

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST. FRANCIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
HIGHCLIFFE ROAD
MORLEY, LEEDS, LS27 9LX

School URN	108016
School DfE Number	383 / 3362
Chair of Governors	Mr John Lockwood
Headteacher	Mrs. Jane Burns
RE Subject Leader	Mrs. J. Burns/ Mrs. J. Heyes
Date of Inspection	19 th and 20 th July 2010
Section 48 Inspector	Mr. David Gott

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Francis 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

St. Francis Catholic Primary School, Morley, located on the southern outskirts of Leeds, is a smaller than average, Voluntary Aided primary school of the Diocese of Leeds. Currently there are 120 pupils on roll arranged into 5 classes, 3 of which are mixed age. The Reception and Year 6 classes are currently single age. There is no nursery provision at the school. The school operates a before and after school club. Pupils join the reception class from a number of different settings. The school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 22 to the reception class. Currently the reception class size stands at 21. 73% of pupils on roll are baptised Catholics. Pupils are drawn from a wide range of socio economic backgrounds. Pupil attainment on entry is around average. Pupil attendance is in line with the national average. There have been no pupil exclusions. The majority of the pupils are of white British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has a below average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Similarly the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. There are 4 full time and 3 part time teachers. There are 6 (full time equivalent) Catholic teachers. 6 teachers teach Religious Education (RE). 3 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) or equivalent.

The school serves the 2 Catholic parishes of St. Francis of Assisi (Morley) and St. Brigid's (Churwell), which are soon to be amalgamated to form the new parish of St. William of York. The current Parish Priest was not in post at the time of the last RE inspection (2007). Good home, school, parish links exist and the school has an active and very supportive parents association.

Following a period of high staff turnover, including difficulty in recruiting a headteacher and declining pupil numbers, the current substantive headteacher was appointed in September 2008. Pupil numbers are now rising. The headteacher shares responsibility for RE and Collective Worship (CW) with the Key Stage 1 (KS1) class teacher. On entry into the reception class, the school's RE baseline suggests that pupil knowledge and experience of the Catholic faith is generally below that expected of pupils of that age. By the end of year 6, the majority of pupils achieve standards in RE which are in line with or above age expected levels. Attainment in RE is also now in line with the other core curriculum areas.

At the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils transfer to St. John Fisher Catholic High School, Dewsbury. Strong links exist between the two schools.

Since the last inspection the school has been reaccredited to the "Investors in People" award; achieved "Healthy School" status, "Active Mark" and the "Stephen Lawrence" (level1) awards. Currently the school is working towards Level 2 of the "Stephen Lawrence" award and has commenced working towards the "Investors in Pupils" award.

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

St Francis Catholic Primary School, Morley provides a good quality of Catholic education with several outstanding elements. Outcomes for pupils, the provision for Catholic education and the school's capacity for sustained improvement are all good. The leadership and management of the school, has developed a very strong sense of Catholic mission within the whole school community, living out the school's mission statement: *"As a family we embrace a shared vision of the values of the gospel as taught by the Catholic Church, as we increasingly know the person of Jesus"*

The governing body, headteacher and senior leadership team are highly motivated and consistently communicate high expectations to staff and pupils about securing improvement. School leadership in RE galvanises the enthusiasm of staff and channels their efforts to very good effect. A realistic and challenging Action Plan for RE is well grounded in detailed and accurate analysis of the pupils' achievement and is being used effectively to improve RE outcomes for the pupils. Teaching and learning in RE is highly effective and pupils enjoy their RE lessons. Staff morale is high and belief in the schools improving success runs throughout all levels of staff. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and are very ably supported by dedicated and proactive teaching assistants.

The management of RE and the liturgical and prayer life of the school is highly effective and this has a very powerful effect on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Standards of achievement and attainment in RE are rising in relation to pupils' capabilities and are now in line with other core curriculum areas. The majority of pupils reach or exceed expected levels in RE by the time they leave Year 6. The exemplary behaviour of the pupils in and around the school is a strength of the school and underlines the calm, orderly working atmosphere which permeates St. Francis School. Pupils and staff respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all. Relationships between pupils of different backgrounds are very positive. The school actively promotes pupils' initiatives in learning about and practically supporting charities at local, national and global levels. The school participates fully in a range of external partnership activities resulting in improvements in the school's training and development provision, enhancing leadership and management guidance in RE and providing wider opportunities for the pupils.

Good home, school, parish links exist. Parents are very supportive of the school, and feel well informed about their child's RE work and progress in the subject. They appreciate attending school Masses, special assemblies and seasonal liturgies.

