

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION  
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

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**School:** Alston Lane Catholic Primary School

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**School URN:** 119635

**Headteacher:** Mr Mark FitzGibbon

**Chair of Governors:** Mr Ian Filbin

**Section 48 Inspector:** Mrs Frances Wygladala

**Date of Inspection:** November 7<sup>th</sup> 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

Alston Lane is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school in the Diocese of Lancaster. The average-sized primary school serves the parish of Our Lady and St Michael, Alston Lane, Longridge. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There are currently 198 learners on role of whom approximately 87% are baptised Catholics. The vast majority of pupils transfer to St Cecilia’s Catholic High School at the end of Year 6. Of the teaching staff, 67% are Catholics.

## FACTUAL INFORMATION

### Pupil Catchment:

Number of pupils on roll:	198
Planned Admission Number of Pupils:	28
Percentage of pupils baptised Catholics:	87%
Percentage of pupils from other Christian denominations:	9%
Percentage of pupils from other faith backgrounds:	2.5%
Percentage of pupils with no religious affiliation:	1%
Percentage of pupils from ethnic groups:	3.5%
Percentage of pupils with special needs:	9%

### Staffing

Full-time teachers:	7
Part-time teachers:	2
Percentage of Catholic teachers:	67%
Percentage of teachers with CCRS:	33%

### 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 Michael, Alston Lane

**Overall Effectiveness**

**1**

**Capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

**MAIN FINDINGS**

Alston Lane is an outstanding Catholic primary school. There is a shared vision, which promotes inclusion and high expectations for all members of the school community. The Catholic mission of the school underpins everything the school seeks to achieve. Areas for improvement from the last inspection have been acted upon and good self-evaluation procedures have ensured that planned improvements are appropriate. Good relationships between all stakeholders are a strong feature of the school.

Pupils are happy to come to school and they demonstrate pride in their school, which results in them having a positive attitude to learning. Pupils make good progress in the seven years they are at Alston Lane and there is no significant variation between the various groups of learners. Pupils benefit from the vast range of opportunities offered to contribute to the Catholic Life of the school: their participation in the prayer and liturgical life of the school is outstanding, particularly exemplary in sharing their talents for singing and for playing musical instruments. The school provides an excellent Catholic education and the promotion of pupils’ spiritual and moral development is outstanding.

The Religious Education curriculum provided is varied and is focused on meeting the needs of all pupils and on raising standards. Planning, assessment and monitoring systems developed since the last inspection have had a positive impact on pupil attainment and progress.

The headteacher and RE subject leader have a very clear vision for RE and for the Catholic Life of Alston Lane. The staff are good role models for pupils and offer a variety of prayer and worship opportunities. Governors provide excellent support and challenge for improvement; the chair and RE governors know the strengths of the school and the challenges that it faces.

**The school’s capacity for sustained improvement**

All priorities for improvement since the last inspection have been addressed and the school is continuously striving to improve standards. The school’s capacity for sustained improvement in all areas is outstanding because of the quality of leadership from staff, governors and clergy and the accurate self-evaluation leading to clear targets and appropriate priorities to consolidate success and secure further improvements.

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

- Continue to develop and use Baseline assessment in Foundation Stage to share and celebrate progress made in RE with staff and Governors.
- Continue to improve standards in curriculum RE to match those attained by pupils in other core subjects, especially for more able pupils at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Standards in curriculum RE are monitored by the RE governor through work sampling, observing lessons and talking to pupils. This should be formalised with a curriculum report from the subject leader, comparing standards in RE with English. This would enable governors to be updated termly of standards and progress in RE.

## **PUPILS**

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

<b>1</b>
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The vast majority of pupils at Alston Lane enjoy RE. They speak enthusiastically about their lessons and have very positive attitudes towards their learning. Assessment data, pupil tracking systems and work scrutiny are all evidence of this. Standards of attainment in RE across the school are high and progress is outstanding particularly in Key Stage 2. There is a range of evidence to demonstrate that most pupils' standards of attainment in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and their ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) are outstanding. From average starting points on entry to school in Foundation Stage, standards rise to being just below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and the excellent progress made in Key Stage 2 results in standards being above national expectations with higher levels achieved. The school plans to improve standards further in curriculum RE to more closely match those attained by pupils in other core subjects, especially by more able pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because teachers accurately identify their needs and carefully adapt support to meet them.

Pupils express their views and beliefs with confidence and are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus and other key religious figures. They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish and the wider community. Pupils display outstanding behaviour for learning in RE and they are enthusiastic and eager to learn. Pupils are well behaved, respectful, considerate and reflective. They readily tackle challenging activities and work collaboratively to complete tasks.

Throughout the school and within individual classes there is a positive ethos and relationships at all levels are very well developed.

Prayer is central to school life and both pupils and staff experience a wide variety of opportunities to pray. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with enthusiasm and respect in a variety of gatherings. They are able to write their own prayers and to choose a range of hymns and religious artefacts. They also use actions, ICT, drama as well as more traditional prayers during worship. Teachers are very good role models for the pupils and support them in planning acts of worship. This could be developed by partnering classes for worship, to allow older pupils to model excellent child led worship and train younger pupils to develop their skills in planning and leading regular Collective Worship. Pupils understand the importance of key celebrations in school and the parish community throughout the liturgical year.

