

**INSPECTION REPORT ON THE PROVISION OF DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION**

School name: Our Lady star of the Sea Catholic Primary School  
 Address: Kenilworth Rd, St. Annes-on-the-Sea, FY8 1LB  
 Unique Reference Number: 119627  
 Name of Headteacher: Miss J Hornby  
 Date of Inspection: 17 November 2008  
 Name of Inspector: Mrs B Gardner  
 Type of school: Catholic Primary  
 Age range of pupils: 4 - 11  
 Number on roll: 215  
 Appropriate authority: The Governing Body  
 Chair of Governors: Mrs M Sellick  
 Religious Education Co-ordinator: Miss J Hornby, Mrs L Hotchkiss, Miss L Brisco  
 Date of previous inspection: 4 - 5 October 2005

<b>The Inspection judgements are:</b>	<b>Grade</b>	
Overall effectiveness of the school	1	Explanation of the grades  1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	1	
The quality of Collective Worship	1	
Religious Education - Achievement and standards	1	
Religious Education - Quality of provision	1	
Religious Education - Pupils' needs and interest	1	
Religious Education – Curriculum leadership and management	1	
Community Cohesion	1	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

**Information about the school:**

Our Lady Star of the Sea is a Voluntary Aided Catholic school and primarily serves the parishes of Our Lady Star of the Sea, St Joseph and St. Alban. It is situated in St. Annes on the Fylde coast three miles south of Blackpool. It is an average sized primary school with 215 on roll. 194 pupils are registered as baptised Catholics while 18 are from other Christian denominations, 2 children are from other world faiths and 1 child has no religion. The pupils are drawn from a wide area, which includes a variety of socio economic groups. The attainment of the children when they start school is just below average with the exception of a small number of pupils who have average understanding and knowledge of Religious Education (RE). At the end of the last Academic Year 40 pupils transferred to St Bede's Catholic High School. Of the teaching staff 7 out of 9 are Catholics.

**Overall Effectiveness of the school**

All pupils have a clear understanding of the school's distinctive Catholic nature and they are given opportunities to shape its life. They are taught the values and beliefs of the Catholic church and they are encouraged to respond in a variety of ways. There is a wealth of evidence of the school's commitment to its mission. The faith background of each pupil is respected. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their religious education because teaching is varied, interesting and effective and the learning styles of individual pupils are catered for. Most pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good. There is a relentless and successful drive to keep standards moving upwards supported by effective monitoring and evaluating procedures. Staff are excellent role models and morale at all levels is high. The school has made very good improvement and is working hard to maintain its high standards. It is well regarded by parents, the wider community and the parishes with which it has constructive links.

## Improvement since the last inspection

- Teaching and learning is constantly evaluated and developed. Teachers monitor the progress of individual pupils with the result that they are constantly challenged to achieve their potential. The school has adopted a new RE scheme and assessment has been thoroughly reviewed.
- The quality of marking has improved over the past three years. The use of effective marking and assessment for learning strategies are helping to maintain high standards.
- The school now has frequent opportunities for parents to be involved with their children in school worships and assemblies.
- The school is continuing to develop links with the parishes of St. Joseph and St. Alban and they now share their newsletters.

## Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is very good. The headteacher has a clear, shared vision for the school and is well supported by her senior leadership team. This team lead and manage developments in RE. They are very effective and are clear about the priorities for development. The school is led by a very committed governing body who work hard to maintain the catholic ethos under the guidance of the parish priest.

## What the school should do to improve further:

- Continue to develop teaching and learning to support and challenge pupils and staff in their constant drive to maintain the highest standards in RE.
- Continue to explore and develop understanding and links with the wider national and global communities.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Inspection confirms the school's judgment of the leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school as **outstanding**.

Leadership is outstanding at all levels. The Headteacher has a clear, shared vision and the ability inspire others. Teaching staff talk about her modeling of worship and the teaching of RE through staff training. The senior management team work closely with her and share her commitment to the catholic mission of the school. The school's mission statement is at the heart of all that the school does. It is clearly visible around the school, in documentation and is referred to in discussions with staff. Efficient monitoring and evaluating systems are in place and inform the school improvement plan.

The governing body is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they feel a welcome part of the community. In common with other subject governors the RE governor meets with the subject leaders to review the year's achievements in RE. Regular reports are given to Governors on progress in RE and the subject is included on the tracking sheets with other core subjects.

