

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St Cuthbert's Catholic Primary School
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School URN: 112370
Head teacher: Mrs Pauline Moss
Chair of Governors: Canon John Watson
Section 48 Inspector: Mrs Jacqueline Hampson
Date of Inspection: 31st March 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 Cuthbert's Catholic Community School is a smaller than average primary school situated in Carlisle, in the Diocese of Lancaster. The school serves the parish of Our Lady of Eden. There are 118 pupils on roll, including nursery pupils, of whom 31 are baptised Catholics, 58 are from other Christian denominations, 2 are from other faith backgrounds and 27 have no religious affiliation.

The proportion of pupils who join school or leave other than at the normal times is above average and therefore classes and groups change often. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is two and a half times the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of educational need, is broadly average.

At the end of year six, two thirds of pupils transfer to Newman Catholic High School in Carlisle.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

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| Number of pupils on roll: | 118 |
| Planned Admission Number of Pupils: | 30 |
| Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics: | 26% |
| Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations: | 49% |
| Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds: | 2% |
| Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation: | 23% |
| Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups: | 20% |
| Percentage of pupils with special needs: | 9% |

Staffing

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| Full-time teachers: | 5 |
| Part-time teachers: | 3 |
| Number of Catholic teachers: | 2 |
| Number of teachers with CCRS: | 1 |

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

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| R | 10% | Yr 4 | 10% |
| Yr 1 | 10% | Yr 5 | 10% |
| Yr 2 | 10% | Yr 6 | 10% |
| Yr 3 | 10% | | |

Parish served by the school:

1. Our Lady of Eden

Overall Effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

MAIN FINDINGS

St Cuthbert's is a good and improving Catholic school which is fully inclusive and is truly at the heart of the community. The head teacher provides strong leadership, ensuring that all those involved in the life of St Cuthbert's are committed to the mission statement, 'Let your light shine'. Leaders and managers strive successfully to ensure that the school is a worshipping community. Parents and governors regularly attend acts of worship and liturgy in school.

Teaching and learning in RE are good overall, with some teaching in Key Stage 1 being outstanding. Baseline data shows that pupils enter school well-below expected starting points in the skills and knowledge of religion. Standards of attainment are improving overall and are now good at the end of Key Stage 1; at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is average, but is improving. This means that, from well-below expected starting points pupils make good progress overall.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and they benefit greatly from this. There are good relationships in school and pupils are happy to attend St Cuthbert's.

Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school have improved greatly since the last inspection and are now good. Governors ensure that there are systems in place to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the Catholic life of the school, giving them a picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They receive reports from the head teacher, who is the RE subject leader, and from the RE governor, on curriculum RE and Collective Worship.

Capacity for improvement

All areas for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and are having a positive impact on the life of the school. Since the last inspection the assessment and tracking systems have been embedded, and are ensuring that progress is carefully monitored, enabling school leaders to tackle underachievement. The impact of this can be seen fully in Key Stage 1 and is beginning to influence attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

The head teacher is passionate and driven in the pursuit of excellence for every child. Governors, including the effective RE governor, have a clear vision of an education rooted in the Catholic faith and tradition. The school engages well with the Diocesan Education Service and there is good support for all staff in school. As a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is very good.

What the school needs to do to improve further

1. Continue to promote the very good and outstanding teaching, to ensure that standards of attainment rise across the school.
2. Share the best practice in marking across the whole school, so that all pupils are challenged to reflect upon and extend their learning further.

PUPILS

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

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The school's judgement on the impact of Religious Education is that outcomes for pupils are good and inspection confirms this.

Pupils enjoy RE and have positive attitudes towards their learning. They particularly enjoy using art work, role play and technologies to enhance their learning in RE. Older pupils described how they enjoyed making 3D crosses as part of a special RE week.

From very low starting points, as shown in the baseline information about pupils on entry into the school, pupils make good progress overall. Progress has continued to improve since the last inspection. There is little difference in the rate of progress of different groups of pupils, including Catholic and non Catholic, boys and girls, and those with additional needs. Pupils who join the school other than at normal times make above average progress due to the good teaching they receive. Pupils have a developing sense of religious literacy and are making progress in both knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and in an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2).

Pupils' standards of attainment are improving, largely as a result of the drive of the leadership team, and attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is now good. Teachers in the Nursery and Reception classes are skilled in using the detailed baseline data they collect, to plan for and measure progress across the foundation stage.

Records for the last three years show that standards in RE at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen and are now above average. They are higher than standards in reading measured nationally.

By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are average, and the school's own data and tracking systems show an improving picture.

The school's judgements about pupils' attainment have been verified by diocesan colleagues at external moderation.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school, in particular through fundraising for those less fortunate than themselves. They understand and can talk about why, as members of a Christian community, they need to help those in the local area and others in need.

Pupils show an awareness of the importance of key celebrations in school and in the parish community, throughout the liturgical year. They regularly lead acts of Collective Worship, both in their own classes and for the whole school. A pupil in year one spoke confidently about liturgical colours, explaining why we use the colour purple during Lent and Advent and why we use green 'for most of the rest of the time'.

Acts of worship are inclusive, in line with the ethos of the school and engage all pupils in St Cuthbert's who participate well. Pupils act with reverence and are eager to participate in the different types of worship offered by the school. There is a clear plan for Collective Worship in the school, so that by Key Stage 2, pupils have experienced many opportunities to contribute to and lead acts of worship and they do this with confidence. During inspection, pupils in upper Key Stage 2 planned and led worship with their peers. With the effective support of staff, they were able to select prayers and scripture to engage their peers in reflecting on being 'Called to Serve'.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

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Inspection confirms the school's judgement that the effectiveness of leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school is good. School leaders and managers promote the Catholic life of the school very well. The head teacher, who is also the RE subject leader, shares a clear vision and direction for the Catholic life of the school. She ensures that the mission statement is at the heart of everything in school and is shared by all members of the school community.

