

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Eden Way, Argie Avenue
Leeds LS4 2TF

School URN	108031
School DfCSF Number	383 / 3377
Chair of Governors	Fr. Anthony Jackson
Headteacher	Mrs. Gabriella Nieland
RE Subject Leader	Mrs. Helena Angstmann
Date of Inspection	22 nd and 23 rd June 2010
Section 48 Inspector	Mr. David Gott

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of Sacred Heart 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

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Leeds is a smaller than national average voluntary aided school within the Catholic Diocese of Leeds. The catchment area served by the school is very wide, covering 9 electoral wards and the 3 Catholic parishes of The Assumption (West Park), Our Lady of Lourdes (Headingley), and St. Anne's Cathedral (city centre). The pupils are drawn from a wide range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds. The majority of the pupils are of white British heritage. An increasingly higher than national average number of pupils (40%), come from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a high proportion of student families from Libya. English is not believed to be the first language for around 16% of pupils. Such pupils frequently join the school from abroad and are at widely varying points in their educational development. Pupil mobility rates (33%) are considerably higher than the national average (16%). The number of pupils qualifying for free school meals (35%) is higher than national average (17%). The number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.

Pupil attainment on entry to the school is below that expected for their age. However, by Year 6 those pupils who joined the school in Early Years make good progress. Currently the pupil roll stands at 197 (including nursery) and is predicted to rise to maximum capacity by September 2013. Currently around 30% of pupils are baptised Catholics. This is a 25 % reduction since the last RE inspection. The number of baptised Catholic pupils is predicted to rise in forthcoming years.

The headteacher was appointed in 2004. The deputy headteacher was appointed in 2008 and took on responsibility for the co-ordination of Religious Education (RE) including Collective Worship (CW) in September 2009.

There are eight full time teachers of whom five are Catholic, with one holding the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) or equivalent. Seven teachers teach RE.

Sacred Heart School is part of the wider family of Catholic Schools whose year 6 pupils transfer in year 7 to Cardinal Heenan Catholic High School, Leeds. Sacred Heart School also maintains close links with other primary and secondary schools in the local community.

The school actively promotes good home/school/parish/community links. The school has a very supportive parents association. The school supports a number of charities which help those in need both at home and abroad (e.g. Catholic Care and CAFOD).

The school has gained National Healthy School status, Sport England 'Activemark' and the Stephen Lawrence standard for social inclusion. Currently the school is working towards accreditation for the award of the National 'Inclusion Charter Mark'.

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 overall effectiveness of the provision of Catholic Education at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is good. Every aspect of the Catholic life of the school and RE is at least satisfactory, the majority are good and some are outstanding.

There is a strong sense of ownership of the Catholic Mission at the heart of the school –as proclaimed in the school Mission Statement: 'Faith in God, Belief in Ourselves. Love for Each Other. Hope for our Future'.

Effective governance by the totally dedicated chair of governors (Parish Priest) and named RE governor (vice chair) is supported by the full governing body. Together with the inspirational leadership and management of the headteacher and the RE co-ordinator (deputy headteacher), there is a clear vision for the school, focused on the gospel teachings of Jesus Christ. Through their own example and tireless efforts, staff at all levels in the school work hard to promote high quality provision of pupil care and Catholic education. A governor commented that the highly regarded school administrator (clerk to the governors) "is so helpful she does summersaults for this school!" She is also admirably proactive in ensuring that visitors entering into the teaching areas of the school comply with current safeguarding requirements.

The school works in active partnership with the families, local community and parish communities which it serves. Sacred Heart School is a very warm, welcoming family school where there is a common sense of belonging, celebrating difference, valuing diversity and ensuring equal opportunities exist for all.

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

The school has addressed the three key issues highlighted in the previous S48 inspection report and continues to develop them further. The role of the RE co-ordinator has now been considerably developed to include more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of RE teaching and learning. Similarly, more effective RE assessment and pupil tracking procedures have been introduced and are already having a positive impact on raising pupils' attainment in RE. The governing body has considerably developed their role as "critical friend" to the headteacher and Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

The capacity to make further improvements

Following a period of turbulence, the school has now entered a period of stability in terms of continuity of staffing and rising pupil numbers. The school is now very well placed to continue to raise pupils' attainment in RE. The effective SLT, governing body and hardworking teaching and support staff, are united in their search for excellence.