The Parish priest guides all governors to be aware of the teachings of Christ when reflecting on decisions made by the school. The RE governor talks about the privilege of being a part of meaningful assemblies when the school comes together to pray.

There are good links with the parish and the Headteacher has developed very effective links with parents and carers. The work on the school's environmental garden is a good demonstration of this as are the comments on the parental questionnaires.

All staff are valued as is shown by the leadership team's commitment to CPD and their support of teachers who are not catholic. All staff feel able to ask for information or clarification during termly RE staff meetings.

## **THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The Quality of collective worship is **outstanding**.

Prayer is central to the life of the school and all members of the school community value it. Staff talk about their beautiful worships, which not only take place on a regular basis before meetings and INSET but also spontaneously when staff feel that they would be of value and appreciated.

Worship with the pupils takes a variety of forms all of which involve them fully by encouraging them to reflect and respond. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their planning for their own acts of worship. In Year 6 a series of worships on the parables encouraged pupils to think in depth about the messages being given. A Year 3 worship for the whole school used modern music and dance to encourage the children to reflect on situations that made them angry and the appropriate responses, whilst Year 2 were able to sit quietly to reflect and pray during their worship on the different meanings of precious. These are good examples of the way in which the prayer life of the school supports the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Quiet areas around the school offer the pupils opportunities for personal prayer and reflection and there is evidence of pupils writing their own prayers on the whiteboard in one of these areas.

Key stage 2 pupils regularly attend mass with the parish. Following discussions with the teachers the parish priest included explanations of the meaning of the different parts of the mass as he celebrated it with them.

Sacramental preparation is shared between the parish and the school. Members of the school staff are also catechists.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

Inspection confirms the school's judgment of standards as **outstanding**.

Discussion with pupils during inspection confirms that these very articulate children have an excellent knowledge and understanding of RE (AT1) and reach outstanding standards in learning from religion (AT2). Discussions with pupils during inspection confirms the school's view that, whilst written evidence is in line with aspects of English, pupils are achieving well at all levels and their overall attainment is above the national average. The highly effective tracking procedures show that the progress pupils make is very good given their starting points. Most pupils are baptised Catholics but not all are regular churchgoers. All pupils including those with learning difficulties make good progress. There is evidence from speaking to pupils and to teachers of clear differentiation. Pupils in Year 6 talk about their targets and of the support given to pupils who are finding a topic difficult. Teachers talk about challenging pupils to achieve their full potential.

Children in the foundation stage make very good progress. Their knowledge and understanding of RE on entry is below average and this was confirmed during inspection through observation and discussion with children. At this early stage in the year only two out of six children showed any knowledge or understanding of religion at the most basic level, however the school's moderated portfolio and tracking records show that by the end of foundation stage they have made very good progress and standards are in line with expected levels. Pupils continue to make good progress and by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are above nationally expected levels. Year 2 pupils know that there is an old and a new testament. They can talk about stories before Jesus was born and stories after Jesus was born. During the inspection they talked with confidence about Moses and Joseph.

By Year 6 standards are very high given their starting point and all pupils are constantly challenged to achieve their full potential. This judgment is supported by evidence provided during inspection from work scrutiny, discussion with pupils and teachers and teachers' planning.

Standards in AT2 are very high and this is due not only to excellent teaching and successful learning but also to the fact that the school's commitment to its Catholic mission is so strong that pupils are learning from religion in all areas of school life. Year 6 pupils talk about valuing and being valued and how this affects their roles and responsibilities towards the younger children in the school. The spiritual and moral development of pupils is excellent.

Other opportunities for prayer and reflection are provided in the quiet rooms and in the environmental garden.

Prayers and thoughts written by pupils of all ages on a whiteboard in one of the quiet rooms demonstrate that faith permeates all areas of their lives.

The senior leadership team monitor teaching and learning and the results of their interventions such as the use of assessment for learning and the marking policy are evident in the pupils' books and in the high standard of work produced.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - QUALITY OF PROVISION**

Inspection confirms the school's judgment that the quality of provision for RE is **outstanding**.

The school is committed to the provision of relevant and effective training at all levels and the results of this are evident in teaching and learning.

