



DIOCESE OF LANCASTER EDUCATION SERVICE

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

**The Willows Catholic Primary
School
Kirkham, Preston**

**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT (Section 48)**

on

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

School: The Willows Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 119626

Headteacher: Mrs Sharon Barnett

Chair of Governors: Mrs Christine Johnson

Lead Inspector: Mrs Jacqueline Hampson

Team Inspector: Mrs Nerissa Nicholas

Date of Inspection: 10th November 2021

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Willows Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school situated in Kirkham in the Diocese of Lancaster. Since the last inspection the school has grown and there are currently 212 pupils on roll of whom approximately 59% are baptised Catholic. A very small proportion of pupils have other world faith backgrounds.

The school is one of two Catholic primary schools which serve the parish of The Holy Cross, comprising The Willows and St Joseph's.

Most pupils are of White British heritage. The numbers of pupils on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities register is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils for which the school receives Pupil Premium is below the national average.

At the end of Y6 the majority of pupils transfer to St Bede's Catholic High School in Lytham.

The majority of teachers in school are of the Catholic faith. Three quarters of teachers have gained or are studying for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).

PUPILS	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Number on roll	30	30	30	29	31	29	33	212
Catholics on roll	13	12	21	20	18	22	20	126
Other Christian denomination	14	8	4	8	5	4	7	50
Other faith background	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
No religious affiliation	3	9	4	1	8	3	6	34
No of learners from ethnic groups	3	3	5	3	4	2	6	26
Total on SEN Register	1	2	4	3	2	7	6	25
Total with EHCP	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

Exclusions in last academic year	Permanent	0	Fixed term	0
Index of multiple deprivation	0.12			

PARISHES SERVED BY THE SCHOOL	
Name of Parish	No of Pupils
The Parish of The Holy Cross	107

TEACHING TIME FOR RE	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Total teaching time (Hours)	2 hrs	2 hrs	2 hrs	2.5 hrs	2.5 hrs	2.5 hrs	2.5 hrs	16 hrs
% of teaching time	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%

TEACHING TIME FOR ENGLISH	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Total teaching time (Hours)	N/A	5 hrs	30 hrs					
% of teaching time	N/A	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%

TEACHING TIME FOR MATHS	YR	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y5	Y6	Total
Total teaching time (Hours)	N/A	5 hrs	30 hrs					
% of teaching time	N/A	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%

STAFFING	
Full-time teachers	9
Part-time teachers	1
Total full-time equivalent (FTE)	9.32
Classroom Support assistants	13
Percentage of Catholic teachers FTE	90%
Number of teachers teaching RE	8
Number of teachers with CCRS or equivalent	5
Number of teachers currently undertaking CCRS	2
Chaplaincy staffing	0

ORGANISATION	
Published admission number	30
Number of classes	7
Average class size KS1	30
Average class size KS2	30.5

EXPENDITURE (£)	Last financial year 2020/21	Current financial year 2021/22
Total expenditure on teaching and learning resources	12,000	£11,500
RE Curriculum allowance from above	£1,000	£1,000
English Curriculum allowance from above	£750	£1,500
Total CPD budget	£5,765	£5,100
RE allocation for CPD (including Diocesan contribution)	£500	£740

How the school has developed since the last inspection
<p>Despite interruptions to teaching caused by school closures due to the pandemic, the school has continued to improve since the last inspection.</p> <p>All aspects of improvement since the last inspection have been actioned: staff use technologies and links with other schools effectively, to deepen children's understanding of the faith and traditions of other cultures; the parish priest has continued to support the school very effectively to deepen the theological development of the pupils' faith.</p> <p>There is excellent capacity for improvement. The headteacher is an inspirational leader who ensures continued improvement in all aspects of school life. All staff work together to ensure very good outcomes for pupils.</p>

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

KEY FINDINGS

The Willows is an outstanding Catholic school where there is a continuous drive for excellence. The mission statement, 'God loves me, God loves everyone', guides the work of leaders and staff in this fully inclusive Catholic community. Christ is at the Centre of the school community and Gospel values permeate throughout.

Pupils benefit greatly from the opportunity to contribute to many aspects of the Catholic Life of the school. For example, they regularly lead liturgies in school and in church, including during Advent, Lent and Easter. They actively support many fundraising activities and demonstrate an awareness of the relationship between faith and action.

Pupils hear the Word of God regularly and are provided with an excellent range of prayer opportunities when they can pray together.

The Catholic identity of the school is very strong. Careful consideration is given to any building work in school. This has facilitated the creation of dedicated prayer spaces, including the communal worship area which pupils can visit either independently or as part of a prayer group.