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

The current headteacher, KS1 joint RE / CW co-ordinator and Parish Priest and a number of other staff were not in post at the time of the last RE (Section 48) inspection. The school has worked hard to address the key issues identified for improvement in the last inspection report. The headteacher and joint KS1 RE/CW co-ordinator have now established an agreed monitoring and evaluation system which includes pupil tracking of standards and progress in RE. Considerable progress has also been achieved in

developing classroom learning environments to better reflect the Catholic ethos of the school. All classrooms visited (5) featured an appropriate RE focal prayer area. Standards of attainment in RE have improved since the last inspection, and are now in line with, or above, standards attained in other core curriculum areas. Scrutiny of pupils work in all key stages evidenced appropriate teacher marking of RE workbooks.

As a result of improvements made since the last inspection, the overall performance of the school has now crossed a grade boundary and has been upgraded from “satisfactory” at the last inspection to “good” at this inspection.

The capacity to make further improvements

After a period of turbulence in staffing and declining pupil numbers, the school now has good capacity for making further improvements in RE. Since the last Section 48 RE inspection, the governing body have appointed a number of new enthusiastic and committed Catholic teachers – including the headteacher and the KS1 teacher who jointly share the role of RE/CW co-ordinator. There are now nearly double the numbers of Catholic teachers at the school since the last RE inspection.

The school has a headteacher with a very clear vision for school improvement, who sets high standards for herself, her staff and pupils. Similarly the school has a very dedicated and hardworking team of staff. The experienced chair of governors skilfully leads an informed and effective governing body. The governor with responsibility for RE (parish priest) is a frequent visitor to the school and, like the whole of the teaching and support staff team, is totally committed to the ongoing success of the school. Staff morale is high and pupil behaviour exemplary.

The school has conducted a very thorough Self Evaluation of RE and has already put in place a very realistic RE Action Plan. Very good home, school, and parish links exist and the school is now very well placed to move forward to make even further improvements in RE.

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

The governors, headteacher and joint RE/CW co-ordinator have already correctly identified the following priorities in the school’s RE Action Plan to further improve the provision of Catholic education at St. Francis School:

- To introduce the new RE scheme: “The Way, The Truth and The Life” into all key stages.
- To Implement ongoing revisions to monitoring, assessment and target setting arrangements in line with the above.
- To review the School Mission Statement in consultation with governors, staff, parents and pupils and to display it in age appropriate, child friendly language in all teaching and learning areas, on official school documentation and on the school website.

- To further deepen the spiritual development of pupils by introducing a residential retreat experience for upper Key Stage 2 pupils.
- To review the school Sex and Personal Relationships education programme in consultation with governors, staff and parents.
- To further develop the school's moderated RE portfolio.
- To include the provision of an outdoor prayer garden in any future remodelling plans for the school building and grounds.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of St. Francis's school are good with some outstanding qualities. The school's leadership is deeply committed to the church's mission in education. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. The governing body exercises its duties to the full in ensuring the adequacy and suitability of qualified Catholic teacher appointments and holds the headteacher and leadership team fully to account.

The headteacher (joint RE/CW co-ordinator with the Key Stage 1 teacher) communicates a very strong sense of spiritual purpose, with a focus on promoting high standards and the fullest personal development of the pupils. The school is very effectively managed. Pupil behaviour is exemplary and staff morale is high. Very good links exist with parents, parishes and external agencies to reinforce the high standard of care, guidance and support the school provides to ensure its pupils' safety and general well being. The result is that the pupils flourish and commit themselves to the school's mission. Sufficient budget is allocated for the purchase of appropriate RE resources for the school including the introduction of the new RE scheme: "The Way, The Truth, and The Life". All classrooms have been provided with religious artefacts to support the teaching and learning of Christianity and other world faiths. Each classroom has a designated prayer area with appropriate religious artefacts and pupil displays to support the RE curriculum. The school is currently exploring the possibility of introducing an outdoor prayer garden to further enhance the Catholic life of the school.

The Parish Priest (nominated governor with responsibility for RE) is a frequent visitor to the school. His influence impacts positively upon, and is very much appreciated by, all members of the school community. He actively promotes productive links between parish, school and community and fully supports the pastoral care of the pupils and staff.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of collective worship at St. Francis School is good with some outstanding qualities. Collective Worship (CW) has a significantly positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. CW was observed in all three key stages and forms an integral part of school life which is central to the Catholic tradition.

The school has joint co-ordinators for CW (headteacher and KS1 teacher). The CW policy has recently been revised in line with diocesan guidance and a new format for planning CW (by key stage) has been introduced. Each class holds CW in their classrooms twice a week, attends a key stage and whole school assembly once each week. Pupil RE work is valued at all ages and at all levels of ability in celebration and award assemblies and in vibrant RE displays around the school. Each classroom has a focal point dedicated to RE containing a crucifix, a Bible, a candle and displays reflecting the pupils work on the current "Here I Am" (HIA) theme. The school is also exploring the possibility of introducing an outdoor prayer garden.