The school has a very realistic view of itself, as identified in the very accurate, comprehensive, and conscientiously completed RE self evaluation form (SEF). A multi

layered RE action plan is already in place as part of the School Development Plan (SDP) – clearly charting future planned improvements in RE.

A very successful joint RE training day for governors and staff has resulted in revisions to the school mission statement. The whole school community is currently fully committed to implementing the mission into the everyday classroom life of the school.

The teaching and support staff access regular Career Professional Development (CPD) opportunities in RE. The RE co-ordinator attends regular diocesan training meetings and leads staff RE briefing meetings in school.

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

In line with the school's RE Action Plan:

- To continue to familiarise staff, pupils, governors and parents with the soon to be introduced Diocesan RE scheme: 'The Way, The Truth and The Life.'
- To continue to further develop RE monitoring and assessment processes incorporating age and ability appropriate target setting for pupils for levels of attainment in RE linked to the above.
- To continue to work towards school accreditation of the National Inclusion Charter Mark by further enhancing the school's Other World Faith's (OWF) RE Curriculum with a programme of out-of-school visits to other faith places of worship.
- To continue to further extend home/school/parish links by supporting charitable parish based projects such as the 'Live Simply' campaign and continuing to offer opportunities to deepen knowledge and practice of the Catholic faith by supporting such Diocesan adult learning initiative as 'Catholic Foundation Stones' and Family Life Ministry 'Parenting Courses'.
- To consider including the provision for parents to respond with their views on the school's RE provision and the work of the governing body in the school's existing annual parent's questionnaire.
- To consider including the provision of a prayer room/prayer garden in the proposed future remodelling of parts of the school building/grounds
- To continue the ongoing update and review process of the current suite of RE Policy Documentation, to assist newly appointed staff to become fully familiar with school expectations in RE classroom practice.
- To continue to provide access to CPD in RE for all teaching and support staff.
- To continue to build up RE resources to support the RE curriculum.

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 of the Catholic life of the school is good with some outstanding aspects. The school has faced significant challenges over recent years including turbulence in staffing and demographic changes in the area which it serves resulting in high pupil mobility. The headteacher and governors have steadfastly provided stability of leadership and management and maintained a strong and very clear vision of the school as a living faith community. (The pupil roll has seen a 56% rise since the appointment of the current headteacher). The governing body actively fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation and is compliant with Diocesan guidance on RE policy documentation and RE teaching time. Governors more closely understand their role as 'critical friend' to the school and seek to implement and further develop the school's Catholic mission and ethos through setting performance management targets closely linked to the School's Development Plan (SDP). Governors and staff held a joint training day and by working co-operatively, drafted revisions to the school mission statement. These revisions resulted in greater understanding and shared vision of the school's mission for the whole school community. The Chair of Governors (Parish Priest) and the named RE governor (vice chair) are familiar visitors to the school and have a positive impact on promoting the Catholic life of the school.

The quality of the leadership of the headteacher, RE co-ordinator (deputy head), and chair of governors (Parish Priest), is outstanding in developing the Catholic life of the school. All set a very clear direction for the school. This leads to good improvement and promotes high quality care and education of the pupils. Developmental needs are accurately identified and tackled energetically. Led by the headteacher and the RE co-ordinator, the school has undertaken a very comprehensive self evaluation process in RE. A very clear RE action plan exists and is linked to the SDP.

Staff value the regular opportunity to pray together. Increasing numbers of teaching and support staff volunteer to lead staff Collective Worship reflections at the weekly staff briefing sessions. Similarly all staff are keen to support the pupils in celebrating first sacraments and this increases their awareness that they are part of a faith/prayer community beyond the school. Newly qualified teachers (NQT's) and newly appointed staff attend diocesan welcome events.