The senior leadership team has high expectations of teaching and learning and teaching throughout the school is stimulating and consistently challenging. A variety of teaching styles are used and provision is made for the different learning styles of pupils.

Observations during inspection and discussion with teachers provide evidence that lesson objectives and learning outcomes are shared with the pupils at the start of lessons. Scrutiny of work shows that good quality marking is used to move the pupils on in their learning. Assessment for learning is used throughout the school and this too is having a positive impact on standards. Year 6 pupils spoke about their learning journey, and the support given to them if they found work difficult. All the evidence provided supports the schools commitment to develop, support and challenge all pupils to reach their full potential.

RE is part of the creative curriculum and the pupils' enthusiasm and work produced shows that it is raising standards. The pupils talk about enjoying RE in relation to other subjects such as geography and literacy. RE is at the heart of the curriculum in this school and observations during inspection in Year 6, as well as evidence from teachers' planning files, confirmed this.

Assessment and tracking are rigorous and effective and are used to ensure that all pupils are planned for and supported. Teaching assistants are included in INSET and they are used effectively to support teaching and learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - PUPILS' NEEDS AND INTEREST**

Inspection confirms the school's judgment that provision for pupils' needs and interests is **outstanding**.

Pupils are proud of their work and happy to talk about their learning. There are many examples of the pupils being encouraged to show their own initiative, a major one being the responsibilities that Year 6 assume during their final year at the school. One Year 6 pupil explained that being given responsibilities makes them feel valued and grown up. They described the clubs that they run for the younger pupils and the responsibility that this brings.

Talking to pupils and work scrutiny shows that pupils are encouraged to explore their faith in a secure environment. Reception children were talking about behaviour that makes God happy whilst Year 6 were looking at the life of the child soldiers in war zones for their RE topic on justice.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Inspection confirms the school judgement that leadership and management of RE is **outstanding**.

In common with other core subjects there, is a leadership team for RE: in this case it is the senior management team. This reflects the schools commitment to RE. Evidence provided during inspection through discussions with different members of the school community shows that the curriculum leadership team give highly effective support to other members of staff and they have high expectations of both teaching and learning.

The school has adopted the RE scheme 'The Way, the Truth and the Life' and staff believe that the more focused emphasis on the gospel values of the Catholic faith as well as on the links with other faiths is improving standards in teaching and learning.

There is rigorous monitoring and evaluating of progress and staff talk about the outcomes of monitoring and their next steps to address them. High priority is given to ensuring that all staff are well supported by appropriate training. Everyone, including midday supervisors, has been involved in the school's work on the diocesan initiative 'Fit for Mission? Schools'. Consultations have taken place with staff and governors and an action plan is now being implemented.

The effective work of the curriculum leadership team has resulted in improvements being made and high standards being achieved. Very few pupils underachieve.

The curriculum is fully inclusive and meets the requirements of the Bishops' conference for RE.

## COMMUNITY COHESION

Inspection confirms the schools view that community cohesion is **outstanding**.

There is evidence in all areas of school life that the mission statement is at the heart of this community. The parish priest, governors and senior staff ensure that everyone working in the school, parents and members of the parish, shares the values and vision for this school. Everyone is valued and given continuous opportunities to develop and grow.

The school places great value on the relationship that it has with parents and the headteacher gives examples of the ways in which this has built up over the years. The parental questionnaires strongly support this. The school's newly developed website includes an informative section dedicated to RE and this makes the work of the school accessible to the wider community.

The school has very strong links with other local schools both Catholic and non-catholic. They come together as a cluster at all levels with both staff and pupils visiting each other's schools to work together. They are currently working alongside other schools to design an entrance to the local park. Parishioners, parents and pupils have worked together on shared ownership of an allotment and the design of the environmental garden. The school also has strong links with St. Bede's Catholic High School.

Senior staff and the parish priest are committed to establishing links with national and global communities. The school has planned theme days, visits and visitors to the school all of which help to develop the pupils' understanding of different cultures. During the inspection Year 6 pupils were learning in depth about the lives of pupils in war zones. The headteacher is establishing links with schools in India and a contrasting locality in Preston. The pupils also raise money for international charities such as CAFOD and the issue of providing support for other countries is often on the agenda for school council meetings. This is an area that the headteacher is committed to developing further.