

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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**School:** St James' Catholic Primary School

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**School URN:** 112351

**Headteacher:** Mrs Nerissa Nicholas

**Chair of Governors:** Mr John Rogers

**Section 48 Inspector:** Mr Gerard McKeivitt

**Date of Inspection:** 9 October 2012

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 James' Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school situated in Millom, Cumbria. The school mainly serves the parish of Our Lady and St James in Millom in an area of some socio economic deprivation. There are currently 202 children on roll of which 60 (30%) are baptised Catholic, 142 (70%) are from other Christian denominations and 0% are from other faith backgrounds. The school has just above the average number of pupils with special needs (19%) and a low number of pupils receive free school meals (12%). At the end of Year 6 a majority of pupils attend the Millom School and a small number of pupils attend St Bernard's Catholic High School in Barrow.

## **FACTUAL INFORMATION**

### **Pupil Catchment:**

Number of pupils on roll:	202
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	30
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics	30%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	70%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	0%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	0%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	0%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	19%

### **Staffing**

Full-time teachers:	7
Part-time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	63%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	49%

### **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 %		

### **Parish served by the school:**

Our Lady and St James', Millom.

**Overall Effectiveness**

**1**

**Capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## **MAIN FINDINGS**

St James' Catholic Primary School provides an outstanding level of education and is highly respected within its community as a caring and nurturing environment which truly promotes and demonstrates its mission, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love' (Jer 31:3). The Headteacher, staff and governing body rigorously strive to fulfil this mission so that everyone can reach their full potential within this happy and secure learning environment.

Most pupils come into the school with a low baseline of religious understanding and experience, yet in recent years they have made excellent progress so that by the end of the Key Stage 2 they are operating at above the national levels of attainment. This excellent progress can be attributed to the high standards expected from its staff and pupils and the high quality training that has been put in place so that all members can achieve their full potential. The school now aims to build on this high achievement by strengthening its assessment procedures throughout the school.

The school's provision for Catholic education is outstanding. Teaching and learning in Religious Education are at least good and often outstanding which enables the majority of pupils to make excellent progress. Staff are deployed effectively to meet the varying needs of its pupils and as such pupils with special needs make very good progress.

The school is truly an oasis for the community and promotes a stimulating, calm and productive learning environment which is adapted to suit the needs of its learners. Pupils are aware of the high standards expected from them and respond positively to the support and guidance given to them. As a result the pupils' behaviour is excellent, they care for each other and are eager to participate and learn in their lessons.

The quality of Collective Worship has a considerable impact on the spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils. The staff and pupils work hard to support each other and promote moments of peace and calm within the busy school to which all pupils respond in a meaningful and appropriate manner. Pupils from an early age are given the opportunities to be proactive in Collective Worship, from taking part in role play to illustrating Bible stories, to fully planning and leading acts of worship.

Leaders and managers in the school make a highly significant impact on the provision for Catholic education for the pupils in its care. The governing body plays an active role in supporting and challenging the school to continually improve its provision. The school has the strong support of parents as reflected in the very positive parent questionnaire responses.

### **Capacity for sustained improvement**

The school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement through the strong leadership of the Headteacher, the staff, the governing body and the strong support of parents. Since the last inspection the school has shown that attainment at the higher levels has greatly improved, boys perform in line with girls and there are extended opportunities to promote community cohesion. The Headteacher is committed to ensuring these strategies move the school forward and continue to raise standards of attainment in religious education for all pupils.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further**

- To ensure that the assessment strategies have a more formative structure in order to continue to embed high levels of attainment throughout the school.

## **PUPILS**

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

**1**

Inspection judges that the standards of attainment and the progress of learning in RE for pupils are outstanding.

Over the past three years attainment data shows that there has been continued improvement in attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

St James's has in place a baseline assessment system which confirms that most children enter the Reception class with a low understanding and experience of religion. At the end of the Foundation Stage most pupils, given their starting points, make good progress so that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupil attainment in RE is above national expectations. This trend continues and by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is well above national expectations and in line with their attainment in English. This shows the excellent progress and attainment made by the majority of learners across the key stages.

Most pupils attain high standards in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and in an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) in all key stages. At the end of KS2 the vast majority of pupils attain level 4, with over 30% attaining level 5. This is a considerable improvement in attainment since the last inspection.

The excellent progress of pupils can be attributed to the effective professional development received by all staff, such as achievement at the higher levels, and the continued monitoring of progress of attainment for all learners. This has enabled the school to provide the expertise and resources to identify areas for improvement in order to raise attainment across all key stages. As such there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls (eg 2012 KS2 L5 Boys 30% and Girls 31%). Pupils with special needs are very well supported by teaching assistants who work hard to meet their needs through a range of strategies such as small group work and in class support. As a result special needs pupils make at least good progress.

Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They are able to speak with great confidence about their beliefs and views and are able to link this to the teachings of Jesus and other key religious figures. They value and respect the Catholic life of the school and their engagement with it; for example pupils were keen to express how they enjoy their visits to the parish church and speak with a sense of reverence about their areas of worship within school. They take full advantage of the opportunities for personal development that the school has to offer and

this contributes greatly to the excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural education in school.