Good links exist with parents, parishes and outside agencies to support the work of the school. The school actively works alongside parishioners engaging in various charitable projects such as the 'Fairtrade' and 'Live Simply' which are helping to fund the provision of a classroom and educational resources for a school in Africa.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship (CW) is outstanding and has a significant impact on the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The Eucharist and prayer are central to the

life of the school. The Parish Priest is a frequent visitor to the school and his presence makes a powerful contribution to the whole school community and is well supported by the school's own structures. Vibrant acts of worship engage pupils' and staff interest and inspire deep reflective thought and heartfelt response from all taking part.

A CW co-ordinator and a CW policy are in place at the school. CW takes place daily either in class or as part of key stage or whole school assemblies. Weekly 'Ethos Statements' give a focus to CW. Whole school mass takes place at least once each half term. Each class has its own Mass (or liturgy in the case of the younger pupils) once per year.

The parish and school work closely to prepare children for first sacraments. The First Holy Communion class lead a Mass in school to celebrate receiving the sacrament. The school values the opportunity to celebrate the sacramental life of its community.

Children in Year 5 take part in a three day residential at Myddleton Grange, Ilkley. Feedback from both pupils and parents has been extremely positive and CW within upper KS2 has improved as a direct consequence of taking part in this experience.

Pupils receive a weekly copy of 'The Wednesday Word' which they take home to their parents. The school has received very positive feedback following the introduction of this RE initiative.

On the school's feast day ('The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus') the whole school walked on a pilgrimage to the Parish Church to celebrate with Mass, followed by a picnic lunch, a school talent show and a summer fair.

All classes have been provided with a 'Worship Box' which contains suitable RE resources to which class teachers are encouraged to add resources relevant to their class. Lower KS2 classes perform a very moving dramatisation of the Easter story during Easter Week.

The school commissioned its own school hymn based on the mission of the school. The hymn is enthusiastically sung regularly at Masses, CW and whole school assemblies. The chorus reflects the RE life at the school:

'Caring together, sharing together
Coming together as one family.
No matter where we are from, we know we all belong.
With Faith in God, Belief in Ourselves,
Love for Each Other and Hope for the Future.'

Acts of worship include a variety of prayer styles, consistently appropriate to the age and faith background of pupils and faithfully reflect the Catholic mission of the school. Liturgical formation is well planned in line with diocesan guidelines and shows appropriate progression. Where appropriate, participation in the prayer and Eucharistic life of the parish communities is assisted and encouraged by the school. Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate. They help to prepare and lead acts of worship with confidence from an early age.

At the time of the inspection the school was following the Route B HIA summer term theme 'Treasures' After taking part in a thoroughly enjoyable treasure hunt in the school grounds during which the Foundation Stage children took digital photographs and made paintings

of flowers, smelling lavender plants, and observing garden insects through magnifying glasses, a child was able to tell me that, "God's world is full of treasures." The children were also introduced to the key words: "God", "world", "beautiful" and "thank you" by proactive teaching assistants during the course of the activity.

During a particularly effective KS1 CW based on the weekly ethos statement 'I know what human dignity means and I show that I respect others', the pupils gathered quietly on the carpet, next to a display of photographs of themselves interspersed with hearts and gems. Gentle music was played in the background. A candle was lit and following teacher initiated discussions the pupils listened to The Word (Matthew 4:43-48). The pupils were then invited to pick up a heart from the display and to pray for someone they love who is important to them and who they treasure. The children then quietly made their way through the path of gems and put a heart in the 'golden bag'. One child's prayer was: "God helps us to be kind and friends with others so that the world can be a better place". At the end of the CW, one pupil was still so deep in meditative prayer that he had to be gently helped back to his seat.

The very positive impact of a recent residential visit to Myddleton Grange was clearly evidenced when upper KS2 pupils quietly gathered for CW in their classroom around an appropriate focal display of pebbles and tea lights, set on a purple coloured cloth. They listened attentively to the Word (Matthew 7:6 12-14). They were then invited to think just how difficult it can be not to criticise other people. In teacher led discussions, they reflected on their own experiences as a class living together for a short time at Myddleton Grange, and how they had learned that Jesus always wants us to treat other people in a positive way. Following a period of quiet reflection, the pupils were then invited to think of something they could say or do to help someone else during the day.

