

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Myers Lane
Bradford
BD2 4ES

School URN	<input type="text" value="107332"/>
Name of Chair of Governors	<input type="text" value="Mrs. Meg Friis"/>
Name of Headteacher	<input type="text" value="Mr. Dan Copley"/>
Name of RECo / HoD	<input type="text" value="Mrs. Sarah Kenyon"/>
Date of Inspection	<input type="text" value="15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009"/>
Section 48 Inspector	<input type="text" value="Mr. Peter Thompson"/>

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' is a popular school, primarily serving the parishes of Our Lady Immaculate and St. Francis. Approximately 80% of the children are baptised Catholics. There are presently 293 pupils on roll, including a thriving Foundation Stage. St. Francis' is heavily oversubscribed. The number of children receiving free school meals is well below the national average.

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' is a good Catholic school. Its strengths include the leadership's development of the Catholic life of the school and the way the school promotes the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. It is an overtly Catholic school, illustrated beautifully by attractive displays – some of them being multi-cultural. Parents and governors speak of a number of steps taken by the new headteacher to raise the profile and quality of Collective Worship. Pupils enjoy being asked to prepare and take part in Collective Worship throughout the school. There are strong links with the parish. These are valued by all the stakeholders.

In order to make improvements in Religious Education the leadership team acknowledges that the children need to clearly know what they have to do to improve and to fulfill their potential. The school also needs to develop more effective ways of monitoring the Catholic life of the school and R.E. and need to consider who to involve in this process.

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

The last S48 inspection was carried out in March 2006. Since then the school has undertaken work on the Mission Statement to good effect. The children now have a grasp of the aims of St. Francis' school.

Assessment procedures have improved further. The school now needs to develop a cycle of Monitoring, incorporating the Section 48 schedule to formulate and analyse judgements made by a range of stakeholders.

The school has attended and hosted RE In-Service training which has had the impact of enabling staff to further develop their understanding of the R.E. curriculum.

The school's self-evaluation is mostly accurate. The areas where the school needs to improve have been confirmed with the school's leadership team.

The capacity to make further improvements

Under the direction of the enthusiastic headteacher, and, with the guidance of the R.E. Leader and the willingness of the staff, the school has a good capacity to make further improvements.

The impact made by the new headteacher in a short time, in terms of raising the profile and quality of Collective Worship is just one example of this.

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

In order for the children to fulfill their potential in Religious Education, the children at St. Francis' need to know how they can improve.

Teachers need to consistently share the "next steps" in learning with all the pupils.

Teachers also need to build into their planning and their teaching the use of 'Driver' words. There is a need here for some In-Service training.

The school needs to develop a cycle of monitoring closely aligned to, and incorporating the S48 schedule.

The leadership team needs to evaluate how best to do this and which stakeholders should be involved so as to analyse data, share it and then respond to areas of the school life which need improving.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

St. Francis' school is very well led by an enthusiastic, capable headteacher. He has a clear vision for the school which, even though he has only been here a short time, is already having a positive impact. The quality and importance of Collective Worship has improved. This has been recognised by parents, parishioners and the children whose spiritual and moral development is a strength of the school. The Catholicity is highlighted by featuring prominently in the School Improvement Plan, the weekly school newsletter and the headteacher's report to governors. Discussion about the Catholicity of the school features at every governing body meeting. Members of the governing body acknowledge that they need to play a greater part in self-evaluative processes if the children are to fulfill their potential. Stakeholders describe how parish links continue to strengthen. A number of joint projects take place e.g. CAFOD work and R.E. workshops in Lent, as well as a number of liturgies to which everyone is invited. Another strong aspect of school life is the way that the children are actively involved in supporting children overseas who are less fortunate than themselves, e.g. CAFOD, a school in Kwazulu Natal, and the suitcase of books appeal.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship is good. It is having a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the whole school community. Children enjoy taking leadership roles and planning worship in school and beyond. They pray reverently and respond well during liturgies. Weekly worship links with the Statements to live by, which are used throughout the school. One school councillor explained how these statements link closely to the School's Mission Statement.

Children in each key stage are able to accurately articulate all the symbolism which they enjoy making into their Collective Worship focal point.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do learners achieve in RE?

