

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 119584

Headteacher: Mr G McKevitt

Chair of Governors: Mrs L Macari

Section 48 Inspector: Mrs J Hampson

Date of Inspection: July 5th 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 Bernadette's Catholic Primary school is a smaller than average Voluntary Aided school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The school serves the parish of St Bernadette Lancaster. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage. There are currently 168 pupils on roll of whom approximately 93 are baptised Catholics. A very small number of children have other faith backgrounds.

On leaving St Bernadette's pupils transfer to several high schools. Approximately one third of pupils transferred to Our Lady's Catholic College in Lancaster last year.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	168
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics:	55%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	40%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	4%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	0
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	8%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	13%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	5
Part-time teachers:	4
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	50%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	71%

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. St Bernadette's Lancaster

Overall Effectiveness

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Bernadette's is an outstanding Catholic school where rigorous and accurate self-evaluation leads to high standards and continuous improvement. There is outstanding leadership at all levels, ensuring a shared, ambitious vision which fosters the highest of expectations for all members of the school community. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very proud of it, which results in them having extremely positive attitudes to learning. Outcomes for pupils are outstanding, with no significant variation between any major groups. All pupils make excellent progress from average starting points and attainment is high. Pupils benefit greatly from the wide range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic life of the school. Their participation in, and leadership of, the prayer and liturgical life of the school is excellent. The promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is exceptional.

The school provides an excellent Catholic education. Teaching and learning are outstanding and pupils make excellent progress. The RE curriculum provided is rich and varied and teachers' planning is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and on raising standards. Assessment, monitoring and tracking systems are excellent and impact positively on pupil progress. The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding: all staff, including support staff are excellent role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities in class and at lunchtimes in the prayer room.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher ensures that all pupils are exceptionally well cared for and cherished as individuals.

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been successfully addressed. The headteacher, senior staff and governors demonstrate total commitment to the ethos and mission of Catholic education where continuous improvement in every aspect of school life is a priority. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is outstanding because of rigorous and accurate self-evaluation leading to clear, challenging targets and appropriate priorities. Collective Worship, the extent to which the school meets the needs of all pupils in RE and leadership and management at all levels are key strengths of the school.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Embed the pupil targets in RE and other assessment systems in school, to continue to achieve high standards in RE.

PUPILS

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

1

Inspection confirms the school's judgement that outcomes for pupils are outstanding.

Pupils enjoy RE; they have extremely positive attitudes towards their learning and speak with enthusiasm about their RE lessons. They remain fully engaged throughout lessons and are eager to improve their own learning. As a result, achievement is very good.

The school has a wealth of assessment data and pupil tracking systems which, alongside regular work scrutiny, provide evidence of pupils' continuous improvement. Standards of attainment in RE are high at the end of Key Stage 2. From average starting points on entry to school, all pupils including boys and girls, Catholics and those other than Catholic, those for whom English is an additional language and children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make very good progress throughout all three key stages. Excellent procedures for assessing attainment on entry enable Foundation Stage staff to match the curriculum closely to the needs of all pupils and ensure rapid progress.

Most pupils attain high standards in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and in an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) in all key stages. Standards of attainment are high in all strands of each attainment target. At the end of KS2, all pupils attain level 4, with over 30% attaining level 5.

Regular assessment ensures that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are accurately identified. Support staff make an excellent contribution to learning for these pupils, resulting in very good progress.

Pupils confidently articulate what they have learned in RE and are able to discuss its impact on their lives at school, at home and in the wider community.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of school. They are able to speak with confidence about their understanding of the Catholic life of the school and their engagement with it. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to say how the extensive work for charity which takes place in school enables them to fulfil their call to serve by being

stewards of the earth. The excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in school enables all pupils to express their views and beliefs with confidence.

Prayer is central to the Catholic life of St Bernadette's School. Pupils throughout the school regularly prepare and lead acts of Collective Worship. They do this with confidence and enthusiasm because they are well-supported by staff, including support staff. Pupils in Reception show respect when selecting religious artefacts to support their Collective Worship. Older children are skilled in choosing scripture and music to support reflection when planning their own acts of Collective Worship. For example, in an observed act of Collective Worship a group of Year 3 and four pupils led their classmates in worship, using scripture and prayer (both traditional and their own) to focus on our call to follow Jesus. Pupils responded positively to this act of worship, praying reverently and remaining quiet during the time for reflection.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

The school's judgement is that leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding and inspection confirms this.

Leaders and managers are very good at promoting Catholic values and principles. The Catholic mission of the school is at the heart of all school life, because the mission statement, which celebrates the dignity and worth of each individual, is the starting point for all school documentation, including the school improvement plan and the headteacher's reports to governors.