Pupils take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school beyond routine lessons and activities. This is seen through pupils' eagerness to take part in prayer activities such as the harvest festival and during Advent and Lenten services in their responses to planning and leading worship during assemblies and Masses. Pupils are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. The school community has been involved in supporting the CAFOD 'Shine a Light in the Darkness' campaign supporting the people of Macambol in the Philippines. Pupils regularly work together to lead and run their own fundraising activities, such as toy, book and cake sales and the making and selling of friendship bracelets. The school supports many charities for example CAFOD, International Aid, the Preston Community Foodbank, Heartbeat, Children's Hospitals, The North West Air Ambulance and the Cenacolo Community.

## **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's outstanding leaders and managers promote the Catholic Life of the school very well. The headteacher has a clear vision for Catholic education, which all members of the school community share. The senior leadership team, governors and clergy work closely with him and share his commitment to the Catholic Life of the school. The mission of the school is at the heart of all school life and pupils' spiritual and moral development is central to the school's vision.

The leadership team is proactive in regular evaluation and in developing further initiatives: they promote high standards through challenging targets for improvement. Senior leaders monitor the quality of teaching

and learning through lesson observations, work scrutiny and pupil voice. RE and worship are monitored as rigorously as other core subjects in the curriculum.

The governing body has the expertise to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school. Standards in curriculum RE are monitored by the RE governor through work sampling, observing lessons and talking to pupils about their work. This should be formalised with a curriculum report from the subject leader, comparing standards in RE with English. This would enable governors to be updated termly on issues relating to RE and to the Catholic Life of the school. Governors have used the diocese document '*Fit for Mission? Schools*' to plan for improvements in curriculum RE and worship. Also parish catechists preparing pupils for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation succeed in strengthening the home, school and parish links.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties well and are very supportive of leaders and of the staff team. Many governors are actively involved in the school and parish community and have positive relationships with pupils and staff. The role of the RE governor is significant in the partnership between governors, parishioners, staff and pupils.

There is a common sense of belonging amongst staff and pupils and all have a high regard for the Catholic life of the school. Staff are excellent role models for pupils and have very good relationships with pupils and parents.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities, for example the Longridge cluster of schools have worked collaboratively to mark the recent national remembrance day with an event involving over 450 pupils at the Guild Hall in Preston. There are plans for a CAFOD project on 'Hunger around the World' led by a Youth Worker, involving pupils from Year 6 and Year 9 from St Cecilia's. These partnerships make an excellent contribution to pupils' outstanding achievement and well-being. The inclusion of all is a central goal and a shared vision. Leaders and managers work with others beyond the school to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to collaborate with people from different backgrounds. For example, a link with a school in the centre of Preston is contributing to pupils having a greater understanding of the wider world and of other peoples' beliefs, cultures and needs. This augments the study of different world religions in Key Stage 2. Every Advent the school is involved with local 'Churches Together' to develop a shared liturgy which is celebrated in a different church each year. Behaviour is excellent and pupils co-operate well with each other.

# PROVISION

## How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

1

Teaching is consistently highly effective in enthusing pupils and ensuring that they learn extremely well. Teachers and other adults are acutely aware of their pupils' capabilities and of their prior learning and understanding, and plan effectively to build on these. There are plans to develop and analyse Baseline assessment in Foundation Stage to share and celebrate progress made in RE with staff and governors.

RE displays of children's work around school are of a good quality and worship tables are well resourced. Support staff are effectively deployed to meet the needs of the pupils in class, where individuals and groups are targeted for support.

The RE curriculum is creatively adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. 'I enjoy RE and learning about God and the miracles of Jesus' stated one pupil. Staff make learning interesting and this has a positive impact on pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation. Teachers enrich lessons through a variety of imaginative and well-planned strategies and use relevant resources, e.g. pupils enjoy role play, so it is often included in RE lessons. An outstanding Year 1 lesson observed during inspection used role play of the Annunciation to help them to understand the role of Mary when she said 'Yes' to God's Word. The RE curriculum provides good opportunities for, and has a positive impact on, pupils' spiritual and moral development. The curriculum meets all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference with respect to the time allocated to it.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding; prayer is central to the life of the school and a key part of every celebration. It is fully inclusive, reflective and well planned enabling pupils to take an active part, as observed in Foundation Stage. Pupils share their talents in Collective Worship, with many gifted musicians and very enthusiastic singers, as witnessed in Year 6.

There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer and pupils eagerly and confidently share prayers in class and school liturgies and Masses.

The school encourages the participation of parents, family members and parishioners in liturgies in church and in school. Staff and clergy play an important part in sharing prayers and in preparing pupils for liturgies and Masses. The Parish appreciates the support of the staff, governors, families and pupils in the 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?	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	1
❖ pupils' attainment in Religious Education	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 Religious Education 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?	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 Religious Education?	1
• 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