Another particularly effective KS2 CW was evidenced based around the weekly ethos statement. The teacher brought in a selection of different types of footwear (for example sports shoes, fashion shoes, old shoes and new shoes). This stimulated lively discussions leading into a moving story from Nepal and a reflection based on a reading from 2 Kings 22: 18-13: 23 1-3. The CW concluded by the pupils singing the school hymn as they left the main school hall as a reminder to always try to follow God's laws and to walk in the footsteps of Jesus.

At a lower KS2 school Mass on the theme 'Sharing our Talents', the pupils took a very active part in the preparation and celebration of the Eucharist. All pupils responded well and behaved with great reverence. Year four children, (many of whom are part of the school choir) led the singing with great enthusiasm.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

Pupils' achievement in RE is satisfactory overall with many pupils achieving good standards given their capabilities and starting points. Most pupils make acceptable progress and gain knowledge, understanding and skills at a satisfactory rate across all key stages. Almost all pupils achieve standards that are at least satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy their RE work, show a good attitude, behave well and are motivated to do their best.

During a KS1 RE lesson, very good use of 'talk partners' was evidenced. One pupil was able to say, "The sun is God's treasure because it lights up the world. It makes people happy when it is a sunny day!"

Good use of ICT was evidenced in a KS2 RE lesson centring upon 'The Parable of the Lost Coin' (Luke: 15). When asked how the parable relates to us one pupil was able to say, "We are lost when we move away from God."

The majority of pupils enter school generally below or well below expected levels of attainment in all areas of the curriculum, particularly in the area of communication, language and literacy and personal and social development. The school judges that the majority of pupils entering the school have little or no prior experience of being part of a faith community.

The school has an effective pupil tracking system in place which shows that, although still low. RE attainment is beginning to show improvement. Developments led by the RE co-ordinator (including improved RE planning and more rigorous assessment and marking of RE) are starting to show a positive impact on RE achievements and standards.

By the end of KS2 those pupils who were admitted to the school in Foundation or Key Stage 1 have made good progress and attain at or just below national expectations by Year 6.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very ably supported by dedicated support staff who skilfully ensure that satisfactory or better progress is maintained in RE.

The school choir takes an active part in the RE life of the school, supporting Christmas and Easter productions. The choir has taken part in a choral concert at Leeds Cathedral and is a founder member of the Leeds Trinity University Partnership Concert that takes place annually.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

The overall effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE is good. No unsatisfactory RE lessons were observed. The teachers' growing subject knowledge and commitment to teaching the faith lends confidence to their teaching styles. This is further confirmed through the school's own monitoring and self evaluation processes. The governing body have ensured that there is an adequacy and suitability of qualified staff committed to the school mission employed at the school. The school RE co-ordinator has a very strong commitment and enthusiasm to RE; she attends regular diocesan RE training meetings and mentors and supports newly qualified teachers (NQT's) appointed to the school.

Very effective RE lesson planning, preparation and delivery of RE lessons, coupled with the mutually respectful and supportive classroom, relationships which were evidenced between staff and pupils, generate a calm purposeful working atmosphere in the classrooms. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and take a pride in their RE work. They are

interested and responsive during RE lessons and their behaviour observed in class is good.

The teaching methods employed, together with the teachers' very clear understanding of their pupils learning needs and the use of appropriate RE resources, including information communication technology (ICT), ensures that RE lessons are taught very effectively. Appropriate time is set aside for prayer, reflection or meditation in the lessons observed. All pupil RE work scrutinised during the inspection showed appropriate marking by the class teacher.

The school takes positive steps to keep parents informed by issuing termly newsletters about the RE themes being covered in class and about planned parish/school/seasonal/liturgical events to which parents are always invited. Similarly the school strives to offer families various opportunities to extend their own personal knowledge of the Catholic faith and ways of developing their own spiritual life through circulation of 'The Wednesday Word' and adult learning initiatives such as 'Catholic Foundation Stones' and Family Life Ministry 'Parenting' courses also support the school mission.