Outcomes for pupils in curriculum RE are very good. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons. They speak with confidence and passion, displaying an impressive depth of knowledge in relation to scripture. Teaching is at least good across the whole school and pupils are religiously literate. Pupils' books and other evidence show that their work is of a high standard across the school and that expectations are high.

A learning mentor provides vital support for some of the most vulnerable children and their families, supporting the school's inclusive ethos.

There is a wealth of professional development opportunities available for all staff. Governors are committed to ensuring that all staff are trained to deliver excellence for the pupils of The Willows.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. They confirm that their children are happy in school, that Catholic values influence every part of school life and that they are satisfied with the Religious Education curriculum provided.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Ensure the marking policy is applied consistently across all key stages.
- Ensure the assessment and tracking procedures, which were introduced with the revised age-related standards, are embedded.

PART A: CATHOLIC LIFE

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

1

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

1

1

1

Inspection finds that the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

At the heart of the success of the school is the mission statement 'God loves me, God loves everyone' and there is evidence of that love in all relationships in school.

Pupils speak very confidently about the ways in which they contribute to the Catholic life of the school. They enjoy going to church with their class, with their key stage and sharing whole school Masses together. They can discuss the parts of the Mass and recognise special times in the church's year, demonstrating a good awareness of the liturgical year.

Pupils speak with confidence about responding to Pope Francis' call, in *Laudato Si'*, to work together to create a better world for future generations. They recycle, give books and old uniform to the Friends of Mulanje Orphans. They also raise money for local charities and for Cafod.

Pupil participation in, and leadership of, the prayer and liturgical life of the school is excellent. Across the whole school, pupils are calm and silent when gathering for prayer. During inspection the year six pupils led whole school worship on Remembrance, which was fully inclusive. All pupils showed high levels of respect and reverence throughout. Each child was given a pebble from a poppy display, made of coloured pebbles and asked to go forward as a peacemaker.

Pupils demonstrate a developing knowledge of the correct responses, during the Liturgy of the Word, such as 'The Gospel of the Lord' and 'Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ'.

As pupils progress through the school, they become skilled in leading their own prayer in class. Pupils in upper Key Stage 2 are prayer leaders for the younger children. During inspection, the older children led worship for the children in the Reception class. They gathered the children quietly, allowing the younger

children to set up the prayer space with a bible, candle and a cross. They read from the book of Genesis, sharing the story of Joseph and his brothers. They gave the younger children time to reflect and then for their 'mission' asked them to think about how they could ensure they were happy for, not jealous of, others in the class.

Across all three key stages, the content of prayer for all pupils is both catechetical and spiritual.

Inspection finds that the leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

The headteacher has worked tirelessly since the previous inspection to ensure that there have been continued improvements in all aspects of school life. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and the RE subject leader. Together, as authentic witnesses to Christ, they have created a faith community where all staff are excellent role models for pupils, relationships are excellent and all children are loved and cared for.

School leaders are totally committed to the Church's mission in education and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. An example of this is the commitment of school leadership to funding the Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies (CCRS).

Governors make a significant contribution to the Catholic life of the school and are ready to challenge as well as support where necessary. They hold school leaders to account very effectively. Self-evaluation, improvement planning, monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and lead to continuous school improvement.

Governors, including the Parish Priest, are fully involved in the day-to-day life of the school, regularly joining staff and pupils for worship, the celebration of Mass and other liturgies. In addition to curriculum RE, they demonstrate an understanding of the progress the school has made towards implementing the Human Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) curriculum.

Leaders ensure there are very strong links with the parish community, the wider community and the diocesan family of schools. These links impact greatly on the pupils and their families.

Inspection confirms the school's judgement that the quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.

The Prayer and Liturgy of the Catholic Church are given the highest profile in school. The liturgical seasons and feasts are celebrated and are integral to school life.

Leaders have successfully created a calm and purposeful environment for all pupils to feel safe, to learn and to know about Jesus. The learning mentor is based in St Gabriel's room, a calm space where children can read scripture, reflect and take part in guided meditations which are rooted in gospel values.

The RE subject leader leads lunchtime prayer groups in the communal worship area. Children look forward to joining the sessions when they listen to scripture and are given quiet time to reflect.

PART B: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education
- How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education
- The quality of provision in Religious Education

1

1

1

Pupils report that they 'love RE' and that they enjoy learning in RE lessons – a number of children told inspectors that RE was their favourite subject. This was certainly evident in lessons observed on the day of the inspection. The children were able to talk with enthusiasm about their learning in RE and were also able to make links between their learning and how this could be reflected in their everyday lives. Children across the school show high levels of engagement with RE.

