

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
WAKEFIELD

School URN

108256

School DfE Number

384/3311

Chair of Governors

Mrs. Karen House

Headteacher

Mr. Bernard Martin

RE Subject Leader

Mrs. Pat Ainge

Date of Inspection

5th & 6th July 2010

Section 48 Inspector

Mrs. Dorothy Hamer

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of English Martyrs Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Bishop of Leeds.

Description of the school

English Martyrs School is broadly average in size and is situated two miles from the centre of Wakefield, catering mainly for the families of the old parish of English Martyrs which, following restructuring is now served from St Austin's Church within the new parish of St Martin de Porres. The newly built Early Years Foundation Stage unit is part of a six-phase programme to modernise the school and its facilities.

The school caters for 206 full time pupils and 43 part time Nursery children. It is very popular with oversubscription in every year group. Growing numbers of non-Catholic children are entering school; 69% of pupils are baptised Catholics. The majority of pupils (55%) live in the lowest category of deprivation and a significant minority are from families newly arrived in the United Kingdom; 15% of pupils have English as an additional language. Baseline assessment indicates children's attainment on entry is below the national average in all subject areas. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below average whilst the number of pupils with statements of special education need and/or disability is above average.

There are a total of 8.2 full time equivalent teachers of whom 6 hold the CCRS certificate. Since the last inspection the school has experienced significant staffing difficulties. The school has gained various awards: Activemark, Healthy Schools and Investors in Pupils.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic life of the school, of curriculum RE, and the school's main strengths and areas for development.

The provision of Catholic education at English Martyrs is overall outstanding. The continued successful growth and development of a school community, with a strong belief that *'With Christ as our inspiration we work in partnership to create a challenging, effective and exciting learning environment'*, is testimony to the imperative of the school's Catholic mission in raising standards and promoting the personal development of pupils and staff by those who hold leadership positions. A tangible living mission is built on the foundations of effective, secure and lasting relationships shared among governors, staff, parents, pupils and parishioners. Every member of the school staff is highly valued and all are actively empowered to partake in shaping the vision for the school's future based on *'Walking with Jesus – God's love in action'*. Leadership at all levels, led by the headteacher, promotes a distinctive and highly spiritual Catholic ethos which permeates all aspects of school life.

The overall response of the pupils is outstanding. Pupils fully understand, subscribe to and actively promote the mission of the school. They thrive as a result of the standards of teaching of Religious Education (RE), speak of their enjoyment of RE lessons, and make good to outstanding progress in relation to their starting points. Effective teaching in RE, together with the good provision of a broad curriculum including PSHCE, Development of

the Whole Child and global awareness, contributes enormously to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, which is a significant strength of the school.

Parents and parishioners are truly welcomed and regarded as partners in nurturing learning, spiritual development and pastoral care. They are consulted on all major matters through the PaLs group and the messaging service and their views are given serious consideration by the school e.g. need for Maths workshops and improved communication systems. The school actively encourages stakeholders into the school to make a reality of home~school~parish links e.g. weekly 'Prayer & Share' gatherings, assemblies, Schoolgate Alpha, liturgical performances and the weekly Rosary group. There is a vibrant, co-operation between school and parish e.g. the school's leading role in Sion Mission and Saturday Mass and the chaplaincy provided by the Parish Priest.

English Martyrs School has many areas of strength:

- The school/parish community is committed to evangelisation and is ably supported by a member of staff gifted in the leadership of worship.
- A valued and actively promoted home-school-parish partnership focuses on enabling pupils to 'love themselves, love each other and find a relationship with God'.
- The headteacher is a key person in the Wakefield Catholic School Partnership working collaboratively to provide rich opportunities for both staff and pupils alike in learning and spiritual/moral development.
- Staff are engaged in a drive for improvement focused on real progress in planning, teaching and assessing in RE. Throughout the school there is much evidence of outstanding teaching in RE.

The effectiveness of any steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection

Aspects identified for improvement in the previous inspection have been addressed through the implementation of a series of comprehensive RE Action Plans. The Mission Statement has been evaluated and reviewed; policies and practices supporting Religious Education have been reviewed and Collective Worship has improved significantly in both quality and variety of delivery. Leadership has become more focused on developing RE monitoring and evaluation and on improvement in pupil tracking.

The capacity to make further improvements

Excellent leadership and management ensures all stakeholders are totally committed as they recognize the need for further improvement; governors are very particularly effective in pursuing this by not allowing themselves to become complacent. The RE governor acts as a 'critical friend' and all governors engage in the active first hand monitoring of all school life e.g. through regular meetings with staff, class/governors buddies, attendance at liturgies and celebrations as well as the more formal governor meetings. The continued pursuit of excellence, with openness to reflecting on new ideas, is an aspiration of leadership. In light of these factors the school clearly has the capacity to improve.

What steps need to be taken in order to further improve the provision of Catholic education?

Areas for development:

- To further raise standards in RE by providing consistent challenge for higher achieving pupils.
- To improve the quality and consistency of teaching by capitalising on the outstanding practice presently found in areas of the school.
- To embed rigorous systems of monitoring, evaluation and reporting in order to further improve standards of teaching and learning.
- To develop the RE curriculum by the planned implementation of the new RE scheme – ‘The Way, The Truth and The Life’.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?

Strong leadership ensures the school is closely focused on its Catholic mission and has created a shared sense of vision among all members of the community. The governors, headteacher, and Parish Priest effectively communicate a sense of spiritual purpose, with a focus on promoting high standards and the fullest personal development of both staff and pupils.