School self-evaluation is thorough and shows a clear focus on the impact of measures taken. As a result, the school is clearly able to demonstrate that issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and are having a positive impact on the Catholic life of the school and on curriculum RE.

Provision for RE is monitored and evaluated very well and the RE subject leader is clear about areas for development. She is well-supported and challenged by governors. There are plans in place that focus clearly on areas for improvement and ensure that outcomes have a positive impact on teaching, learning, progress and standards in RE.

As a result of this monitoring, standards are shown to have improved in RE over the last three years to above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average by the end of Key Stage 2. The RE development plan has a clear focus on ensuring continued, rapid progress for pupils in Key Stage 2, to bring standards of attainment to above average across the whole school.

Since the last RE inspection, governance of the Catholic dimension of the school has improved and is now good. Governors ensure there are systems in place for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of school life. The RE governor has a good knowledge of the key issues in RE, including rates of pupil progress and standards of attainment. She is a regular visitor to school and spends time in classes, monitoring RE and worship. She meets with the head teacher to discuss her findings and monitor progress towards the school's improvement priorities. As a result, governors speak with confidence about provision for both attainment targets in RE, tracking pupil progress and pupil attainment in RE compared to other core subjects. Governors are proud of the school and value the work of all staff members who 'help children to see the spiritual side of life, through an education rooted in the Catholic faith and traditions.'

Leaders have established strong links with parents, the community, local schools and schools in other areas. The vice-chair of governors, who is also the chaplain at the Catholic High School, and all leaders are using these links to good effect, for the benefit of the Catholic life of the school, to provide good value for money and to enable pupils to enjoy and achieve well. Leaders recognise the importance of developing these partnerships further, particularly with other Catholic schools, in order to share and promote Catholic learning.

The promotion of community cohesion is good. There is a shared vision in school, where everyone is valued and included in this varied worshipping community. The school plays a key role in supporting vulnerable children and their families by keeping close contact with their parents and engaging them in school activities.

During a period of instability in staffing, the head teacher has successfully ensured there is a common sense of belonging amongst staff and pupils and all have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. The curriculum is planned to meet all pupils' needs and there is equality of opportunity for all.

All staff, including those who are not Catholic and those new to the profession, are well supported by senior leaders. The school accesses diocesan professional development activities both at individual and at whole school level. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

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The school provides a good Religious Education curriculum that is structured around the diocesan approved scheme 'The Way the Truth and the Life'. The head teacher is leading developments in the school to use the national Religious Education Curriculum Directory and a wider range of teaching resources, to enrich curriculum provision.

The curriculum meets the statutory requirements of the Bishops' Conference with respect to the time given to it.

Evidence from monitoring carried out by leaders in school shows that the quality of teaching is good overall: inspection confirms this and notes that some teaching is outstanding.

Teachers' planning is detailed and has a clear focus on the intended learning outcomes of pupils. Teachers use a range of teaching styles and good questioning techniques to ensure that all pupils are engaged and make good progress. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the achievement of those pupils who need additional support in the classroom.

In the Foundation Stage, a prayer area has been set up in the classroom. The theme and resources available to children are changed regularly. It is used well by children to think, pray and write prayers, beyond their directed teaching activities.

A Key Stage 1 lesson observed during the inspection buzzed with excitement, as the teacher planned activities which motivated and interested children and required lots of collaboration. Very careful questioning helped children to reflect on their learning. There were clear

'steps to success' to enable all pupils to reflect on some symbols of the Mass. As a result, outcomes for these pupils were outstanding.

Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 used new technologies well during a lesson observed. Pupils responded well to teacher questioning; one pupil, when asked why Jesus is called 'The Lamb of God' responded, 'lambs were used as sacrifice and Jesus sacrificed himself for us'.

The quality of displays in classrooms and in communal areas reflects the importance of the RE curriculum in school. A display in upper Key Stage 2 on 'leadership' provides evidence of the range of activities in which children participated, as well as some thought-provoking responses and reflections from the pupils.

Assessment and monitoring procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now good. The head teacher meets with each teacher termly to monitor the progress of each child and respond to any underachievement quickly. The quality of marking is largely good overall, although there are some variations. Where it is best, marking informs pupils of the next steps in learning and requires pupils to respond to a comment or question, or to challenge what the teacher has written when marking their work.

All staff value the support they receive from the RE subject leader and from the RE governor. During the regular moderation meetings for curriculum RE, staff are supported in assessing RE and levelling pupils' work. They say this gives them confidence when assessing pupil progress. There are portfolios of moderated work for the past three years which have been agreed externally by diocesan colleagues and confirm the judgements made by teachers.

The quality of Collective Worship in the school is good and the spiritual and moral development of pupils is enriched by the opportunities offered.

Acts of worship are given a high profile and are well-resourced: they are well-planned and inclusive of all pupils. Staff provide a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer. Discussions with pupils confirm that prayer is an important part of their lives and that they are developing an understanding of different types of prayers and their purpose.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding**

Grade 2 **Good**

Grade 3 **Satisfactory**

Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

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| Overall effectiveness | 2 |
| The school's capacity for sustained improvement | 2 |
| 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? | 2 |
| ❖ 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 | 2 |
| ❖ pupils' attainment in RE | 3 |
| • to what extent do pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school? | 2 |
| • how well do pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship? | 2 |
| LEADERS AND MANAGERS How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School? | 2 |
| • 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? | 2 |
| • how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils? | 2 |
| • 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? | 2 |
| • 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 RE | 2 |
| • the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education? | 2 |
| • the extent to which Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs? | 2 |
| • the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school? | 2 |