

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Mary & St Michael Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 119617

Head teacher: Mrs Cathryn Wilkinson

Chair of Governors: Mr Roger Mason

Section 48 Inspector: Mrs Frances Wygladala

Date of Inspection: April 1st 2014

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 & St Michael's is a Catholic Voluntary Aided primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The smaller than average-sized primary school serves the parishes of St Mary and St Michael, Garstang and St Mary and St James, Scorton. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from ethnic backgrounds. There are currently 130 learners on role of whom approximately 94 are baptised Catholic, 27 from other Christian denominations, 9 have no religious affiliation and none are from other faith backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below the national average. A very small minority of pupils transfer to Our Lady's Catholic High School, Preston, at the end of Year 6. Of the teaching staff, 88% are Catholics.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	130
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	22
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics:	72%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	21%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	7%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	5%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	2%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	8
Part-time teachers:	0
Number of Catholic teachers:	7
Number of teachers with CCRS:	5

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:

St Mary and St Michael's, Garstang
St Mary and St James', Scorton

Overall Effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St Mary & St Michael's is an outstanding Catholic primary school. There is a shared vision, which promotes inclusion and high expectations for all members of the school community. The Catholic mission of the school underpins everything the school seeks to achieve. Good relationships between all stakeholders are a strong feature of the school.

The school is a very welcoming environment, pupils are happy to come to school and they demonstrate pride in their school, which results in them having a positive attitude to learning. Pupils make excellent progress in the seven years they are at school and there is no significant variation between the various groups of learners. Pupils benefit from the vast 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 an excellent Catholic education and the promotion of pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is outstanding.

The Religious Education curriculum provided is varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and on raising standards. Planning, assessment and monitoring systems developed since the last inspection have had a positive impact on pupil attainment and progress.

The head teacher and RE subject leader have a very clear vision for RE and for the Catholic Life of St Mary and St Michael's. The staff are good role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities. Governors provide excellent support and challenge for leadership; the chair and RE governors know the strengths of the school and the challenges that it faces.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been acted upon and good self-evaluation procedures have ensured that planned improvements are appropriate. The school is continually striving to improve standards. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is outstanding because of the quality of leadership from staff, governors and clergy and the accurate self-evaluation leading to clear targets and appropriate priorities to consolidate success and secure further improvements.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Develop partner classes for worship, to allow older pupils to model excellent child led worship and to train younger pupils to develop their skills in planning and leading regular Collective Worship.
- Monitor and track standards in both AT1 and AT2 in curriculum RE to highlight strengths in teaching.
- Extend the work already developed through whole school themed days to include visits to places of worship of other Christian and world faiths.

PUPILS

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

1

The vast majority of pupils at St Mary and St Michael's enjoy Religious Education. They speak 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 RE across the school are high and progress is outstanding. Most pupils' standards of attainment in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and their ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) is outstanding. From average starting points on entry to school in Foundation Stage, standards rise to being above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and excellent progress is made in Key Stage 2, resulting in standards being above national expectations with many pupils achieving the higher levels. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because teachers accurately identify their needs and carefully adapt support to meet them.

Pupils express their views and beliefs with confidence and are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus and other key religious figures. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish and the wider community. Pupils display outstanding behaviour for learning in RE; they are enthusiastic and eager to learn, respectful, considerate and reflective. Pupils readily tackle challenging activities and work collaboratively to complete tasks. Throughout the school and within individual classes there is a positive ethos and relationships at all levels are very well developed.

Prayer is central to school life and both pupils and staff experience a wide variety of opportunities to pray. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with enthusiasm and respect in a variety of gatherings for example in advent and in class assemblies. They are able to write their own prayers and to choose a range of hymns and religious artefacts. They also use

information and communication technology (ICT) and drama as well as using more traditional prayers during worship. Teachers are very good role models for the pupils and support them in planning acts of worship. This could be developed further by partnering classes for worship, to allow older pupils to model excellent child-led worship and train younger pupils to develop their skills in planning and leading regular Collective Worship. Pupils understand the importance of key celebrations in school and in the parish community throughout the liturgical year.