The inclusion of all pupils is a central goal based on the belief that all are created in the image of God. The school openly and visibly declares that ‘*every child is precious*’ which is promoted through the highest level of care and to the extent that the spiritual and moral development of the pupils is outstanding; Y5 pupils clearly articulated their enjoyment of and interest in RE lessons. School council members are advocates of the staff being good listeners, teachers who can be trusted to sort out their problems and keep them safe. Pupils valued the opportunities to plan and lead Worship, assemblies and alms raising activities and speak warmly of their school and its achievements in education, sport, drama and dance.

Very good links exist with external agencies to support the high standard of care, guidance and support the school provides to ensure its pupils' safety and general well-being e.g. the provision of a Catholic Care Worker who supports individual children and their families. The result is that the pupils flourish and commit themselves to the school's mission.

Governors are fully involved and committed to the development of the Catholic life of the school through their work in the cycle of monitoring and evaluation, Performance Management RE targets, and attendance at many school celebrations; they are keen to promote Christian behaviour and values.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The variety and quality of Collective Worship at English Martyrs School is outstanding. Pupils are very confident in preparing, leading and participating in sensitive, prayerful acts

of Collective Worship and liturgical performances. The headteacher and RE manager make a powerful contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the staff and pupils. Acts of Worship engage pupils' interest and inspire deep thought and reflective responses. Staff work hard to ensure a calm, spiritual atmosphere and creatively use everyday life situations, music and Scripture to successfully develop the personal and whole school prayer life. Pupils speak of interesting assemblies and enjoyment of reflection liturgies. Class Masses give witness to the importance the school places on the celebration of the Eucharist being at the heart of school life. Use of the meditation garden by classes allows children to experience God in the setting of His creation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

Given their mainly below average starting point and, for many children, lack of religious experience and vocabulary achievement in R.E. is high across all year groups and leads to pupils in Y6 making excellent progress. Through written work, but more so through conversation, the pupils are able to discuss and explore religious beliefs, explain the impact of religion on the way they behave, ask questions relevant to topics being discussed and display a very good understanding of their faith. All pupils show very good attitudes towards their work, take a great deal of pride in it and enjoy what they are doing. The quality of marking in R.E. is good and pupils effectively use 'I Can' statements and Steps to Success to support their learning in RE.

In the majority of lessons observed children made good progress. The quality of work produced by the pupils demonstrated their understanding of the 'Here I Am' (H.I.A.) topics. Cross curricular links, particularly to English, dance and drama, enriched the provision of RE and supported effective skills development in RE.

Whilst learners achieve well, with regard to standards the latest attainment results evidence that by the end of Key Stage 1 75% of pupils attain Level 2 and above and by the end of Key Stage 2 the great majority of pupils attain Level 4, with some pupils attaining Level 5. This data evidences the need for a continued focus on the progress of the more able pupils in order to increase the pupil numbers at Level 3 at Y2 and at Level 5 by the end of Y6.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and Learning in RE?

Observations undertaken during this Inspection, indicate that the teaching of RE is regularly at a high level with evidence of some outstanding practice across the school. Teachers' good subject knowledge and commitment to teaching the Faith lends confidence to their varied teaching styles. Together with careful planning, showing clearly identified

intended learning outcomes and assessment of learning, most teachers ensure that work in RE is well pitched but there needs to be greater challenge planned for able pupils. Tasks set are clear and success criteria shared with the pupils. Use of lollipop partners, peer appraisal and steps to success support learning; the aid and encouragement given by teaching assistants is invaluable to the more needy pupils. Teachers' use of resources, particularly IT (inter-active whiteboards), is well judged to engage pupils, including those with particular learning needs.

Opportunity for prayer, reflection or meditation during lessons makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupils thrive as a result of the teaching of RE, and enjoy their lessons. Plans to develop an effective tracking system will ensure that teachers, pupils and parents are better informed about attainment and progress in RE.

A greater rigour in systems for the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of teaching would help disseminated outstanding practice throughout the school, support setting of priorities for improvement as well as allowing for objective evaluation of performance.

How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?

R.E. curricular provision is outstanding with a balanced delivery of the Diocesan R.E. programme with pupils learning about other faiths through quality teaching experiences enhanced through visits and visitors to school. Opportunities are provided in R.E. for reflection and formal prayer and for children to compose and record their own prayers. Observed teaching highlighted the importance which all teachers attach to developing reading, writing, speaking and ICT skills in their R.E. teaching.

Family life and sex education is appropriately planned and provided for. This help pupils focus on relationships with their peers, communities to which they belong and the global community. Children are provided with many opportunities to empathise with people less fortunate in the wider society. Pupils take part in a wide range of fund-raising activities throughout the school year, making them aware of their role as global citizens and Young Cafod Workers. Observations and discussions with all parties in school supports the view that inclusion is a shared vision, where dialogue and collaboration are encouraged, respect for all is engendered and all show concern for the well-being of others, locally, nationally and internationally.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?

Leadership and management of R.E. is very effective and a strength of the school. The subject leader has a strong sense of mission which drives the school to constantly improve and move forward. There is a detailed, thorough R.E. Action Plan which links to the School Development Plan. Resources are purchased carefully and utilised effectively to enhance the provision in R.E. This last year particularly a great deal of work has been put

into improving RE provision but the full impact of these initiatives has yet to be evaluated. Leaders at all levels share a cohesive evangelical mission based on the teaching of the Gospel and through their own example, tireless undertaking and commitment, set a clear direction for the whole community, promoting the highest quality care and education. Pupils speak highly of the school and the support it gives them to be effective partners in their own education and faith journeys.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

ASPECT	GRADE	DESCRIPTOR
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	1	Outstanding
THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL		
How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	1	Outstanding
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	1	Outstanding
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION		
How well do pupils achieve in RE?	1	Outstanding
How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?	2	Good
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?	1	Outstanding
How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?	1	Outstanding