

INSPECTION REPORT ON THE PROVISION OF DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

School name:	St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
Address:	Smithy Lane, Cloughton-on-Brock, Preston PR3 0PN
Unique Reference Number:	119619
Name of Headteacher:	Mrs R Ross
Date of Inspection:	25 th November 2008
Name of Inspector:	Mr S Thornton
Type of school:	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Number on roll:	37
Appropriate authority:	The Governing body
Chair of Governors:	Mr P Rydeard
Religious Education Co-ordinator:	Mrs R Ross
Date of previous inspection:	2 - 3 November 2005

The Inspection judgements are:	Grade	Explanation of the grades 1 = Outstanding 2 = Good 3 = Satisfactory 4 = Inadequate
Overall effectiveness of the school	2	
Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school	2	
The quality of Collective Worship	2	
Religious Education - Achievement and standards	2	
Religious Education - Quality of provision	1	
Religious Education - Pupils' needs and interest	2	
Religious Education – Curriculum leadership and management	1	
Community Cohesion	2	
<i>The following pages provide reasons to support these judgements</i>		

Information about the school:

St. Mary's is a Voluntary Aided Catholic primary school serving the parish of St. Thomas, Cloughton-on-Brock and also drawing a small number of pupils from St. Mary and Michael, Garstang, and St. Thomas and Elizabeth, Thurnham. There are 37 pupils on roll of which 25 are Catholic and the remaining 12 are from other Christian denominations.

The school is situated in a rural location but the current trend is for an increase in numbers. There are two classes, one shared by the headteacher and a part-time teacher (Foundation Stage/Key Stage 1) and the other class taught by a full-time teacher (Key Stage 2). The headteacher is a committed Anglican; the other two teachers are Catholic. The headteacher and full-time teacher are currently undertaking the CCRS qualification.

Children start school with a range of skills but overall their attainment in terms of Religious Education (RE) is typical for their age. The small but variable number of pupils who leave St. Mary's at the end of year six transfer to a range of high schools including Our Lady's Catholic High School (Preston), Garstang High School and the Lancaster Grammar schools.

Overall Effectiveness of the school

St. Mary's, Cloughton-on-Brock is a **good** Catholic school with some outstanding features.

It is driven by a Mission Statement and values that permeate all aspects of school life. The school is a welcoming Catholic community guided by strong leadership from an active and supportive governing body with a caring successful headteacher. Pupils are proud of their school, relate well to each other, respect staff and are keen to participate in the spiritual and community life of the school. Standards of work in RE are good across pupils of all ages and abilities and good progress is made in all key stages. Prayer and worship is good and a range of formal and informal opportunities to pray is experienced by staff and pupils. The school's distinctive nature is apparent throughout the school and it explores and promotes relationships with the wider local, national and global communities in a thoughtful and manageable way.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has made **good** progress in developing RE since the last inspection.

- The school has improved the quality of pupils' learning by setting clear outcomes at the beginning of each lesson and ensuring that they are referred to again as part of the assessment for learning process.
- Collective Worship is of a good standard throughout school and pupils of all ages are involved in some planning and leading of acts of worship.
- The school has developed an extensive portfolio of moderated work, that better informs planning and has contributed to a significant raising of standards.

Capacity to improve

The school demonstrates a **good** capacity to improve by maintaining its clear focus to raise standards of attainment through the commitment and support of staff and the leadership of the governing body and the headteacher/subject leader.

What the school should do to improve further:

- In order to further raise standards in RE, the school should continue to develop its use of Assessment for Learning procedures within curriculum RE, including the use of peer evaluation.
- The school should develop its community cohesion provision to include regular, sustainable links with other faith groups.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Inspection confirms the school's view that leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school at all levels are **good** with some outstanding features.

Leadership shows a clear vision that is owned and shared by all staff and governors of the school. This promotes purpose and commitment to the Catholic mission of the school. The Catholic ethos is communicated clearly through policies, documentation and practice. The governing body makes a major contribution to the development of the Catholic life of the school. Their monitoring and evaluation systems ensure that they are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Good links exist with parents, parish and the wider community to support the work of the school, and the parish priest's role as the RE governor is already achieving further success in this area. The Improvement Plan features work related to the school's distinctive Catholic nature and '*Fit for Mission? Schools*' is already being used by the school to enhance RE provision.

Leaders at all levels are keen to access diocesan training and to ensure that their Mission Statement and aims are fulfilled. Staff are happy with the clear direction of the school and inspired to contribute their expertise and to act as role models. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and was rightly judged to be a strength of the school by OFSTED (June 2008).

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Inspection confirms the school's judgement that the quality of collective worship is **good**.

Prayer is central to the life of the school. The school provides a wide variety of acts of worship and these are relevant and meaningful experiences for all. In the mixed-age classes, planned acts of worship take into account the children's social, educational and spiritual needs and stages of development. Periods of reflection, silence and prayer are used to help pupils to feel the presence of the Holy Spirit. Children are encouraged to take an active role and they are confident in formal prayer and hymn singing. An increasing number of opportunities has been identified by children to lead worship according to the theme of the week. For example, year six and year three pupils together used drama to lead an assembly of a theme of 'Feelings'.

