

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Primary School
Harrogate Road
Leeds
LS17 6SX

School URN	108035
Chair of Governors	Miss Ann O'Brien
Headteacher	Mr Shaun Dudgeon
RE Subject Leader	Mrs Jilly Roberts
Date of Inspection	22 nd & 23 rd March 2010
Diocesan Inspector	Joe Ginty

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of Immaculate Heart of Mary 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.

Immaculate Heart of Mary is a two form entry school standing in grounds adjacent to the parish church. It is a larger than average primary school with 400 pupils on roll of whom the overwhelming majority are Catholic. The children are drawn primarily from the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish serving the Moortown, Roundhay and Shadwell areas of Leeds and additionally from parts of the Chapel Allerton, Alwoodley and Harehills districts. The pupils are of predominantly English background, with a range of other cultural communities represented. Parents of all backgrounds become actively involved, thus enriching the life of the school. The school is very popular and over-subscribed year on year.

Pupils enter the school from a very wide range of early-years provision and attainment on entry is broadly in line with national expectations with a minority above expectations.

There are 14 pupils on the SEN register, 4 of whom have Statements of Special Educational Needs. There are no pupil exclusions. There are seventeen full or part-time teachers, seven of whom hold CCRS or an equivalent qualification.

THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The provision of Catholic Education is outstanding. Expectations are high, as expressed in the stated Aims of the school, published clearly within the Mission Statement. There exists a vibrant partnership between school and parish manifest in the warmth of welcome and hospitality. There is a united purpose and determination to foster dignity and confidence in each pupil both as an individual and as a member of the Christian community. The school and parish also foster great respect for those of other denominations and backgrounds.

The governing body has the expertise to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the direction of the Catholic life of the school. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties very effectively being fully involved in evaluating the school and ensuring that the views of all parties feature prominently when priorities and targets for improvement are set. Their relationships with staff are constructive and they show determination in challenging and supporting the school in addressing change and so bringing about necessary improvements. Both the parish priest and the governor with oversight of RE are popular and regular visitors to the school, thereby maintaining an informed understanding of learning outcomes and therefore how successfully the needs of all pupils are being met.

Leadership and management of the school is outstanding. The Headteacher and Religious Education subject leader are knowledgeable and committed, have established very good working relations and exercise a positive influence throughout the school.

The pupils develop skills, concepts and knowledge within an overtly Christ-centered community where the Gospel ethos permeates every aspect of school life. They are happy to share values, develop understanding and care for others, and derive joy from a commitment to their faith. Vibrant acts of worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm from their earliest years in a variety of gatherings. All pupils understand and value the purpose and power of prayer. The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils is a significant strength of the school.

All adults extol the gifts of catechesis and evangelisation which underpin teaching in its broadest sense. Through the role model, support and encouragement of all adults the pupils are becoming exemplars of their faith and responsible, caring citizens. This highly effective teaching, delivered with enthusiasm and evident commitment, supports pupils' good attainment and progress. The overt proclamation of the Catholic mission of the school is vibrantly displayed in all classrooms and communal areas of the school.

The pupils conduct themselves in an exemplary manner in all given situations. The pupils' response to the demands made of them in the classroom and around the school is outstanding. Through their School Council the pupils enjoy an active involvement in ongoing improvement and are currently formulating a '*Learning Lighthouse*' child-friendly model of the Mission Statement.

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

Since the last s48 inspection in 2006 the school has maintained a clear focus on observing and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and this has impacted positively on the quality of provision in RE.

The capacity to make further improvements

There is a strong capacity to make further improvements as the governors and senior leadership team are highly motivated and inspire the school community in promoting their Catholic vision. Morale throughout the school is very high and belief in the school's success is shared and celebrated by all.

The school has a clear idea of its own strengths and has identified areas it wishes to develop further as outlined in a realistic and challenging action plan.

Steps the school proposes to take in order to further improve provision

In line with their action plan the governors and senior leadership team intend to:

- extend the opportunities for teaching and learning about other faiths through visits to denominational places of worship in the local area;
- continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the '*In the Beginning*' EPR scheme.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The effectiveness of Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school.

