

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: The Cathedral Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 119621

Headteacher: Miss Anne Goddard

Chair of Governors: Dr Judith Broadbridge

Section 48 Inspector: Mrs Margaret Wright

Date of Inspection: 22nd November 2010

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

The Cathedral Catholic Primary School is a Voluntary Aided school in the Diocese of Lancaster and serves the parishes of St Peter's Cathedral and St Thomas More in Lancaster and Our Lady Immaculate, Caton.

The school currently has 165 pupils on roll of whom 104 are baptised Catholics, 46 are of other Christian denominations and 15 have no religious affiliation. 19 pupils are from ethnic groups including an average number for whom English is a second language. The percentage of pupils with SEN is lower than the national average. At the end of Y6, only 24%, that is six pupils, transfer to the local Catholic secondary school, Our Lady's Catholic College, Lancaster.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	165
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics	63%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	28%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	9%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	12%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	15%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	6
Part-time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	43% FTE
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	38% FTE

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 Peter's Cathedral
2. St Thomas More
3. Our Lady Immaculate, Caton

Overall Effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

This is an outstanding catholic school. There is a vibrant, living, deep commitment to the school's role in fulfilling the mission of the Church to educate the whole person. All members of the community, from the inspirational headteacher to the youngest child in Reception, have a pride in belonging to this school and a wish to 'live life to the full'.

Standards of attainment have risen and pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are now attaining high standards with most attaining Level 4 and a small minority attaining Level 5. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and Early Years Foundation Stage also show high attainment and progress from a below average starting point.

The centrality of prayer and spiritual development is evident in every aspect of the school's work. Pupils worship with reverence, are introduced to the rich heritage of the Catholic Church's liturgy and are given opportunities for quiet reflection and private prayer. 'Worship is fun' said one Year 3 pupil.

Leaders and managers are fully committed to the school and work hard to ensure that areas of weakness are addressed. The school's systems of self-evaluation are robust and meticulous in their detail. This has had a significant impact upon the school's ability to raise standards. The commitment to staff development in faith formation is a particular strength of the school.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. Governors and senior managers have addressed all key issues from the last inspection. Senior leaders, including the subject leader for RE, are highly motivated and are consistent in focussing on securing improvement. Self evaluation is rigorous and is used to set appropriate priorities and challenging targets

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Ensure that high standards are maintained through further staff development on the use of attainment levels and strands when planning and assessing curriculum RE.
- Strengthen community cohesion further through teaching about people of other faiths and cultures. Promote a greater understanding of the similarities and differences between pupils' lives and those of people in a wider context.

PUPILS

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

2

Pupils enjoy their Religious Education (RE), most achieve well and a significant number make good progress. They demonstrate a very positive approach to their learning and take pride in their written work. Pupils enter the school with a large majority below average levels of attainment but quickly make progress in their knowledge and understanding of RE. By the end of Reception pupils can recognise and retell some religious stories and use some religious words and phrases. They can talk about their own experiences and feelings and say what they wonder about. During the inspection children in Early Years Foundation Stage talked enthusiastically about how God made the world and all the good things in it; they were eager to share their knowledge with others. Pupils in Year 2 showed sensitivity when praying and knew that during the month of November they were remembering those who have died. Year 6 pupils, observed in an RE lesson, demonstrated that they have a mature understanding of the concept of justice and are able to talk about how the beliefs of individuals such as Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King influenced their actions. Standards at the end of the 09/10 academic year were high with 79% attaining Level 4+ and 29% attaining Level 5 in Key Stage 2 and 96% attaining Level 2+ and 24% attaining Level 3 in Key Stage 1.

Through the school's comprehensive tracking system it is possible to track the progress of pupils from the previous year. By the end of the Spring Term 2009 targeted pupils were attaining secure or confident Level 4 in Year 6 and confident Level 2 with some evidence of a few reaching Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1. Although there is insufficient evidence of data on attainment at the end of the summer term 09, other evidence suggests that since the last inspection most pupils have made good progress and attained standards in line with other core subjects. Pupils are attaining equally well in both attainment targets across the key stages.

However, pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 2 are not yet demonstrating such high levels of attainment. Monitoring evidence shows that this appears to be cohort specific and that these pupils have been identified and supported throughout Key Stage 2.

Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) frequently make good progress and attain good standards due to the school's very effective use of a teaching assistant enabling them to establish clear knowledge of pupils' starting points.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are accurately identified, and targeted support is used to allow them to demonstrate their understanding.

The centrality of prayer is at the heart of this school and its contribution to the pupils' understanding of the Catholic life of the school is paramount. Pupils' leadership of worship, in particular the voluntary acts of worship such as the Rosary in October and May and the Advent worship at lunchtimes, gives them an appreciation of the role they play in living out the school's mission. The current Year 6 children speak with pride of the role they had played in leading some of these whole school celebrations and in Year 3 a group of pupils led their friends in reflecting on the riches that they had, using scripture and actions in an imaginative and meaningful way. Pupils are introduced to the rich heritage of the Catholic Church's prayer life through regular Mass with the parish, with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and with opportunities for quiet meditation as well as joyful singing. All these opportunities enrich the spiritual life of the pupils and develop their appreciation of their place within the wider church.