Pupils are invited to bring parish bulletins into school to place on the each class' prayer focus. The prayer intentions of the parish are in this way shared with the school.

Parents particularly appreciate the presence of the multi lingual parent governor at parent events to assist those parents for whom English is a second language.

A representative group of children interviewed feel that the school is now much better than it used to be – they particularly enjoy being 'buddies' to children new to the school. They have lots of friends and enjoy taking part in the many clubs the school makes available.

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

The school RE curriculum fulfils diocesan requirements to a good standard. It is organised around the life and teaching of Jesus and the Church, and the beliefs, celebrations and way of life of Catholics who follow that teaching. Currently the 'Here I Am' (HIA) RE resource is used as the main programme of study, together with weekly 'Ethos Statements'. Provision for teaching and learning about Other World Faiths (OWF) is already established. This is an aspect that the school wishes to develop further. Following governor, staff and parent consultations, the governors have approved a Catholic Programme for Education for Personal Relationships (EPR), 'In the Beginning', for use in school with pupils from Year 1 to Year 6.

The curriculum in RE makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. They are taught to respect other faiths and cultures. Children from different backgrounds feel respected and valued at the school. Literacy, Oracy and ICT skills are further developed through the RE curriculum – particularly in whole school/class/parish liturgical celebrations. The pupils are very aware of under privileged children both in this country and abroad through their joint involvement with parishioners in various charitable activities. For example, Catholic Care ('The Good Shepherd'); 'Fairtrade' , 'One World Week', CAFOD and 'Live Simply' initiatives.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

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

Leadership and management are good with outstanding aspects in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE.

The RE co-ordinator is outstanding in setting clear direction for the school in RE and in providing the necessary support to staff to enable improvements in RE to come through into their everyday classroom practice. Given the short time that she has held responsibility for RE (including CW) an audit of RE has already taken place and an RE Action Plan programme for improvements has been put in place which is already beginning to bear fruit. Every classroom visited (7) has a designated prayer area with appropriate RE artefacts, including a copy of the school mission statement and a copy of the same weekly ethos statement prominently displayed. No unsatisfactory RE lessons were observed during the inspection. Vibrant RE displays of pupil RE work were evidenced throughout the school and especially in the main school hall providing a focal point for whole school Collective Worship/ school assemblies etc.

Sacred Heart School is a very warm, welcoming Catholic school with a very strong family atmosphere. Morale in RE is high amongst staff and pupils. Pupils and parents are proud of their school. Pupils' friendship bonds cross cultural, faith, social and economic boundaries. Provision for spiritual development celebrates, reflects and respects the religious diversity within the whole school community. No one is forced to act in a manner contrary to their beliefs. Pupils' diverse backgrounds are recognised and valued in RE. Discrimination is vigorously tackled so that all pupils and staff may achieve as well as they can in RE. Both school and parishes keep each other informed of their activities and from time to time plan and work together to respond to common issues in the local and wider community. The school premises are made available to other faith groups in the neighbourhood for example The Libyan School. Pupil performance in RE is effectively monitored, evaluated and tracked. RE data is effectively analysed by the RE co-ordinator and as a consequence specific improvements in RE are targeted on a cyclical basis in line with the RE Action Plan.

The governors ably discharge their many duties and responsibilities with regard to safeguarding the religious nature of the schools' foundation. They have ensured that the school is appropriately staffed by those who share the aspirations of the school mission statement. Improvements to the school building ensure a safe, secure and uplifting learning environment is provided for the pupils and staff. Appropriate signs, symbols and icons of the Catholic faith are clearly manifest both externally and internally on the school premises to proclaim the school mission and to assist the school community and visitors to reflect on the uniqueness and sacredness of the processes of education taking place within this schools' learning environment.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

ASPECT	GRADE	DESCRIPTOR
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	2	<i>GOOD</i>
THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL		
How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	2	<i>GOOD</i>
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	1	<i>OUTSTANDING</i>
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION		
How well do pupils achieve in RE?	3	<i>SATISFACTORY</i>
How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?	2	<i>GOOD</i>
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?	2	<i>GOOD</i>
How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?	2	<i>GOOD</i>