Standards in R.E. upon entry into the Foundation Stage are broadly in line with the national expectations. By the time the children leave Key Stage 1 the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory. At the end of Key Stage 2 achievement is broadly in line with the national average. The children in Foundation Stage enjoy R.E. During the topic on CHOICES early writers wrote:

“I am happy when I help my mummy do the washing up.”

During a role play relating to making others happy, one four year old showed real empathy for the child who was left out by saying:

“Would you like to play with us?”

One Year 2 child showed a good grasp of the CHOICES topic by writing:

“Jesus said: The Holy Spirit will help us to do things we need help with.”

Children learn about other major world faiths from a young age. One Year 2 child wrote:

“Muslims go to the mosque to pray five times a day. They wash themselves before they pray.”

The school held an R.E. focus day on Judaism. As a result of this one Year 4 child wrote:

“Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish people’s New Year and is a massive celebration.”

When studying a topic on CREATION one Year 3 pupil showed an ability to be very reflective, writing:

“I think God’s plan for me is to help me get wiser each year so I will be there for people who need advice.”

During the topic on CHOICES one Year 5 child described the Sacrament of Confession very accurately in these words:

“When you are at Confession you tell the priest everything you have done wrong on purpose. The priest will give you a task to do or something to put right or say a prayer – this is called a penance.”

A Year 6 child showed a particularly deep understanding of the different relationships Jesus had with the scribes saying:

“The scribes desperately wanted to trick Jesus. If Jesus said throw stones at her, they would call him a hypocrite. If he said leave her they could say Jesus is breaking the law of his own belief.”

Overall achievement is good in Foundation Stage but satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

The provision for Religious Education at St. Francis' is satisfactory overall. The staff know the abilities of the children and generally differentiate work effectively for them. However, in order for the children to fulfill their potential and make greater progress, the staff need to plan for the use of key 'Driver' words. There are many examples of good quality relationships which enhance opportunities to learn well. Children generally listen very well and are keen to learn. Behaviour and attitudes exhibited by the pupils are consistently good. Some cross-curricular approaches to learning are employed by the staff, for example role play. For teaching to be more effective teachers need to share next steps in learning in R.E. as they do in other core subjects. Some use of ICT was evidenced but its more widespread use would enhance the effectiveness of the teaching of R.E. The senior staff and key governors realise the need to monitor standards of teaching and learning more effectively. They know what to look for and know where teaching is most effective. Sharing of good practice has begun and should continue to help the children progress. Where teaching is most effective teachers share the learning objectives, refer to success criteria and have stimulating plenaries. Particularly effective teaching takes place in the Foundation Stage and Upper Key Stage 2.

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

Teachers use a range of interesting activities to deliver the R.E. curriculum. There are some particularly stimulating lessons delivered in the Foundation Stage. Children say that they find R.E. "fun". They find R.E. a good subject in which they can "express their feelings and examine their actions". The children at St. Francis' enjoy taking part in interesting activities prepared for them by the staff. These include R.E. workshops to which parents are also invited. The children are particularly enthusiastic about role play. Part of the school's self-evaluation discovered that children found the stories in R.E. interesting, they listened to ways of thinking and ideas and views that may be wrong are explained to the pupils. The R.E. curriculum could be further enhanced by more extensive use of ICT by the children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

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

The R.E. Subject Leader regularly attends diocesan meetings to keep informed about developments within Religious Education. She encourages staff to attend appropriate courses. The Subject Leader has further developed assessment and tracking procedures since the last inspection. She has led the staff through moderation of children's work in R.E. and is planning to do this with other schools. The staff are able to teach well. In order to raise standards and to help the children make more progress the school leadership realise the need to:

- share the relevant Driver words effectively with all pupils;
- to look at more effective ways of monitoring the subject of R.E.

This would involve finding out and sharing information with stakeholders and then systematically updating the school's self evaluation document. The school's leadership does have a willingness and ability to do this.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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 learners achieve in RE?	3	SATISFACTORY
How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?	3	SATISFACTORY
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	2	GOOD
How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in RE?	3	SATISFACTORY