Pupils know the key celebrations that occur during the year and actively participate in events and services held in school and at church (such as Harvest, Advent, Christmas, Easter, Saints Days). A particular strength of this small school is the positive role played by the older children in each class who are keen to act as role models in being reflective, prayerful or still. Parents and wider families are always welcome and are keen to be involved. The newly appointed parish priest at St. Thomas' enjoys his work with the school and plays an integral part in maintaining the effective partnership between school, home and parish.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

In line with the school's own self-evaluation and moderation, achievements and standards are judged to be **good** across pupils of all key stages, abilities and backgrounds. Inspection also confirmed the school's self-evaluation that there is outstanding practice in the aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Given their capability and starting point pupils achieve higher than average standards in RE. Children enter Foundation Stage with the basic knowledge about 'God' and 'Church' which appears consistent with pupils in other schools. The school uses precise planning of differentiated work and a secure knowledge of levels of attainment in AT1 and AT2 to provide clear and appropriate targets for individual pupils. Pupils are assessed on each unit of work and these assessments inform future planning, providing learning experiences for all pupils that are further enhanced by good use of assessment for learning strategies. Learning objectives are shared with all pupils at the beginning of, and during, each lesson.

Foundation stage children listen carefully to special stories from the Bible such as the 'Presentation in the Temple' and are able to reproduce the story in pictures (AT1). They are able to share their own experiences and feelings related to family life (AT2). In year two good work is evident across the strands of each attainment target demonstrating high standards. Pupils are able to select a favourite 'Good News' story and clearly explain its meaning (AT1). They also show an ability to reflect on the meaning of events such as the Ascension or the Visitation of Mary. By the end of Key stage two, the school's portfolio of assessed work in RE shows a good rate of achievement at Level 4 and Level 5 across AT1 and AT2. At all times pupils are guided towards the next steps in learning by clear, helpful marking and thorough planning. The portfolios and the subject leader's records demonstrate that progress is good across all groups of pupils regardless of age, ability and background.

Key Stage 2 pupils have recently met with the parish priest in an open forum to talk about the deeper questions related to their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. There are plans to continue this successful venture.

Pupils are proud of their school and behave very well. They respond to opportunities to take responsibility around the school. Older children in each key stage are given significant responsibility towards younger children and many school events result from pupils' collaboration with the staff. The school's motto 'The Small School with a Big Heart' is regularly reviewed, as is the Code of Conduct. There is a strong emphasis on continuing to maintain and raise attainment through a broad, balanced curriculum and the enhancement of Christian values.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - QUALITY OF PROVISION

The school's self-evaluation is that the quality of provision is good. However, inspection judges that standards in this area are **outstanding**.

Although the headteacher of the school is a committed Anglican rather than a Catholic, she has been a teacher at the school for eleven years and has provided a leadership role since 2005. She is undertaking the CCRS programme (with the other full-time teacher). The chair of governors and parish priest both speak highly of her ability to maintain and promote a distinctive Catholic ethos as well as her deep commitment to Gospel values. Her inspiration to others is evident in the interaction and the positive relationships between everyone in the school family.

Teachers have a clear focus on promoting high standards and the fullest personal development of the pupils. Teaching uses a variety of learning styles including information technology (ICT) and drama. Teaching is stimulating, enthusiastic and consistently challenging. A range of strategies is used to support all children including those with additional learning needs and those who are on the 'Able, Gifted and Talented' register. Parents and carers are well supported in assisting children's learning via regular contact including termly newsletters. Their responses via the pre-inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly supportive of the school's life and work as a Catholic family.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION - PUPILS' NEEDS AND INTERESTS

The inspection judgement confirms the schools own judgement that provision for pupils' needs and interests is **good**.

Pupils are enthusiastic and positive about their learning in RE and their participation in collective worship. Pupils at all levels are proud of their achievements, understand why a particular piece of work is good and appreciate the helpful feedback they receive in their teacher's marking. The school meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales with regard to the timetabling of RE. An appropriate proportion of the school's curriculum budget is allocated to RE and the school is now developing its range of resources to support the recently acquired scheme, 'The Way, The Truth and The Life'. This is proving popular and effective as the school's core scheme and its use with mixed age classes is effectively planned. RE is accorded core subject status on the annual report to parents. The school is most conscientious in ensuring that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds play a full part in the Catholic life of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school's self-evaluation is that the quality of curriculum leadership and management is good. However, inspection judges that standards in this area are **outstanding**.

The subject leader is effective in ensuring that staff and governors are involved in monitoring and evaluating progress towards the challenging targets set for the pupils. She is a trained Pastoral Assistant and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion in her own church and offers guidance and support to other staff in terms of the theological aspects of teaching RE, which enables staff to be effective in raising standards. Effective plans are also in place to manage improvement, with lesson observations, further moderation of pupils' assessed tasks and the scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' work at the heart. The subject leader has a clear vision for further improvements to the school's work in the various areas of provision in RE and collective worship.

The high performance of pupils of different age and ability reflects the successful leadership and management of RE.

COMMUNITY COHESION

The school's self-evaluation is that the quality of work in the area of community cohesion is outstanding. However, inspection judges that standards in this area are **good** with some outstanding features.

The school's Mission Statement permeates all aspects of school life and is evident in pupils' attitudes, the mutual support of colleagues and in the care and love shown for everyone in school including visitors. Staff work hard to maintain the excellent relationships, which have been established between the school, parents/carers and the parish. They are also committed to promoting relationships with the wider community for example in the 'cluster' of small schools in their locality where the school shares a range of events with other denominational and community primary schools; or through the use of school premises for the local 'Mother and Toddler' group.

A strong feature of the school's work in this area emanates from pupil leadership. The Pupil Forum is instrumental in decisions regarding which charitable organisations to support and they also lead the activities in support of, for example, the Lancaster Night Shelter, the local hospice or a school in the Gambia. Pupil-led work on recycling has resulted in accreditation as an eco-school. The global dimension is also achieved by links with CAFOD and Fair trade.

The school is interested in developing further links with churches and religious communities of various faith traditions in order to improve multicultural teaching and learning.