Pupils actively and enthusiastically 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 termly school-led Sunday Family Mass, and in the recent Mission week 'Walking with Jesus' and in the KS1 Palm Sunday assembly, observed during inspection. Pupils are considerate to others and caring to others in apparent need. Pupils regularly work together to lead and run their own fundraising activities, such as own clothes days, cake sales, Rock up in Red for British Heart Foundation and Year 4 led the no electricity day by being sponsored to 'put yourself in someone else's shoes'. The school supports many charities for example CAFOD, North West Children's Support Group, the SVP in the Parish and Donna's Dream House in Blackpool by raising funds and organising fund raising activities.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

The school's outstanding leaders and managers promote the Catholic Life of the school very well. The head teacher has a clear vision for RE, which all members of the school community share. The senior leadership team, governors and clergy 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, social, cultural and moral development is central to the school's vision. Pupils, staff and governors regularly review the Mission Statement that underpins the whole ethos in the school.

The leadership team is proactive in regular evaluation of RE and in developing further initiatives: they promote high standards through setting challenging targets for improvement. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil voice. RE and worship are monitored as rigorously as other core subjects in the curriculum. The RE subject leader is enthusiastic and very effective in supporting staff in developing the curriculum and trialling new materials.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties in full and are very supportive when challenging leaders and the staff team. Many governors are actively involved in the school and in the parish community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff. The role of the RE governor is significant in the partnership between governors, parishioners, staff and pupils. The governing body has the expertise to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. Standards in curriculum RE are monitored by the RE governor who has strong links with the school, regularly visiting and leading staff training and supporting the school in its aims. Parish catechists, who prepare pupils for the sacraments, succeed in strengthening the home, school and parish links: parents who are not Catholics have often joined the RCIA group, as a direct result of their child attending St Mary and St Michael's.

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 excellent role models for pupils and have very good relationships with pupils and parents.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities, for example singing to the elderly members of the parish at Christmas. Every Advent the local catholic schools plan a joint service together and raise money collectively for CAFOD. The Garstang Fairtrade campaign led to the formation of many links between Garstang and Ghana. These links culminated in a twin town relationship between Garstang and the cocoa farming community of New Koforidua that lies 40km from Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The school and many parishioners are involved with this association. These partnerships make an excellent contribution to pupils' outstanding achievement and well-being. The inclusion of all is a central goal and a shared vision in the school.

Leaders and managers are inclusive with all the families they serve and they work with others beyond the school to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to collaborate with people from different backgrounds. For example, recent themed world faith days have contributed to pupils having a greater understanding of the wider world and of other peoples' beliefs, cultures and needs. Plans are in place to extend this work by visiting places of worship of other Christian and world faiths.

Behaviour is excellent and pupils co-operate well with each other.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

1

Teaching is consistently highly effective in enthusing pupils and ensuring that they learn extremely well. Teachers and other adults are acutely aware of their pupils' capabilities and of their prior learning and understanding, and plan effectively to build on these.

RE displays of children's work around school are of a high quality and worship tables are well-resourced. The new outdoor prayer space is well used by pupils and staff for example in the Palm Sunday assembly observed during inspection that was shared with pupils, parents and parishioners. Support staff, are effectively deployed to meet the needs of the pupils in class, as individuals and groups are targeted for support.

The RE curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. "I enjoy RE and learning about justice in the world through the recent CAFOD topic on Common Good" stated one Year 6 pupil. Staff make learning interesting and this has a positive impact on pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation. Teachers enrich lessons through a variety of imaginative and well-planned strategies and use relevant resources. An outstanding lesson observed during inspection was focused on the principles of Catholic social teaching and the links with the realities of a child's life in Sierra Leone.

The RE curriculum provides good opportunities for, and has a positive impact on, pupils' spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in full with respect to the time allocated to it. The subject leader has worked with the Local Leaders of Diocesan Education to develop a curriculum that is fit for purpose and supported by staff and clergy.

Teachers share the learning objectives with pupils and give them the success criteria, so that all pupils have a clear idea of what is expected of them in every lesson. Teachers would benefit from monitoring and tracking standards in both AT1 and AT2 to highlight strengths in curriculum RE.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding: prayer is central to the life of the school and a key part of every celebration. It is fully inclusive, reflective and well-planned enabling pupils to take an active part, as observed in Foundation Stage and Year 2. 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 Masses.

The school encourages the participation of parents, family members and parishioners in liturgies in church and in school. Staff and clergy play an important part in sharing prayers and in preparing pupils for liturgies and Masses. The Parish appreciate the support of the staff, governors, families and pupils in the community.

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 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