The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has ensured there are outstanding procedures for self-evaluation, monitoring and evaluation at all levels within the school.

High quality staff training and procedures for performance management enable the dedicated staff to regularly contribute to improving RE in the school.

The monitoring and evaluation of provision for RE are outstanding. The RE subject leader has successfully ensured that very effective monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place and are impacting positively on pupils' learning, progress and standards. They accurately inform areas of both strength and development and contribute to the school's excellent capacity for improvement. She has very high expectations, sets challenging targets for staff and supports them effectively in the delivery

and assessment of RE. For example, staff set challenging termly targets for pupils in RE and report to the RE subject leader termly on analysis of pupil progress.

Governors provide high levels of professional challenge and support. They are very proactive, involved in the Catholic life of the school and make a highly significant contribution to the school's work. The parish priest, who is also the RE governor, effectively ensures that all governors are well informed on issues relating to RE and to the Catholic life of the school. As a result, they understand pupil's performance in RE and know what needs to be done to ensure continuous improvement of standards. Governors are very supportive of leaders and of staff, valuing the commitment of all in school to make all children feel cherished and special. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well.

The headteacher, RE subject leader and parish priest work tirelessly to ensure the school participates fully and actively in developing a variety of partnership activities, including charity work, collaboration with other Catholic schools and excellent parish links. This has a significant impact on pupils' achievement and well-being and to the Catholic life of the school.

The promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The headteacher successfully ensures there is a common sense of belonging amongst staff and pupils and all have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. Every aspect of school life demonstrates that leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. As a result, children clearly recognise and value their own religious identity and value the range of similarities and differences both within the school community and beyond. Pupils in Year 6 are able to articulate how learning about other world faiths prepares them for life beyond St Bernadette's school.

One parent commented, 'St Bernadette's is an outstanding school where children are supported in their faith, but are equally taught about other beliefs and are encouraged to value and respect everyone.'

The curriculum is planned to meet the needs of all pupils and thus to ensure equality of opportunity for all.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

1

School monitoring systems show that teaching is outstanding overall and inspection confirms this judgement. A good range of teaching styles, excellent questioning techniques, clear explanations and well-paced lessons ensure that all pupils are consistently enthusiastic about their learning and make good progress in both attainment targets (ATs). In a

lesson observed in Key Stage 2, pupils were able to draw on a range of religious sources to develop a plan for missionary work, taking account of spiritual as well as physical needs. They used their knowledge of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to guide their thinking, their discussions and their decisions. The excellent questioning by the teacher challenged pupils to think and work at very high levels. Pupils were given time to fully develop their ideas and to make links to the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Excellent planning ensures lessons build on prior learning and meet the needs of all pupils. Support staff are very effectively deployed to meet the needs of pupils with additional needs and they make a significant contribution to the learning and progress of these pupils.

Teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate true commitment to fulfilling the mission statement, where the dignity and worth of everyone is celebrated and where everyone is helped to reach their full potential, in their approaches to supporting and challenging all pupils in curriculum RE.

In a lesson observed in Key Stage 1, pupils with SEND made very good progress due to the excellent support they received from teaching assistants. Pupils were able to recall and make links to previous learning. For example, when listening to the story of Jesus healing Bartimaeus, a blind man, children confidently discussed other miracles which Jesus had performed.

Assessment and monitoring procedures are excellent and give a clear, accurate and up-to-date picture of pupil progress and attainment. Leaders and teachers use this information consistently and systematically to sustain high levels of achievement. The tracking system for RE enables the school to focus on ensuring that different groups of pupils achieve equally well and this information is used effectively by teachers to set targets for improvement. Marking is excellent and ensures that pupils know how well they have done as well as what they need to do to improve further.

The RE curriculum is adapted well to meet the specific needs of all pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language and those of other faiths. It is enriched through a variety of imaginative and well-planned strategies and relevant resources, which engage and motivate the pupils. Long and short-term planning is excellent and ensures full coverage of the religious curriculum. The RE curriculum provides excellent opportunities for, and impacts positively on, pupils' spiritual and moral development. The time given to the RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding and ensures that the spiritual needs of all pupils are well met. It is fully inclusive, reflective and well-planned enabling pupils to take an active part. Prayer is central to the life of the school and this is reflected in the

way the pupils are enabled, from a very early age, to plan and lead their own acts of Collective Worship. Pupils' liturgical formation is well-planned, appropriate to their faith backgrounds and shows progression. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer, including a lunchtime prayer group for staff and one for pupils in the prayer room. Parents value the opportunity for family members to be remembered in the prayers of staff during these prayer sessions.

One parent commented on the positive impact of the prayer life of the school on her daughter's prayer life at home with her family.

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	1
• 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
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?	1
• 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
PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?	1
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in?	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