they contribute to the Catholic life of the school. This

includes: peer mediation, buddies, play pals, running lunch time clubs, school council, worship leaders and fundraising for a variety of charities such as Cafod. When pupils were asked what the most important thing about Our Lady of the Assumption school was, they agreed that it was "to respect everyone, love each other, share kindness and learn together."

Prayer is central to the life of the school. Pupils are eager to participate in Collective Worship and to act with reverence, and they are now developing their ability to reflect in silence. From an early age pupils are encouraged to contribute to Collective Worship and, as they progress to Key Stage 2, pupils take on full responsibility for planning and leading Collective Worship. Children in the Foundation Stage demonstrate that they are already developing an understanding of the religious seasons and they respond with reverence during Collective Worship. In the Year 1 class during inspection, pupils participated fully in the Collective Worship which was appropriate for their age and relevant to their lives. The pupils helped to prepare the Collective Worship table and read gospel readings. All the pupils silently thought about particular things they could do to be kind to others. A prayerful atmosphere was created and the children responded well. Pupils in Year 3 confidently take on responsibility for planning and leading their class Collective Worship. This includes music, prayers, Bible readings and ICT to display images and prayers based around the theme 'Called to change'.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

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

<b>1</b>
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Leaders and Managers are dedicated to promoting the Catholic life of the school. The Catholic mission is lived out in the way staff and pupils treat each other. Staff describe with great appreciation the excellent role models provided by leaders and managers. They report that there is an atmosphere of trust and confidence and a real "sense of team" which reflects the school mission. The Catholic mission of the school is a priority. School leaders are driven by a desire to "bring their children to God and support the children in developing a relationship and deeper understanding of God."

The monitoring of RE has become more rigorous since the last inspection and this has led to further improvements in RE provision. School leaders monitor pupil progress each term and discuss this in pupil progress meetings. Lesson observation notes demonstrate how teaching is monitored. Where any areas for improvements are identified, actions and support are put in place to further develop teaching and learning in RE. Pupil progress is tracked and analysed by the leadership team to ensure that any underachievement in classes, groups or individuals is quickly

identified and addressed. Effective monitoring, along with high expectations, is having a positive impact on pupil progress. The leadership team is now keen to further develop their tracking systems so that progress in each separate attainment target can be monitored across each Key Stage. This will enable targets to be set for individual attainment strands.

The governors provide both challenge and support to the school and are deeply committed to promoting the Catholic life of the school and RE. They have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school and contribute to improvement planning. Governors are well informed – the monitoring processes they have in place include analysing progress against development plans, involvement in training and presence in lessons.

The chair of governors is the RE governor and regularly visits both the school and individual classes. The parish priest, who is also a governor, has very strong links with the school and is a regular visitor. The relationship between parish and school is described as “symbiotic or two sides of the same coin” The positive impact of this close relationship is clearly evident in many areas of school life. Governors have high expectations and a clear vision; they are rightly proud of all that is being achieved. *Fit for Mission* and the *Year of Faith* both play an important part in school development.

Leaders and managers have developed effective partnerships with other providers, organisations and services such as Cafod, Barnardos, St. Mary’s High School, Trinity Hospital, and Vincent House. This partnership work is linked to learning and this particularly supports Attainment Target 2 (AT2), ‘learning from religion’. Parish links are very strong and this has a very positive impact on the school both in terms of the Catholic ethos and pupil progress. These partnerships have a great impact on pupils’ development and understanding of other people.

Leaders and managers show a good awareness 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. Many opportunities are taken to work with others beyond the school to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to learn about people from different backgrounds between all groups. Respect for others is central to the school. Links with Cuba, Nigeria and Malawi help develop global cohesion. The provision for RE helps to develop an attitude of respect for other world faiths. Whilst other world faiths and cultures are included in the curriculum, this is an area that could be further enhanced through more opportunities to work with other faiths or cultures in the area.

# PROVISION

## How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

2

Provision across the school for Catholic Education is good. In lessons observed during inspection, teachers challenged, supported and engaged pupils in their learning. In the Year 2 class, pupils were completely engaged in their learning as they shared their ideas and produced information books about religious objects in their Catholic church. A visit to the church prior to this activity had clearly enhanced their knowledge. The vocabulary used by the pupils in their explanations showed a depth of understanding which was quite remarkable, as was their enthusiasm and eagerness to learn. In the Year 3 class pupils were challenged to relate St. Paul's writing about love to the lives of holy people. The work produced by the pupils was of a high standard and showed a good understanding of sacrifice.

Lesson plans across the school show that a wide variety of teaching and learning activities are used to motivate pupils and provide a depth of understanding. Work is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils with both challenge and support provided by teachers and teaching assistants. Good use is made of resources to enhance learning and progress. Teachers use assessment well to provide pupils with next steps in learning through both verbal and written feedback. Pupils in some classes are given opportunities to respond to marking and feedback and add comments of their own or improve their work after reading teachers' comments. Developing this area of assessment for learning across the whole school will benefit pupils' understanding of what they need to do improve their work.

Assessments of RE, as well as other core subjects, are carried out by teachers each term to track and monitor pupils' achievement. Pupils understand that teachers use these to help them to improve their work. The Senior Leadership team track overall progress in RE and use this to identify strengths and areas for development. A whole school tracking system is in place and senior leaders are eager to develop this further.

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 the time allocated to it. The school structures the RE curriculum around the scheme "The Way the Truth and the Life" and enriches learning by using creative opportunities to engage pupils. Examples of this include the use of drama, music, art and ICT to create exciting learning opportunities.

Collective Worship is enhanced by staff training, both formal and informal. Teachers who are not Catholics are well supported in this area. There is a wealth of beautiful resources and displays for both staff and children to

use during acts of Collective Worship. Teacher led worship is used to develop pupils' skills and knowledge. During the Key Stage 1 act of Collective Worship, very effective use of resources helped not only to engage children but to help them to develop their understanding of the Gospel. The provision for Collective Worship is outstanding. Detailed planning ensures that children in all classes have the opportunity to participate in high quality, reflective worship activities. As pupils journey through the school they develop independence in planning and leading their own class worship. Teachers also provide pupils with the opportunity to evaluate their own and other pupils' acts of Collective Worship. Pupils, parents and staff celebrate the key Catholic celebrations in school.

On the day of the inspection, a school Mass was celebrated before school started as one of their Lent challenges. Parents, staff, pupils and parishioners all gathered together. Pupils were provided with Mass books which explain parts of the Mass and the priest also explained what was happening during various parts of the Mass. Pupils participated in the readings confidently but some found it difficult to maintain their full attention at times.

This Mass provides an excellent example of how the whole community is involved in Collective Worship. It is also one of many examples of how pupils are immersed in liturgy and worship throughout the whole 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>2</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>2</b>
• How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE?	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?	1
• 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>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?	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?	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?	2
<b>PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education.</b>	<b>2</b>
• The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in RE?	2
• The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in RE?	2
• The extent to which RE curriculum meets pupils' needs?	2
• The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school?	1