Pupils engage well in lessons and speak confidently using age-appropriate religious vocabulary. In Key Stage 1 they are highly motivated by the variety of creative and hands-on learning opportunities and are developing a good knowledge of scripture and the sacraments of the Catholic Church. They show good recall and teachers are able to support them in making links and relating this to the new learning. They are also beginning to show an awareness of how people of other faiths celebrate important events. For example, a child in Year 2 was keen to share with the class how Hindus celebrate welcoming a baby into their faith when the class were learning about baptism. In the Reception class, where children were learning about the Annunciation, activities provided in the continuous provision gave children the opportunity to process and explore what they had learned, for example dressing up and acting out Gabriel's visit to Mary.

Pupils in upper key stage 2 make good use of bibles to support their learning. They are able to make strong links between scripture and how they are called to act. They speak with confidence and passion, displaying an impressive depth of knowledge in relation to scripture. Teachers take care to make explicit links to prior learning which helps to deepen understanding.

Pupils' books and other evidence show that their work is of a high standard across the school and that expectations are high. There has been some work done on improving the effectiveness of marking and a move towards providing high quality verbal feedback in order to ensure that pupils know what to do to improve their work. This has been somewhat hampered by the pandemic and because of this, the new marking policy is not yet embedded across the school. However, there are clear plans in place to further develop and embed this.

Tracking of pupil progress is robust and provides further evidence of good progress and attainment. Baseline assessments show that children start school well below age related expectations in RE. As a result of excellent teaching, pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and by the end of Reception, all children are able to answer the Baseline questions accurately, ensuring a solid foundation on which to build. The good progress continues in Year 1 and Year 2 so that by the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils are able to meet the age-related expectations for 5 to 7 years, with a number of children beginning to work in the next phase. Continued good progress throughout Key Stage 2 means that by the end of Year 6, the vast majority of pupils achieve age-related expectations, with a good number of pupils exceeding them.

School leaders, including governors, have a clear, ambitious vision and ensure that this is shared with all staff. Monitoring of the quality of the curriculum and the quality of teaching is highly effective. Development plans in RE show a continuous drive for excellence. Monitoring of teaching and learning has a positive impact and is used to inform development plans, professional development and identify areas to be celebrated or improved. Staff report that they feel well supported by the subject leader, deputy head, head teacher and Parish Priest; there is a very open, supportive ethos across school which all staff recognise and value highly.

Governors are well informed and speak with confidence and knowledge about pupil progress in RE. They have a good understanding of teaching and learning in RE across the school. For example, governors explained that following the pandemic, the baseline assessment was re administered with the Year 1 children as they had missed a lot of their Reception Year. This highlighted the fact that children had not made as much progress as would have been expected, so additional work was put in place to ensure that children caught up rapidly. Self-evaluation carried out by senior leaders and governors is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self-challenge which results in well targeted strategic planning. There is no doubt that RE is placed at the centre of the school curriculum and this is clearly reflected in the engaging, vibrant learning environment and the passion both staff and children expressed in relation to RE. Governors and school leaders work closely together as a team offering both support and challenge. The leadership and management of RE is a great strength of the school and ensures that the whole school community are fully engaged, have high expectations and are supportive. One member of staff said that 'the children fully engage with RE and really 'live' it. They are able to make the links and put their learning into action.' This was evident during the observed lessons and discussions with pupils throughout the inspection.

Following national guidelines, new assessment criteria has been introduced for curriculum RE moving from curriculum levels to age related phases. Although this is still relatively new to the school, senior leaders are highly focused on making sure this has a positive impact. Assessment strategies and moderation procedures have been put in place to ensure it is not just coverage that is tracked but that the focus is on attainment and progress of cohorts, groups and individuals. For each RE

topic, knowledge organisers and tracking sheets have recently been implemented. These help staff focus on key learning and support staff in assessing pupils' progress and attainment.

The leadership team has worked with passion and dedication to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all the pupils and is engaging and challenging. The delivery of curriculum RE meets all the requirements of the Religious Education Curriculum Directory and Fit for Mission (Schools). Excellent subject knowledge and skilled use of questioning enhance teaching and learning across the school. Teaching is often imaginative and is consistently effective in engaging pupils. A wealth of resources including technology are used creatively to enhance the delivery of the curriculum. Support staff are also given opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the RE curriculum through in-house training and support. They are well directed and make a positive contribution to teaching and learning ensuring that all pupils are able to access the RE curriculum.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Overall Effectiveness	1
Capacity for sustained improvement	1
Catholic Life	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders and managers promote and ensure provision for the Catholic Life of the school through monitoring and evaluation. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school. 	1
Religious Education	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education. 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of provision in Religious Education. 	1

	Pupil Outcomes	Leadership & Management	Provision	Overall
Catholic Life	1	1	1	1
Religious Education	1	1	1	1