The school's leadership is outstanding. Governors and the leadership team are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties very effectively. There is clear evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is a priority along with spiritual and moral development of pupils. This is reflected in the school improvement plan, the extensive range of self evaluation (SERFS) and other documents. Self evaluation at all levels within the school is a reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. This leads on to well targeted planning and actions taken by the school as appropriate in full collaboration with pupils, parents, parishioners and other key partners. The governors' relationships with staff are constructive and they show determination in challenging and supporting ongoing developments, so bringing about necessary improvements.

Whilst all adults at the school place great emphasis on the care of the pupils the governors' consideration for pupil safeguarding and welfare is reflected in the staffing structure at the school with a member of staff having oversight of their pastoral care. Planning documentation across all areas of the curriculum clearly indicate well thought out opportunities for the development of the pupils' spiritual and moral development.

As a result, the pupils are happy at school and testify to feeling 'safe and loved'. They hold all staff in very high regard and recognise them as ideal role models. The pupils have a clear understanding of the school's mission, share its purpose, and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it specifically through their active School Council and generally through their outstanding response in daily life. The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is outstanding and is a significant strength of the school.

Periodically, visiting professionals to the school are moved to comment on the ethos and character of the school. Recently a supply teacher wrote, *'I would feel privileged to work in the school again. In the short period of time I worked here I felt part of the team and this is a reflection on the warmth and openness of the staff and children.'*

The quality of Collective Worship.

Immaculate Heart of Mary is a prayerful community wherein staff and pupils regularly pray together. The quality of Collective Worship, opportunity and provision, is outstanding. This has come about through the wholehearted belief of governors and staff that prayerful worship should be central to the life of the school and a fundamental part of every school celebration. The outcomes of regular monitoring are informative and acted upon. Improvements are implemented enthusiastically by staff through the sharing of good practice and the acquisition of appropriate attractive and stimulating resources.

Worship is further enhanced through the wholehearted active cooperation of the parish priest and very strong links have been forged with the parish community, further promoting sacramental and liturgical celebration.

There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer. Attendance by parents and others associated with the school is facilitated and encouraged. Themes are consistent with the Catholic character of the school and responsive to the experience and backgrounds of the pupils. Staff ensure pupils are skilled and equipped in leading prayerful liturgies.

Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. They have a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and are becoming skilled in the use of scripture, religious artifacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. They are at ease when praying with their school community and appreciate what is taking place. These qualities are best exemplified as the pupils of Years 3 and 4 joyously proclaim to their peers and parents through word, song and movement the true message of Easter in their presentation of '*Resurrection Rock!*'

Parents appreciate the way school involves them in first sacramental preparation and are encouraged by liturgical 'outreach' initiatives such as the '*Traveling Crib*'. To quote a parent's response, '*A wonderful idea – we enjoyed the crib so much we bought our own. We all set the crib up together as a family which was nice as, due to work and everyday life, we find it hard to sit together as a family.*'

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Pupil learning outcomes.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectations with a minority above expectations. Their attainment in RE at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 is good in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2). Standards of attainment are good in all strands of each attainment target. All pupils make at least good progress and some go beyond this. Pupils are keen to do well, seek to produce their best work and are interested, knowledgeable and enthusiastic when talking about topics they have covered in the subject. The school is exploring ways to further extend the more able pupils.

Pupils lead and take responsibility for planning activities in the school and the wider community. They take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development and evaluating the Catholic life of the school. They show curiosity, are imaginative, intuitive and understand what makes them who they are.

They are proud of their faith backgrounds and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. In proportion to their years they show a capacity for community praise and celebration, an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and be forgiven. They express their own views and beliefs with confidence and are able to refer to the teachings of Jesus and other key religious figures.

They value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community. They treat others with high levels of respect and know acutely that their behaviour always has consequences. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community. Pupils are encouraged to be generous in their support for those less fortunate than themselves and this was clearly evident in their enthusiastic supporting for their Lenten fund-raising activities.

The effectiveness of teaching in RE.

