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DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Beeston St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School
Lady Pit Lane, Leeds, LS11 6RX

School URN	108025
School DfE Number	3371
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Chair of Governors	Bernard McGrath
Headteacher	Patricia Mary Holmes
RE Subject Leader	Jessica McEnroe
Date of Inspection	4 th - 5 th July 2011
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs. Kathryn Spillane

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Francis of Assisi 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.

The inspector observed four Religious Education (RE) lessons across the key stages and three Collective Worship. Meetings were held with the headteacher, RE subject leader, Parish Priest, Governors, the school council, support staff and parents. School documentation was made available, including the RE subject leader's file, RE portfolio, planning and assessment files, monitoring and evaluation records, Governing body minutes and samples of the children's RE and literacy books.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Francis of Assisi is a Voluntary Aided Catholic primary school. At the time of the inspection there were 207 children on roll (including 26 part time in the Nursery).

The school serves the community of Beeston and Holbeck, an area of high social disadvantage and cultural diversity. A new development for the school in the past year has been working within the new parish of St Maximillian Kolbe formed by the amalgamation of the parishes of St Anthony's and St Francis of Assisi. Father Frank, Father Bob and Sister Damian are frequent visitors to the school and support the pastoral welfare of staff, children and parents.

The pupils come from a very wide range of socio economic and cultural backgrounds, with 47% of the children coming from an area of the lowest 3% of social deprivation. 68% of children are EAL and 26 languages are spoken in the school. The school achieved the Inclusion Charter Mark in 2009 and working towards submission of their portfolio of evidence for the Stephen Lawrence Award.

Upon entry to Nursery attainment is well below the national average, however, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The school benefits from having 10.4 f.t.e teachers, of which eight are Catholic and six teachers hold the CCRS.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 is Satisfactory, 4 is Inadequate

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

This is a summative judgement based on the 2 judgements below: Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils, provision for Catholic education (includes effectiveness of leaders and managers) and capacity for sustained improvement.

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS, PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

2

CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

2

Main findings

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School provides a good quality of Catholic education with several outstanding features. 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, have developed a very strong sense of Catholic mission and the school is held in high regard in the local community, The school's mission statement: *'I have come that you may have life and live it to the full'* permeates all aspects of school life. Leaders and all staff are totally committed to providing every child with opportunities for them to live life to the full and to be true missionaries.

Areas for development in the previous Section 48 inspection have been addressed. The Headteacher and RE coordinator are fully aware of areas to develop in the teaching of RE and the Catholic life of the school and they are totally committed to improving provision. Morale is very high and belief in the school's success and mission is clear throughout the whole staff team, Parish clergy, the Governing body and parents, which ensures that the school has good capacity for further improvement.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- To continue to develop the assessment systems introduced with 'The Way, the Truth and the Life, in particular clarifying assessment opportunities throughout the school and to use the marking policy and assessment strategies consistently throughout the school, to ensure that marking clearly identifies areas for development.
- To continue to develop links within the new parish of St Maximilian Kolbe and include regular opportunities for the children to celebrate the Mass in addition to the existing calendar of high quality liturgies.
- Provide regular opportunities for the hard working and committed RE coordinator to continue to monitor and evaluate RE throughout the school and provide opportunities to contribute to Senior Leadership meetings.

PUPILS

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

2

Children at St Francis of Assisi make good progress in Religious Education. Attainment is in line with national averages, and mirrors standards in literacy, which is good considering their starting points.

Children's behaviour is exemplary and all children are polite and courteous and proud of their school, as one child said, "St Francis's is a loving caring place that helps everyone." Another said, "People help each other and share things, children are encouraged to help each other in lessons". Pupils work steadily on tasks, which are well differentiated to meet the wide range of abilities in most classes.

Standards of attainment in Key Stage 2 are at least broadly average and are able to illustrate their knowledge and understanding of religion and their ability to reflect on meaning. Children in a lesson recognizing the gifts and talents which God has given each one of them, were able to clearly articulate why they were given these gifts and how their belief in God shapes their life. It is very clear that children are very confident in class discussions and feel secure in expressing their own views and beliefs, often exhibiting higher level thinking skills.

Children respond to the needs of others outside their immediate experience, and take an active part in fundraising, during Lent money was raised for Catholic Care through the Good Shepherd appeal and for also for Cafod. The school achieved the Inclusion Charter Mark in 2009 and are currently in the process of submitting a Portfolio of evidence for the Stephen Lawrence award. The school actively encourages involvement with local groups. One group, Mariners, is a centre in the community for people with sensory and physical disabilities and they join Year 6 each week for circle time and school celebrations. A member of the Mariners commented, "It was a bit like the United Nations with children from all different backgrounds. I felt that I was able to teach them something, but I was also able to learn from them. It surprises you how much they knew!"

