



**DIOCESE OF LANCASTER EDUCATION SERVICE**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

**St. Mary's Catholic Primary School,  
Ulverston**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

**School:**

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

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**School URN:**

112358

**Headteacher:**

Laura Byrne

**Chair of Governors:**

Isabel O'Donovan

**Lead Inspector:**

Mia Barlow

**Team Inspector:**

Jacqueline Hampson

**Date of Inspection:**

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's Catholic Primary School is a small primary school situated in the historical market town of Ulverston, with close links to the local Catholic church. 50% of the children on roll are baptised Catholic. The school is part of Our Lady of Furness Catholic Federation, along with Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School in Dalton in Furness.

The majority of the school's intake comes from neighbouring localities, with eight pupils coming from a wider catchment area. Families from outside the immediate area travel some distances to attend a Catholic school. As a result, the school serves a varied population. The percentage of pupils currently eligible for Pupil Premium is 18%, which is just under the national average. Parents and carers support the school exceptionally well.

The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, including those with Educational Health Care Plans is in line with the national average.

The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is around 4%. The percentage of children with English as an additional language is 1%.

PUPILS	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number on roll	14	15	9	22	14	18	14	106
Catholics on roll	8	10	5	13	5	7	6	54
Other Christian denomination	6	5	3	9	9	11	7	51
Other faith background			1				1	2
No religious affiliation								0
No of learners from ethnic groups	1	1	1	1				4
Total on SEN Register	1		1	1	1	4	1	9
Total with Statements of SEN			1			3		

Exclusions in last academic year	Permanent	0	Fixed term	0
Index of multiple deprivation				

PARISHES SERVED BY THE SCHOOL	
Name of Parish	No of Pupils
Saint Mary and Margaret	121

<b>TEACHING TIME FOR RE</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Y4</b>	<b>Y5</b>	<b>Y6</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total teaching time (Hours)	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	10.5
% of teaching time	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%

<b>TEACHING TIME FOR ENGLISH</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Y4</b>	<b>Y5</b>	<b>Y6</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total teaching time (Hours)	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	32
% of teaching time	16%	16%	16%	16%	16%	20%	20%	18%

<b>TEACHING TIME FOR MATHS</b>	<b>YR</b>	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Y4</b>	<b>Y5</b>	<b>Y6</b>	<b>Total</b>
Total teaching time (Hours)	4	4	4	5	5	5	5	32
% of teaching time	16%	16%	16%	20%	20%	20%	20%	18%

<b>STAFFING</b>	
Full-time teachers	5
Part-time teachers	0
Total full-time equivalent (FTE)	5
Classroom Support assistants	9
Percentage of Catholic teachers FTE	66
Number of teachers teaching RE	5
Number of teachers with CCRS or equivalent	1
Number of teachers currently undertaking CCRS	3
Chaplaincy staffing	0

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	
Published admission number	15
Number of classes	4
Average class size KS1	29
Average class size KS2	34

<b>EXPENDITURE (£)</b>	<b>Last financial year 2020 -2021</b>	<b>Current financial year 2021- 2022</b>	<b>Next financial year 2022 -2023</b>
Total expenditure on teaching and learning resources	£25,000	£31357	£27276
RE Curriculum allowance from above	£3000	£5000	£2000
English Curriculum allowance from above	£2000	£2000	£2000
Total CPD budget	£2170	£2605	£2700
RE allocation for CPD	£1000	£1000	£1000

<b>How the school has developed since the last inspection</b>
Developed the quality of teaching across the school, providing differentiation to challenge and support learning.
Further developed the Religious Education curriculum with a wealth of learning activities and enhanced curriculum.
Sharing and celebrating the Catholic Life of the school with parents, governors, staff and children.

## **INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

## CATHOLIC LIFE

1

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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## KEY FINDINGS

St. Mary's is an outstanding Catholic school with many strengths. The Catholic ethos and mission are truly at the heart of everything that the school does. There is an overwhelming sense of family and community in the school. Staff and governors speak with pride about how it is impossible to separate the Catholic life of the school from anything else in school as it permeates everything they do. Staff and governors are justifiably proud of the children and their participation in the Catholic life of the school. One pupil described how they are called to serve, "we follow Jesus' message and help everyone." The pupils themselves are likewise proud of their teachers- who they say don't just tell them about gospel values – but are role models in the way they follow and demonstrate these values all the time.

Pupils make good progress as they journey through the school developing knowledge, understanding and skills in RE. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and benefit from a wide variety of well-structured and sequenced learning experiences. During school closures due to Covid, teaching in RE was delivered to both school and home learners. Effective and imaginative use of the outdoor environment adds to the excellent provision in RE.