Pupils act with reverence in CW and are keen to participate. They sing enthusiastically, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. No one acts in a manner contrary to their beliefs and all show respect for each other. They have a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and are becoming skilled in the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. They are at ease when praying with their school community and appreciate what is taking place.

The Eucharist is acknowledged as central to the life of the school. Parents and grandparents are invited to attend seasonal school Masses, liturgies and assemblies throughout the year. Voluntary confessions are offered during the season of Lent.

At the time of the inspection, the school was following the HIA Cycle B Summer Term topic theme: "Treasures". At a KS2 CW, pupils gathered as appropriate quiet background music played. The teacher had arranged a focal point featuring a large treasure chest, some sea shells, sweets, a mirror and other natural objects. A pupil was invited to light the candle and whilst other pupils held up the objects. They were then asked to rearrange the objects in the order they thought was most important. Following discussion, a pupil then read the Parable of the Lost Sheep from St. Matthew's Gospel. After a period of perfect silence for reflection on how important Jesus thinks we are, the pupils enthusiastically sang "Here I am Lord" followed by a closing children's litany of thanks for their particular gifts and treasures. To conclude, 3 pupils held up mirrors by the exit doors and the pupils were invited to "Look at God's most important treasure" as they quietly left the room. Reception class pupils made very good use of a newly created space leading to an outdoor play area where they thoroughly enjoyed listening to the parable of the lost sheep. and re-enacting it wearing appropriate dressing up clothes. Clever use was made of "emotion fans" (based on the number fan idea). The children could indicate at various points in the parable, how they thought individual characters in the parable were feeling by holding up an appropriate picture of a smiling face (or a sad face etc.) from the range of pictures held within the finger fan.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

Pupils achievement in RE is good. From the evidence of pupil learning as gathered from classroom observations, scrutiny of pupil RE workbooks, RE displays, discussions and links with CW, attainment is average or above and learning and progress in RE are good. Standards of attainment for the final key stage are mostly above average. Standards of attainment are largely above average in all strands of each attainment target (AT). Pupils are attaining generally above average standards in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) in all key stages.

Pupils are generally working at level 2 or above by the end of KS1 and at level 4 or above by the end of KS2. Standards achieved by pupils in RE are reported annually to parents in a written end of year report. The school uses RE assessment materials provided by the diocese. Pupils have individual RE progress books in which a piece of work based on the topic sheets is placed inside the teachers' cohort files. These are then monitored by the joint RE co-ordinators.

Pupils make good progress in RE, taking into account their varying abilities and starting points. Class teachers ensure that all pupils make good progress in RE by planning appropriately differentiated RE work at appropriate levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and are very ably supported in RE by dedicated and proactive teaching assistants.

Pupils have a very positive attitude towards their learning in RE and work at a good pace because the teachers have secure subject knowledge and pupils find the work interesting and stimulating. Pupil behaviour during RE lessons and throughout the school day is of a very high standard. This is a strength of the school – especially given that the inspection took place in the very last week of the school year. Pupils are confident in speaking and listening and willingly volunteer their views about the RE life of the school.

As the school further develops revised systems of target setting, assessment, monitoring and evaluation linked to the soon to be introduced new RE scheme "The Way, The Truth, and The Life", the pupils will in turn become more fully aware of their own progress and what they need to do in order to improve. Similarly, as the school further develops a moderated RE portfolio linked to the new RE scheme, pupil attainment in RE will be accurately captured.

The school uses a very effective merit system to encourage achievement based upon the 4 houses: St. George, St. David, St. Andrew, and St. Patrick. Pupils further achieve in RE through their regular practical support for those in need in the wider community both at home and abroad. For example the school supports a number of charitable projects such as for homeless people (St. George's Crypt), families in need (Good Shepherd) and humanitarian projects across the world (CAFOD Fairtrade). Pupils also donate flowers to a local care home (Siegen Manor) in the Marian month of May.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

Teaching and learning in RE is good overall in all key stages. The good teaching promotes good learning and as a consequence, pupils make good progress in RE. The teaching in RE is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are appropriately motivated and engaged. As a result of good RE subject knowledge and secure assessment procedures, teachers and other adults plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, in most lessons, pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well and make good progress. Good and imaginative use is made of resources, including technology, to maximise pupil learning particularly for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The support provided by other adults is very well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Pupils are provided with appropriate feedback both orally and through marking. Pupils know how well they have achieved and can discuss what they need to do next in order to improve still more. Teachers and other adults listen to, observe and question individuals and groups of pupils during RE lessons in order to re-shape tasks and provide explanations to further improve pupil learning.

