

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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**School:** Dean Gibson Catholic Primary School

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**School URN:** 112341

**Headteacher:** Mrs Norah Mercer

**Chair of Governors:** Mrs Maureen Calnan

**Section 48 Inspector:** Mrs Frances Wygladala

**Date of Inspection:** February 23<sup>rd</sup> 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**

Dean Gibson is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The school serves the parish of Holy Trinity & St George in Kendal. It is a smaller than average sized primary school. Most pupils are of white British heritage, with a small percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups. There are currently 159 learners on role of whom approximately 60% are baptised Catholics. As there is no Catholic High School in Kendal, pupils transfer to Local Authority High Schools.

### **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

#### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll:	159
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics:	60%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	26%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	12%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	14%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	15%

#### **Staffing**

Full-time teachers:	7
Part-time teachers:	0
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	71%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	57%

#### **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%		

#### **Parishes served by the school:**

1. Holy Trinity & St George, Kendal
2. Christ the King, Milnthorpe

**Overall Effectiveness**

2

**Capacity for sustained improvement**

2

**MAIN FINDINGS**

Dean Gibson is a good self-evaluating school with some outstanding features. 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. Rigour has been introduced to the monitoring, assessment and tracking system to enable the standard of attainment to improve for all groups of learners. Those with special educational needs are given effective support in RE and make good progress.

Pupils are happy to come to school which results in them having a positive attitude to learning. Outcomes for pupils are good; most pupils make good progress from below average starting points. 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 outstanding.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education are good which enables the vast majority of pupils to make good progress. The Religious Education curriculum provided is varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and raising standards. Assessment, monitoring and tracking systems, introduced and developed since the last inspection, have had a positive impact on pupil attainment and progress. This will be improved by the establishment of a firm baseline on entry to the school from which pupils’ progress can be more accurately judged. The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities, with pupils, staff and governors benefiting from collaborative work.

The staff provide good role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities.

**The school’s capacity for sustained improvement**

All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed satisfactorily and the school is continuously striving to improve standards. The school’s capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is good because of the quality of leadership and the accurate self-evaluation leading to clear targets and appropriate priorities.

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

- Introduce a baseline RE assessment in Reception to recognise progress made from entry to school to the end of key stages.
- Review communication between home and school in order to strengthen the partnership and keep parents informed about topics covered in curriculum RE and Collective Worship.
- Review the marking policy in RE to include giving oral or written feedback to pupils to inform them of the next steps in learning in order to improve outcomes for pupils.

## **PUPILS**

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

<b>2</b>
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The majority of pupils enjoy Religious Education. They talk enthusiastically about their lessons and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Assessment data, pupil tracking systems and work scrutiny are all evidence of this. Standards of attainment in Religious Education are average but progress is good. Most pupils' standards of attainment in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) are good. Pupils in all key stages make good progress. From below average starting points on entry to school in Foundation Stage, standards rise to being broadly in line with national norms by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and support is carefully adapted to meet them.

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.

Prayer is central to the Catholic life of the School and pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in the many different types of worship offered at school, they join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence, enthusiasm and respect from their earliest years in a variety of gatherings, as evidenced in a Year 2 worship during 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 a variety of world faith places of worship last year, travelling as far as Preston and Manchester. Pupils display a strong sense of belonging to their school, the Church and 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 festival and during Lent, also in their responses to planning and leading worship during assemblies and Masses,

ably led by the Key Stage 2 liturgy group. Pupils are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They regularly work together to lead and run their own fundraising activities and enterprises. Recently they have supported many local, national and global charities including CAFOD, Mission Together and Operation Christmas Child. Connect2Cafod was chosen to be supported by the parish and the school. Pupils from Years 5 and 6 decided to connect to a community in Ethiopia and the whole school have raised funds and established links with the community.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

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

<b>2</b>
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The school's leaders and managers promote the Catholic life of the school well. The headteacher has a clear vision, which is shared with all members of the school community. The senior management team and governors work closely with her and share her 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.

Planning is founded on sound evidence and 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 talking to pupils and staff, standards of attainment have risen in recent years.

Governors provide effective challenge and support regarding 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 well informed on issues relating to Religious Education and to the Catholic life of the school; they appreciate the termly report to governors on the school's performance in Religious Education. This gives them an accurate picture of how well all the pupils are achieving and how well different groups of pupils within the school are performing.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of leaders and the staff team. They are actively involved in the school community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff. The role of the RE link governor is key in the partnership between governors, staff and pupils.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a wide variety of partnership activities locally. These are at a cost, but provide excellent value for money because pupils achieve highly and develop exceptionally well in a number of areas which the school alone could not provide. The vision of leaders and managers is to continue to work effectively with partners to bring about improvements in outcomes for pupils, staff and governors, for example shared professional development and leadership opportunities with St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School, Windermere and other local Catholic schools.

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. Senior managers are aware that communication between home and school is an area for development and plans are in place to strengthen the partnership and keep parents informed about topics covered in curriculum RE and Collective Worship.

Strong links exist with the parishes of Holy Trinity & St George and Christ the King. Relationships among pupils are positive. Many opportunities exist for pupils to engage and collaborate with each other through, for example, the effective school council and the newly formed liturgy group. Pupils have a sense of the wider world, of other peoples' beliefs, cultures and needs.

## **PROVISION**

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

<b>2</b>
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Teaching is a strength of the school. A range of teaching styles, clear explanations, well paced lessons and good use of ICT ensure that all pupils are consistently interested in their learning and make progress that is in line with their capabilities. 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. Year 6 pupils enjoy drama so, often role play is included in their RE lessons. Displays of pupils' work around school are of a high quality and in the past pupils have worked with a local ceramic artist to create inspirational work together, displayed all around the school.

Support staff are effectively deployed to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. The school has an accurate picture of pupils' achievement but pupils need to be provided with detailed feedback, both orally and through constructive marking to inform them of the next steps in their learning.

The school has developed an assessment and tracking system to monitor attainment and progress throughout the year enabling underachievement to be addressed and standards to be maintained with very different cohorts of pupils. A baseline assessment in RE in Reception would enable the school to accurately measure the progress pupils make by the end of each key stage.

The Religious Education curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. It is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well-planned strategies and relevant resources, which engage and motivate the pupils e.g. detailed discussions and frieze framing in all age groups. 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 good: prayer is central to the life of the school and is a key part of every celebration. Collective Worship

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 and in school liturgies and school Masses. Attendance by parents, other family members and parishioners is facilitated and encouraged in liturgies both in church and in school. The local parish clergy play an important part in sharing prayers and preparing pupils for liturgies and masses. The parish church is not close to the school, but regularly the whole school will walk half an hour to Mass to worship there. Year groups also attend Mass e.g. on a Friday in Lent Year 6 went to share mass and afterwards a soup lunch with parishioners. Pupils attend from a wide catchment area, so feeling part of the parish is important to the staff, governors and clergy. Pupils, parents, staff and governors work hard to strengthen the home, school and parish partnership sharing information on newsletters.

# 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>2</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 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?	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>2</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?	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?	1
• how effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion?	1
<b>PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?</b>	<b>2</b>
• 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