

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: St. Begh's Catholic Junior School

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School URN: 112354

Headteacher: Mrs Catherine Mallard

Chair of Governors: Rev. Stephen Scott

Section 48 Inspector: Mrs Mia Barlow

Date of Inspection: 21st June 2013

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. Begh's is a Catholic Voluntary Aided junior school in the Diocese of Lancaster. It is a larger than average junior school that serves mainly the Parishes of St. Begh's and St. Benedict's. Almost all children are of white British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, as is the number of children with special educational needs.

FACTUAL INFORMATION

Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	267
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics	84%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	15%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	0.03%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	0%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	22%

Staffing

Full-time teachers:	9
Part-time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	88%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	30%

Percentage of learning time given to RE:

Yr 3	10%	Yr 4	10%
Yr 5	10%	Yr 6	10%

Parish served by the school:

St. Begh's
St. Benedict's
St. Mary's Kells
St. Mary's Cleator

Overall Effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

MAIN FINDINGS

St. Begh's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. The mission and ethos of Catholic Education are at the heart of all that the school does. There is a very strong sense of community in the school. Staff, pupils and governors speak with pride about positive relationships, high expectations and commitment to the shared vision. Pupils are eager to embrace the Catholic mission and participate fully in the Catholic Life of the school. There is a vibrancy that runs through the Religious Education curriculum, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school.

Pupils make at least good and sometimes outstanding progress as they journey through the school developing knowledge, understanding and skills in each year group. The pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and are offered a variety of stimulating and well planned learning experiences in Religious Education. There are high expectations and challenge in everything that the school does.

Governors and senior managers demonstrate great commitment and this is evidenced through their monitoring, clear development plans and evidence of challenge at all levels. The acting head teacher leads by example and with the RE subject leader is driving improvements based on clear vision and high expectations. There are excellent relationships between the school and the Parish.

An extensive range of Collective Worship opportunities is offered to engage pupils of different ages and abilities in praise, thanksgiving and silent reflection. Pupils response to, and participation in Collective Worship are a great strength of the school.

Capacity for improvement

The school's capacity for improvement is excellent. Despite disruptions to staffing, the school has improved since the last Section 48 inspection with standards in Religious Education rising considerably. Leaders and managers have high expectations of themselves and of the staff. The vision for the school is shared throughout and self-evaluation shows that the school has a good awareness of how to improve further.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Further develop the improved marking and feedback to ensure consistency across the school.
- Develop the tracking and evaluation process to include information on the progress and attainment of all groups including the different attainment strands within RE.
- Seek more opportunities for pupils to collaborate with people from different faith backgrounds.
- Continue to develop staff knowledge and understanding of what is required to achieve the highest levels for all pupils.

PUPILS

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

2

The school evaluates pupils' outcomes in RE as good and inspection confirms this judgement.

Through Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress and have good attitudes to learning. Baseline assessment on entry to Year 3 shows that some pupils enter St. Begh's with attainment below national expectations and some with attainment that is in line with national expectations. By the end of the Key Stage pupils have made good progress and attainment is in line with or above expectations. Pupils in receipt of free school meals make good progress as do those with special educational needs.

The standard of work in pupils' books is excellent and is an indicator of the high expectations shared by all in RE. Pupils speak with pride, confidence and enthusiasm about their learning in RE. They describe their lessons as "fun, interesting and full of different kinds of activities." In lessons observed pupils were engaged in challenging and imaginative tasks and showed both resilience and developing independence; they respond with enthusiasm and are keen to participate. Pupils demonstrate good knowledge of the Bible including parables, miracles and the liturgical seasons of the church. They also know about the lives of a number of saints.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and contribute greatly to the Catholic Life of the school. They express their views confidently and are able to relate these to the teachings of Jesus. The school motto - "*Walking hand in hand in the footsteps of Christ: we are his hands, we are his feet*" is very important to them and this is reflected in their behaviour towards others and their sense of responsibility to the wider community, especially to those in need. The school council choose charities for the school to support and pupils across the school are actively involved in fund raising. Charities supported include Help for Heroes, Water Aid, Macmillan Cancer Support, Cafod and Children's Heart Unit Fund. Pupils take advantage of the many opportunities offered in school, as part of the year of faith, to contribute to the religious life of the school. Examples include naming the four doors of faith in the school, recycling projects and taking part in voluntary lunch time prayer groups in their prayer room. Pupils feel a strong sense of community. One pupil described St. Begh's as "a family where everybody is loved by each other and there is always someone you can trust."

Pupils have a very strong sense of the importance of trust and report that, "Because we know that we can always trust God, we have to make sure that people can trust us too."

Prayer is central to the life of the school. Every class has a prayer space which is clearly valued by pupils. The pupils' response to Collective Worship is outstanding. In all the acts of Collective Worship observed there was a very spiritual atmosphere and pupils of all ages showed great reverence and respect.

Year 6 pupils lead Collective Worship for pupils in Year 3. As pupils progress through the school the responsibility they take for planning and leading worship increases. During a teacher-led act of worship in a Year 5 class all pupils were engaged in a spirit of awe and wonder and were eager to participate. They displayed an ability to take part in both traditional and spontaneous prayer, showing respect for other people's prayer intentions. During a whole school very good act of worship, older pupils used drama and music to add impact to their Bible message. Pupils report that they enjoy Collective Worship and that assemblies are joyful times.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

School self-evaluation judges the effectiveness of leaders and managers in developing the Catholic Life of the school to be good: inspection evidence confirms this. Leaders and managers are deeply committed to promoting the Catholic Life of the school. The Catholic mission is at the heart of all that the school does and is clearly lived out in the way staff and pupils support each other. Staff describe the acting headteacher and RE subject leader as amazing role models whose strong faith is lived out daily and is evident in all that they do.