The teaching styles and use of stimulating resources, such as Information Communication Technology (ICT) are precisely judged to enable and extend pupil learning in RE, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Teachers appropriately challenge pupils in RE to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and to become more aware of the demands of religious commitment in their own day to day school and family life. Representative parents voiced their high opinions of the school and especially of the good behaviour of the children. Parents felt included in their children's RE and recognised the positive impact that it was having on their children's spiritual and moral development. They felt that through regular school newsletters they were kept informed about what their children were learning in RE. They also appreciated "The Wednesday Word" as a further RE extension "prompt" around which family RE discussions could take place in the home.

Parents appreciated being invited into Masses, special assemblies and seasonal liturgies. Parents were appreciative of the current arrangements for preparation of their children for first sacraments. They felt well informed and acknowledged the "open door" availability of the staff to discuss and resolve any issues which they may have concerning their child's education. Parents would value a more up to date "Sex and Personal Relationships Education Programme" for their children. This is an issue which the school already has under active consideration.

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

Overall the RE curriculum meets the needs and interests of the pupils to a good standard with some outstanding qualities. The curriculum fulfils diocesan requirements. It is enriched through imaginative and well planned strategies to capitalise on the expertise within and beyond the school. This lends to learning that is overwhelmingly stimulating and memorable. The RE curriculum is appropriately customised to meet the needs of differing groups and individual pupils and includes personalised programmes for those

who need them. The extent to which the curriculum in RE contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils is outstanding. This is a strength of the school.

In a KS2 RE lesson, the pupils skilfully re-enacted the parable of the Good Samaritan. One group of pupils used a computer programme to create a poster on the parable to put up in the church. Other groups role played and “hot seated” witnesses to compile newspaper articles. Video flip cameras were also utilised.

The RE curriculum at St. Francis School significantly raises pupils’ awareness of other faiths. Pupils value the annual “Faith Week” through which they gain knowledge and appreciation of other faith beliefs, cultures and practices. The school arranges visits to and from religious leaders of other world faiths and visits to places of other faith worship. For example Rabbi Charing visited school and pupils learned about Judaism. Year 6 pupils visited a Synagogue. RE resource provision (e.g. “Faith Boxes”) provides ample opportunities for pupils in each class to handle religious artefacts from Christian and other world faiths.

Sacramental preparation takes place at school, outside the normal school day. Eligible Catholic children of the parishes who are not being educated at a Catholic primary school are invited to join the preparation classes at St. Francis School. Preparation is organised around the life and teaching of Jesus and the Church and the central beliefs and celebrations surrounding the Eucharist and way of life of Catholics who follow that teaching.

The “Here I Am” (HIA) resource is currently used as the main RE programme of study. It is the intention of the school to introduce “The Way, The Truth, and The Life” RE resource in the near future. The school also plans to incorporate aspects of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) materials into the RE curriculum.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

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

Overall, standards of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils RE are good with some outstanding qualities.

The joint RE/CW co-ordinators (headteacher and KS1 teacher) have a very clear vision for school improvement in RE and they set a very clear direction for raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE. The headteacher and joint RE/CW co-ordinator are deeply committed to the church’s mission in education. They are energised by the task and provide a rich, broad and balanced curriculum with spiritual and moral development of the pupils a priority. The co-ordinators conduct a range of monitoring and evaluation activities relating to the provision and outcomes of RE. Their analysis provides a firm basis for completing a very accurate self evaluation form (SEF) with judgments correctly identifying the school’s strengths and areas for further development in RE. The headteacher’s consultative team approach, incorporating questionnaire surveys, staff meetings and parental consultations, enable governors, staff, parents and pupils to claim ownership of the resulting RE Action Plan which clearly outlines how and when further RE improvements will be achieved.

The governing body has the expertise to meet the school's needs and makes a highly significant contribution to the leadership and Catholic dimension of the school. The governors very ably discharge their responsibilities with regard to RE. During a previous period of turbulence in staffing, the governors maintained their firm commitment to upholding the tenets of the school's Foundation Trust Deed by ensuring the adequacy and suitability of staffing by appointing qualified Catholic teachers – including the current headteacher and the joint KS1 RE co-ordinator. There is now nearly twice the number of suitably qualified Catholic teachers working at the school than at the time of the last inspection. The school works in active partnership with the Diocese of Leeds, the Leeds Association of Roman Catholic Headteachers (LARCH), Morley Children Services, Morley Music and Liturgy Festivals, Leeds Trinity University College, Morley High School Partnership. Very good links are also maintained with the Morley cluster of primary schools. Pupils get a very good start to their life long learning journey at St. Francis Catholic Primary School, Morley.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

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