All the children act with reverence during Collective Worship and are at ease when praying with others. The older children regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence. One act of worship observed, included prayers written by the children and children sang with enthusiasm, one child asking if he could stand up when it was his turn to sing solo! They are aware of others who have different beliefs but recognize that God plays an important part in the lives of their friends and members of the school's worshipping community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
• 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	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

2

Display around the school is good. All classes have prayer corners/focal points and children's work features prominently. Correct liturgical colours are evident throughout the school to help children understand the changing seasons of the Church calendar. Photographic evidence shows the range of opportunities which the children have throughout the year to enhance their religious education.

The lessons which were observed, together with the work presented for scrutiny, supports the schools judgment that the majority of teaching is at least good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and children are keen to learn and are provided with a range of activities to meet different learning styles. Teachers use a variety of questioning and encourage children to reconsider answers, and at times are able to encourage children to develop higher level thinking skills.

Teachers plan appropriately differentiated work, ensuring that all children are able to access the RE curriculum, which contributes to their good progress. Activities show evidence of cross-curricular planning and awareness of different learning styles allowing children to enjoy their work and make good progress. In one outstanding lesson, children were asked to either write about, or dramatise, Peter's imprisonment and his release. After the activities, several questions were 'posed' and self-assessment used to assess whether the children understood the objectives set at the start of the lesson. A further challenging question ensured that the higher achievers made outstanding progress. Support provided by other adults is well focused and planned and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning.

Some marking provides detailed feedback, which shows the children how to make their work better, this secures good progress, however this needs to be consistent throughout the school to ensure that all children are able to build on their prior learning.

The curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual and moral development and is very responsive to the local context and the rich diversity of faiths and cultures. Regular planning for SEAL and Circle times enrich this provision. Pupils with different faith backgrounds are well supported in the school and there are formal and informal opportunities for prayer.

All statutory requirements are met including the children's moral and spiritual development. Acts of collective worship are given a high profile within the school and are a key part of school celebration. Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned. Sacramental preparation takes place in the school and the First Communion Mass is celebrated annually in the parish church. Collective Worship in the school celebrates and reflects the religious and cultural diversity of the school and Feast days of the church, together with the start and end of the school year, are celebrated with Masses in the church; however, Father Bob expressed a desire to extend the number of masses celebrated in the future.

Parents from all backgrounds are given opportunities to become fully involved in the life of the school; parents are invited into school for masses and liturgies and weekly assemblies. Parents' evenings take place three times each year and termly newsletters ensure parents are kept informed of their child's progress and also of important calendar dates. Parents are very supportive of the school and feel that all staff are approachable and want to work

in partnership with them to ensure that the children are supported and cared for and are provided with a good standard of education. One parent commented, “I wouldn’t want my children to be at any other school”.

The range and quality of extra curricular opportunities is particularly valued by the parents. The school provides teaching in Sex and Relationship Education(SRE) and parents are informed of the policy and content of the lessons.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching in Religious Education.	2
The use of assessment to support learning in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils’ needs.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School.

2

The school’s headteacher and RE coordinator are deeply committed to the Church’s mission in religious education with the spiritual and moral development of the children a priority. RE is included as a focus in the School Development Plan and leaders and managers conduct a range of monitoring activities to provide analysis of the impact of developments on standards in the school. The RE coordinator has worked extremely hard to drive standards forward and together with the headteacher their self-evaluation is very accurate, with both strengths and areas to be developed clearly identified.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities effectively. Some members of the Governing Body including Father Frank together with Father Bob and Sister Damian are regular visitors to the school, to support staff and pupils, and are able to hold the school to account for tackling areas for development in Religious Education. Religious education is always included in the headteacher’s report and ensures that governors are kept informed about religious education and the Catholic life of the school.

The school is held in high regard in the community and leaders and managers work with others beyond the school to ensure that children are given opportunities to show concern and respect for cultural and religious differences. Visits to places of Worship and cultural centres, for example the Hamara centre and the local Sikh Temple, have become a regular event in the schools calendar The school also has strong links with ‘The Mariners’, a local resource centre, people from the centre come into the school each week to work with the children in Year 6.

One annual Inset day is planned to reflect the Catholic Mission of the school, it takes place at The Briary Retreat Centre in Ilkley and staff are also encouraged to take part in relevant CPD. The school's mission as a Catholic school in an area of religious and cultural diversity is recognized, celebrated and valued by the whole school community. The staff of the school are totally committed to ensure that pupils are equipped with skills, which will enable them to take a full and active role in their community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement 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 areas needing development 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 pupil well-being.	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	1