The monitoring of RE and pupil progress has become more rigorous since the last inspection and this has led to further improvements in RE provision. A detailed tracking system is in place, progress is tracked and targets set and shared with pupils. Leaders and managers now need to further develop their evaluation procedures to include highlighting any groups where attainment is lower and putting strategies in place to narrow the gap. They are well on their way to achieving this. Tracking achievement in the different attainment strands would also add to the impact of assessment and evaluation. Staff and governors are all developing their knowledge of strengths and areas for improvement. The School Improvement Plan sets out clear priorities to address targeted areas.

Lesson observations are used by staff to identify good practice and highlight areas for improvement. Work scrutiny has led to an improvement in marking

and feedback to pupils. In some classes this is now outstanding. This now needs to be shared across the school to ensure consistency of high standards.

Governors challenge and support the school. They have a high profile and are involved in well documented monitoring visits. The RE governor and chair of governors are well informed and take on their responsibilities with vigour and enthusiasm, demonstrating a clear drive for school improvement. This is shown in their high level of involvement in monitoring, evaluating and development planning. They are rightly proud of the pastoral care and of the way that the faith is lived out in their school family.

Leaders and managers have developed effective partnerships with other providers, organisations and services such as local schools and parishes, theatre companies, Cafod, MacMillan Cancer Support and the Diocese. Parish links are excellent and contribute significantly to the Catholic Life of the School. The parish priest is a regular visitor to school and promotes pupils' visits to the church at every opportunity. His time in school is purposeful and staff speak very positively about the contribution he makes to the Catholic Life of the school and to RE.

Leaders and managers have a good awareness of the need to promote community cohesion. Pupils and staff share a very strong sense of belonging. Positive relationships are evident in all areas of the school. Many opportunities are taken to learn about people from different backgrounds and cultures. Pupils have pen pals in Africa, China and Korea: visiting teachers from other countries visit the school as part of the "connecting classrooms" project and share their experiences with pupils. Although there are already many opportunities to learn about other faiths in the RE curriculum, leaders and managers recognise the need to further develop cohesion with people of other faiths. The school, for example, could arrange visits to a variety of places of worship so that the children can engage in dialogue with people who hold different beliefs and values. Good use is made of resources to support global awareness and community cohesion. Parents are often invited to events in school and in the Parish and are very supportive of the school.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

2

The school evaluates provision for Catholic education as good and inspection confirms this judgement. Much of the teaching observed during the inspection was outstanding; pupils were challenged, supported and highly motivated. In a year 4 class pupils were engaged through a variety of teaching and learning activities. There was pace, challenge and an excitement to the lesson, and progress in learning was clearly seen. The same high expectations and pace were also observed in a Year 5 class where children were learning about

different beliefs in our community. Pupils were challenged to research independently. The clarity of the task, along with the dynamic teaching style provided pupils with an excellent learning experience.

Pupils report that they enjoy RE lessons and find them interesting. They speak animatedly about a variety of learning experiences including drama, art and ICT. They have a good knowledge of Bible stories and particularly enjoyed the "scripture in pictures" project. Pupils across the school are confident, knowledgeable and highly motivated in RE.

The school makes good use of visitors including the local parish priests and charity workers, to add meaning to the learning and to make it purposeful to the pupils. Although meeting different needs is not always clear in plans, lessons observed were clearly adapted to meet the needs of individuals. Good use is made of other adults in the classroom to remove barriers to learning and to enable all pupils to access learning and produce high quality work. Effective use is made of Information and Communication Technology to engage all pupils. Teachers use assessment during lessons and provide pupils with challenge and next steps through oral feedback. Marking and feedback has developed across the school and in some classes is outstanding.

The RE curriculum provided by the school meets the needs of the pupils and is in line with the Bishop's Conference requirements with respect to the time given. The school structures the RE curriculum around the scheme "The Way the Truth and the Life" and enrich learning by using a wide variety of creative opportunities to engage pupils. Teaching materials provided by the Diocese for the Year of Faith have also been used effectively.

Pupil progress is monitored regularly; this along with high expectations has led to an improvement in standards. Staff are working with the Catholic high school and the Diocese to ensure that they have a good knowledge of what is required to reach the highest levels. External moderation shows that school assessment judgements are secure at levels one to four but still need some adjustment at level five.

Prayer is central to the life of the school. The provision for Collective Worship is outstanding and as pupils journey through the school they become increasingly skilled in planning and leading worship. There is a good balance of teacher and pupil led worship. Pupils are given opportunities to plan and lead worships, selecting scripture readings and traditional prayers, leading their peers in reflection and inspiring spontaneous prayer. Themes chosen by staff and pupils reflect the Liturgical seasons and the mission of the Church.

Through the prayer room, pupils are offered the chance to take part in lunch time prayer groups, where they demonstrate awe and reverence and show great respect for other peoples' prayer intentions. Pupils share in the celebration of Mass and also other liturgical services such as benediction. The

Parish priest explains the meaning and significance of these liturgies to the pupils.

Pupils, parents, staff and Parish share the celebration of the key Catholic celebrations. Pupils report that they enjoy the variety of Collective Worship opportunities and see them as a very important part of St. Begh's school. Their outstanding response to Collective Worship shows that not only do they say this but that they live it out in school as they walk hand in hand in the footsteps of Christ.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 **Outstanding** Grade 2 **Good** Grade 3 **Satisfactory** Grade 4 **Unsatisfactory**

Overall effectiveness	2
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?	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	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?	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?	1
• 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 wellbeing?	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 RE?	1
• 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?	1