The commitment of the governors and the headteacher is a strength of the school. The headteacher is a powerful driving force within the school and leads with passion, determination and love. The staff work together, supporting one another and speak with high regard of the support and the example they receive from the leadership team.

Prayer and Liturgy is an important part of school life and is treasured by staff and pupils alike.

### **CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT**

The school has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement due to the commitment of staff and governors, accurate and reflective self - evaluation and a continuous drive for improvement that is evident throughout the school. Improvement is driven by the passion and vision for Catholic life of the school and RE.

## **WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

To improve further the school needs to:

Further improve monitoring by:

- Creating discrete improvement plans, for Catholic Life and curriculum RE so that targets are more evident and can be measured more closely and accurately.
- Including the improvement actions already identified from data analysis in this plan

Further develop monitoring in the Early years

- By using baseline assessment on entry to the Nursery to evidence progress and to use the outcomes to plan for learning and measure progress more easily as they progress through the Foundation Stage.

Further develop children's role as co-creators by

- Continued development of the excellent use of the outdoor area and the creation room.
- Continued focus on the pupils' role in looking after God's world.

## PART A: CATHOLIC LIFE

### THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

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Pupils speak with great pride about the Catholic life of the school and clearly place great importance on this aspect of their school. They describe how this helps them to learn “how to be closer to God.” Pupils have a very strong sense of belonging and enjoy taking responsibilities for developing the Catholic life of the school. They have many responsibilities including fundraising for charities, visiting rest homes and caring for God’s creation. They talk confidently about how they support Mary’s Meals and Aid to the Church in Need. They speak with knowledge and passion about how they are called to care for each other and the wider community. A child in Key Stage 1 reported “they don’t necessarily have to like everybody but they do have to love them still.” Pupils take their role as co-creators very seriously and clearly benefit from the tasks they undertake.

Pupils show great reverence and respect during times of prayer and liturgy, demonstrating deep thought and heartfelt responses. This begins in the Foundation Stage where children are able to listen, contribute and reflect during prayer showing a sense of awe, wonder and spirituality. Pupils in Key Stage 1 take on increasing responsibility within prayer and liturgy, choosing religious artefacts and helping to write prayers. As pupils progress through Key Stage 2 they become very skilled at planning and leading prayer and liturgy. Pupils act with integrity, creating a spiritual atmosphere and prayer and liturgy clearly helps them to grow in their faith. Prayer is very important to the pupils and they see it as a vital part of their school life. Pupils are able to reflect deeply during times of prayer and this is evident in their responses. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of a wide variety of prayers. They have a good understanding of the liturgical seasons and feasts and are developing confidence in using scripture, religious artefact, hymns and other forms of prayer. They are considerate and sensitive to the needs of others.

The commitment of governors and school leaders to the Church’s mission is outstanding. Staff report that the senior leaders are excellent role models. The headteacher, who is deeply committed to making a difference in the pupils’ lives, speaks with great passion about helping the children to “grow in faith” so that they can make a difference in other people’s life as they grow up.

Governors play an important role in holding the school to account for its Catholic life and are both well informed and highly involved within this. Governors and

school leaders ensure that prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school and are a key part of school celebrations. Priorities are set through rigorous self – evaluation, where governors hold the school to account for its Catholic life. Based on strong evaluation of the school’s strengths and areas for development, governors and school leaders have a very clear vision, which is shared with staff about how to develop further the Catholic life of the school. A wealth of opportunities is provided for staff to grow in faith and knowledge and staff feel well supported by leaders and each other.

Pupils have a very clear understanding of the school's mission and feel that they too have a responsibility to develop this. They are able to speak confidently about how their beliefs are reflected in their actions. Whilst speaking about following gospel values one pupil explained that “they don’t just say it – they DO it.” They also express gratitude and admiration for the staff who, they say, “just live by gospel values.” Christ is at the centre of this school community, and this is reflected in the way that staff and pupils support each other and in the atmosphere of trust and respect that is so evident. The quality and quantity of religious displays and the spiritual learning environment clearly demonstrate that the Catholic faith is central to the school.

Many opportunities are provided for parents, parishioners and other community members to be involved in the Catholic life of the school and this has been maintained during school closures. This is also a great strength of the school.

## PART B: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education
- The quality of provision in Religious Education

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Inspection confirms the school's judgement that the extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE is outstanding. Pupils report that they enjoy RE and that they learn something new in every RE lesson. During inspection, pupils were able to talk with enthusiasm about their learning in RE, particularly in relation to using the school grounds when learning about God's creation and stewardship. They said that during RE lessons, they 'can open up and say what we really think and feel about things.'