Pupils from the earliest age engage in a variety of acts of worship to which they respond with a sense of reverence, thoughtfulness and empathy towards others. An observed act of worship in Year 4 about 'Little Way Week' showed that the pupils act with integrity in moments of public and private prayer, they listen respectfully and were able to offer their own interpretations to a Gospel passage. The pupils also show a good knowledge of traditional prayers from our Catholic faith tradition and were able to contribute their own thoughts and prayers. The contribution of Collective Worship is evident in the way the pupils treat each other in their excellent behaviour and relationships with each other. This makes a considerable contribution to the spiritual, social and moral development of the pupils.

## **LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

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

<b>1</b>
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The school judges leadership and management of the school to be good but inspection finds it to be outstanding.

The Headteacher is very much the rock and driving force of the whole school community, who has boundless zeal and determination to inspire everyone to achieve their full potential. The school is deeply committed to promoting its mission, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love' (Jer 31:3) and this is evident in the caring ethos of the school and is at the forefront of all its documentation. She is supported by the school leadership team and staff who have worked hard to establish a culture of high expectations in RE. As a result, pupils have a great understanding of the schools' mission; they share its purpose and are actively involved in shaping and supporting it.

The RE subject leader has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and actions are in place to more fully formalise assessment strategies throughout the school.

The governing body makes a highly significant contribution to the Catholic life of the school and discharges its statutory and canonical duties effectively. All governors are involved in the school's established self-evaluation programme and in formulating the school improvement plan. Governors have the responsibility to monitor and evaluate a specific area of the improvement plan and as such the RE governor is very aware of the school's attainment in RE and its areas to develop in the future. The governing body is confident in its role as 'a critical friend' and provides a

high level of challenge for the school, such as in its analysis of attainment data, in order to bring about necessary improvements.

The governing body and the leadership team excel at promoting community cohesion at school, local, national and international levels. This school really does go the extra mile to equip its learners with the necessary skills to be fully active citizens in the future. Leaders and managers are very proud of their place in the local community and pupils take part in a variety of local initiatives such as Rotakids charity work. The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school and the pupils regularly attend Mass at the parish church. Visits for pupils take place to St Peter's Cathedral and a highly respected choir takes part in inter-denominational services locally. As a rural community leaders and managers are acutely aware of the need to prepare the pupils for our diverse society by taking part in a very successful link with a school in Nepal and visits to a Synagogue, Mosque and a Buddhist Centre. Such activities greatly contribute to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of other faiths. Pupils also participate in a range of charity activities at a local and international level such as fundraising for the elderly and CAFOD.

This is a school that is very much at the heart of the community and is highly respected with all denominations (eg 30% pupils are Catholic and 70% pupils are non Catholic), as one parent stated, 'Excellent ethos, feels like my extended family.'

## **PROVISION**

### **How effective the provision is for Catholic Education**

<b>1</b>
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Inspection finds that the quality of provision for its learners is outstanding. The quality of teaching is at least good and often outstanding. This is effective in ensuring that pupils are consistently interested in their learning and make excellent progress given their starting points.

The school adopts a creative curriculum and uses a cross curricular approach to teaching and learning in order to fully engage the needs and interests of its learners. Pupils enjoy links to subjects, such as Science in Year 6 when growing seeds to explain the Parable of the Sower and acting out the Creation story using toys in the Reception class. In an observed Year 5 lesson about 'How individuals inspire us to look after vulnerable members of our society' excellent use was made of Assessment for Learning strategies (eg Talk Partners) which was also supplemented with other areas such as ICT and problem solving. The teacher was highly skilled at asking appropriate yet probing questions to engage and challenge the differing abilities of learners. Pupils speak enthusiastically of the 'Big Picture' which enables them to gain an understanding of their learning journey in RE. The additional support given by teaching assistants

also enables groups of pupils, in particular SEN pupils, to make at least good progress.

The school's self-evaluation cycle employs a range of strategies, e.g. lesson observations and book scrutinies, to ensure each pupil is given every opportunity to reach their full potential. Pupils are aware of the high standards expected of them through their use of challenging targets. In addition to this consistent and effective marking provides the pupils with the necessary next step advice to improve further and they are given the opportunity to reflect and rectify this.

The school environment plays a considerable role in producing an effective teaching and learning culture. As soon as you enter the school it is obvious that this is a school which is visibly proud of our Catholic faith tradition as evident in the use of high quality display and artefacts. In addition to this, each class has its own altar area as a focus.

The quality of Collective Worship plays an important role in meeting the needs and interests of its learners. Prayer is given a high priority in the life of the school and pupils are actively involved in all areas of Collective Worship. Pupils in the Foundation Stage delight in taking part in role play activities about Bible stories and by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to plan and lead worship for their class. At the end of Key Stage 2 they have full ownership in planning and leading class worship, as in a recent CAFOD assembly for the whole school. In addition to this the pupils particularly enjoy the opportunities given to them to respond to private prayer and reflection in the Little Chapel.

The provision for Collective Worship has a considerable impact on the high quality of relationships and the spiritual, social and moral development of the whole school community.

# SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

**Key for inspection grades:**

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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>PUPILS How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</b>	<b>1</b>
• 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
<b>LEADERS AND MANAGERS How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the School?</b>	<b>1</b>
• 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
<b>PROVISION How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?</b>	<b>1</b>
• 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