In other aspects of the Catholic life of the school pupils were carrying out a number of responsibilities including acting as 'buddies' and leading younger children into whole school worship. They carry out these roles with maturity and pride. A number of pupils act as altar servers for their respective parish churches. Relationships between parishes and school are very good and the use of the cathedral as a resource further enriches the opportunities for children to develop an appreciation of Catholic life. During inspection all pupils responded with courtesy and a warmth and curiosity, which gave evidence to the strong sense of security and worth they feel within the school. Pupils are currently collecting for the 'Shoebox' appeal and have recently raised money for CAFOD and supported the homeless in Lancaster. These actions deepen their commitment to the Church's mission to care for the weak and vulnerable in our society. They have a sense of belonging to one community, irrespective of faith or ethnic background. Pupils in Year 6 demonstrate an understanding of the concept of justice. Some pupils had decided themselves to investigate the local shops for evidence of Fair-trade items on sale.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

The school's leadership are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and are constantly seeking to inspire and lead their community forward. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership, well supported by her staff and governors. The high priority given to RE both in terms of its centrality within the curriculum and the rigorous monitoring and self evaluation carried out in all aspects of the religious life of the school means that the school leaders are well informed and able to tackle areas of weakness robustly. The regular opportunities for ongoing faith formation provided for all adult members of the school community is a particular strength of the school and this has a direct impact on outcomes for pupils. Teachers are encouraged to undertake the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) and currently three teachers are completing the course.

The RE subject leader is a highly motivated and skilled teacher who has a keen awareness of strengths and areas for development in Religious Education. The high quality of her work ensures that governors are well informed about the standards and progress in curriculum RE.

Governors are well organised, are visible in the school community and support staff and pupils well. Most governors know the strengths and areas of weakness in the school and are directly involved in setting priorities for improvement. They are provided with high quality information regarding curriculum RE which contributes to their setting of priorities. They have involvement in the direction of the school improvement plan. Governors are rightly proud of their school and the visible Catholic presence it provides for the community.

The school works with other providers to support its work. The use of the Diocesan Education Centre, cluster schools and local Catholic High School has allowed staff to develop their knowledge and understanding of curriculum RE and its assessment which has further contributed to the rise in standards. The school takes part in annual external moderation of its work in RE and has partnered with other local Catholic schools in the locality for an inset day on the work of CAFOD.

Community cohesion is good. All within the school are valued and respected for what they are. Leaders respect diversity and pupils from different backgrounds work together happily. There are very strong links with the parish communities and many staff are involved in parish activities. There is less evidence of the school engaging as fully with the wider local community, although the school does support local charities such as the homeless and takes harvest gifts to the housebound. The 'Shoebox' Appeal and fund raising for CAFOD show an appreciation of the

need to support the global community. They have established very positive links with schools in different parts of the world. At present the school has no pupils of other world faiths and recognises that this is an area that it needs to promote further in order to deepen pupils' understanding of the religious identity of others and the different beliefs and values of people around the world and in the locality.

The school has the strong support of parents. The parents' questionnaire confirmed this judgement with the vast majority stating that they felt welcome and that their child was happy in school. One parent commented on the developing spirituality of their child which they felt was a direct result of the teaching and example given by the school.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

2

Teaching is good throughout the school. In a Year 6 lesson observed pupils were engaged through excellent use of information and communication technology (ICT) by the teacher to deepen their understanding at an appropriate level. Scrutiny of pupils' work both current and from previous years and a sample of lesson observations by the subject leader showed that teachers are well equipped with knowledge about religious education to set meaningful tasks and to relate these to the levels of attainment for the subject. Where teaching is less effective there is some evidence that tasks sometimes do not allow pupils to demonstrate understanding at a higher level of attainment. In some instances there may be over-reliance on the scheme to provide assessment tasks. In the lesson observed during inspection additional support staff were effectively deployed to assist groups of pupils. The learning objective was displayed and clearly understood by pupils and more advanced work was set for higher attaining pupils.

The school's assessment, monitoring and tracking is of a very high quality. The setting of individual targets and the half termly monitoring of progress allows weakness to be quickly identified and measures taken to address issues. The school sets targets of two sub levels per year for each pupil which is challenging but wholly appropriate given the school's commitment to the highest quality curriculum RE. The introduction of pupils' self-assessment this term is a new initiative, which is beginning to give pupils more ownership of their learning. Marking usually refers to the learning objective but might be further strengthened by reference to the strand and level to which the task is directed.

The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of pupils. The use of teaching assistants, particularly for pupils with EAL, is also well planned and allows pupils who may have difficulties with spoken or written language to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. The school

makes good use of the scheme, 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' and supplements this with additional resources such as scripture and ICT. The use of the Cathedral as a resource is a highly valued addition, leading to opportunities for pupils to experience the living practice of the Faith. This further impacts on the opportunities particularly for younger pupils for whom this may be their only experience of 'Church'.

The opportunities for prayer are highly evident throughout the school. Displays in classrooms and around school lead pupils into contemplation and invite them to pray in many ways. During November a book of remembrance asks pupils to remember those who have died. A display in the school hall challenges pupils to live out Pope Benedict's message to 'live life to the full'. Pupils plan and lead acts of worship at an appropriate level throughout the school. The monthly 'Baptism Assembly' is a highly effective way of involving parents and the wider parish community in the life of the school.

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	2
• how well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education?	1
❖ 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	1
❖ 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
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?	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?	2
PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?	2
• the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education?	2
• the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education?	2
• the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs?	1
• the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school?	1