Pupils engage exceptionally well in lessons and speak confidently using age-appropriate religious vocabulary. Across the whole school, pupils are highly motivated by the variety of creative and hands-on learning opportunities and are developing an excellent knowledge of scripture and the Sacraments of the Catholic Church. During inspection in the Early Years, where children were learning about the Annunciation, activities provided in the continuous provision gave children the opportunity to process and explore what they had learned, for example dressing up to act out Gabriel's visit to Mary and re-telling the story in the small world provision.

In a lesson observed during inspection, pupils in Key Stage 1 learned about the Most Holy Trinity. Using scripture, 'For God so loved the world, he gave his only Son', pupils articulated that God the Father is 'the father of Jesus, of us and of great nations.' They filled jars with water, oil and glitter and observed the contents when shaken and mixed together, then later when separated.

During inspection, pupils in lower Key Stage 2 used traditional artwork to reflect on the Annunciation and Mary's response to God. Pupils were fully engaged throughout. Excellent questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to make links to prior learning which deepened their understanding.

Pupils' books and other evidence show that their work is of a good standard across the school and that expectations are high.

Tracking of pupil progress is robust and provides further evidence of good progress and attainment. Baseline assessments are carried out at the beginning of the Reception year and show that children are broadly in line with age related expectations in RE. Leaders recognise that this baseline assessment could take

place on entry to school, enabling teachers to use the outcomes to plan for learning and measure progress more easily.

Prior to the pandemic, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was very high. Despite the impact of school closures on progress and attainment, pupils make good progress across the early years and Key Stage 1 and by the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils meet the age-related expectations for 5 to 7 years. Continued good progress throughout Key Stage 2 means that by the end of Y6, the vast majority of pupils achieve age-related expectations. A small number of pupils exceed the expectations by working at a much deeper level.

A portfolio of externally moderated work confirms the school's judgements on attainment are accurate.

The leadership and management for the provision for RE is outstanding. School leaders, including governors, have a clear, ambitious vision and ensure that this is shared with all staff. Monitoring of the quality of the curriculum and the quality of teaching is effective and demonstrates a continuous drive for excellence. For example, the introduction of the oversized 'Awe and Wonder' books enable pupils across the whole school to respond to questions of meaning and purpose more easily. The school development plan has *Fit for Mission* at its core. Leaders recognise that separating the areas for improvement which are specific to curriculum RE will enable even further improvement.

Staff report that they feel very well supported by the headteacher, who is the subject leader. They also value the support of the Parish Priest who answers difficult questions relating to the faith and wider issues, in a special book.

Governors offer both support and challenge to the school. They are well informed and speak with confidence and knowledge about teaching, learning and pupil progress in RE. For example, they spoke to inspectors about the work done by staff to improve pupils' knowledge of signs and symbols, following lesson observations and work scrutiny. The RE governor has worked very closely with the headteacher in the last two years to ensure Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) is fully implemented. This has included consultation, policy development and resourcing.

The leadership team ensures that the curriculum is engaging, challenging and meets the needs of all pupils. Careful consideration is given to ensuring work is differentiated. For example, RE is timetabled when support staff are available. I-pads and QR codes are used to record the work of those children for whom writing is difficult. The delivery of curriculum RE meets all the requirements of the RE Curriculum Directory and *Fit for Mission (Schools)*. Excellent subject knowledge and skilled use of questioning enhance teaching and learning across the school. Teaching is imaginative, creative and is consistently effective in engaging pupils. A wealth of resources including technology are used creatively to enhance the delivery of the curriculum.

Marking is used effectively to enable pupils to make improvements to their work.

Pupils say that teachers help them if they struggle with their work and provide them with constructive feedback.

Support staff are very well directed and make a positive contribution to teaching and learning ensuring that all pupils are able to access the RE curriculum.

A clear plan for enabling pupils to use scripture to support their learning has been put in place. This includes the introduction of weekly bible homework for which every pupil is given their own bible. In addition to re-affirming RE as the core of the curriculum, pupils are able to share their learning with their families. Pupils are confident in using scripture and are skilled in making links between what they learn in RE lessons and their actions in and beyond school.

## SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	1
<b>Capacity for sustained improvement</b>	1
<b>Catholic Life</b>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders and managers promote and ensure provision for the Catholic Life of the school through monitoring and evaluation.</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.</li> </ul>	1
<b>Religious Education</b>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.</li> </ul>	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of provision in Religious Education.</li> </ul>	1

	Pupil Outcomes	Leadership & Management	Provision	Overall
<b>Catholic Life</b>	1	1	1	1
<b>Religious Education</b>	1	1	1	1