The quality of teaching overall is outstanding and meets pupils' needs and curricular requirements. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and keen to share their faith with the children in their care.

The school has rigorously focused assessment strategies which provide an accurate, up to date picture of the achievement of all pupils. This information is used consistently and systematically in line with other core subjects through the CLAR database to promote improvement and sustain good levels of achievement. Pupils are consistently involved in evaluating how well they achieve and, through their '*RE Assessment and Evaluation Record*' are well aware of their own levels of attainment and how they might improve. This contributes to their improved achievement and provides them with confidence about making further improvement. Accurate, regular, systematic assessment ensures pupils know what the school expects of them and how well they are doing in all aspects of their work in RE.

Teachers' good questioning skills are used to involve and extend learning opportunities for all children. All teachers have very high expectations as to behaviour, attitude and quality of work. As a result pupils make good progress, work well together and enter fully into the spirit of the lessons. The interactive whiteboards are used very effectively in class teaching and liturgies. Teachers are also clearly adept at promoting cross-curricular links when teaching RE. In turn, pupils make very good use of their IT skills, particularly evident in some delightful displays of their work.

There is an obvious strength of relationships between all teachers and the pupils and the teachers' respect for the pupils is mirrored in the consideration the pupils have for each other. Pupils are loved and respected. Consequently they work hard and develop their knowledge and understanding in RE lessons. All planning carefully follows the '*Here I Am*' syllabus and shows appropriate progression and continuity.

Parents have ample opportunity to make their opinions known about their children's learning by way of school evaluation report forms that are available to them. Parents express their appreciation of the way school involves them in first sacramental preparation. In the words of one parent, '*There is a positive attitude prevailing throughout the school and every child is encouraged to reach their full potential.*' In the words of another, '*Our children are developing as caring people.*'

The broader RE curriculum.

The school is successful in meeting all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and those of the diocese. Immaculate Heart of Mary is a fully inclusive school wherein all learning styles and abilities are well provided for and there are no significant variations in

attainment between groups of pupils all of whom are attaining well and developing a good understanding of their faith.

In full consultation with parents the school has introduced the *'In the beginning'* family life and sex education programme and intend to monitor the effectiveness of the programme carefully in light of the perceived needs of the pupils and the wishes of the parents. There is every indication that the programme affords the pupils and their families a well-balanced approach to the subject within a fundamental Christian foundation. Together with the successful implementation of the SEAL programme this is having a significant impact on the social and moral aspects of the pupils' development.

The pupils have a good understanding and appreciation of the beliefs and values of the major world religions. The school continues to extend and improve its provision for the informed study other world faiths and to this end is looking to arrange visits for the pupils to a range of denominational places of worship in what is a richly diverse local area.

A significant strength of the school is the spiritual and moral development of the pupils which is enriched through every aspect of school life.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement, and supporting all pupils in RE.

The leadership and management of RE is outstanding. Teachers feel they are well supported in the subject and regular audits ensure that the necessary up-to-date resources are provided and expenditure on RE and liturgy compares favourably with spending in other core subjects. The headteacher and subject leader have inspired all staff to make RE a real living experience. They are committed to continuing the improvement of RE provision and in doing so they have involved the pupils and their families.

The teachers regularly attend diocesan meetings and the subject is afforded a high profile in ongoing school-based discussion and in-service. The subject leader regularly leads staff briefings to disseminate good practice and information.

Very effective use is made of the staff portal within the school's virtual learning environment (Gateway Learning Platform) where the outcomes of monitoring exercises together with an extensive bank of shared resources are readily available to all staff and good use is made of this facility by them.

The named governor and parish priest regularly visit the school and meet pupils and staff. They are well informed about the subject and are instrumental in promoting ongoing improvement. They are very aware of strengths and areas for development within RE and effectively communicate this to the full governing body.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

Aspect	Grade	
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	1	Outstanding
THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL		
The effectiveness of Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school.	1	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship.	1	Outstanding
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION		
Pupil learning outcomes.	1	Outstanding
The effectiveness of Teaching in RE.	1	Outstanding
The broader RE curriculum.	2	Good
The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE.	1	Outstanding