

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



## SECTION 48 REPORT

### THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School  
Heald's Road  
Dewsbury  
WF13 4HY

School URN

107733

Chair of Governors

Mrs Sarah Riley

Headteacher

Mrs Maureen Fletcher

RE Subject Leader

Mrs Claire Bass

Dates of Inspection

July 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> 2009

Section 48 Inspector

Joe Ginty

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dewsbury, 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.

Pre-inspection evidence was gathered from the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF) 2009; the school's Religious Education (RE) Improvement and Action Plans; a record of Staff INSET (RE); written testimonial from the Parish Priest.

During the inspection the inspector scrutinised a range of school monitoring records; held discussions with the Chair of Governors, Headteacher, RE Subject Leader, Staff, Pupil Council, Parents; shared the celebration of Liturgy in Y1, Y6, whole school and observed Y6 RE.

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### **Description of the school**

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St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is an average sized school serving the parish of St Joseph's, Batley Carr on the outskirts of Dewsbury. It attracts pupils from a large catchment area covering seven council wards in Kirklees, some of which are relatively economically disadvantaged. There are 211 pupils on roll of whom 65% are of the Catholic faith. A further 14% of pupils are of other Christian denominations. Attendance is in line with the national average. There are currently 9% of pupils on register of special needs and 5 pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Needs. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is 9.6% and is below the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry is broadly in line with expectations but varies widely.

Since the last s48 inspection in 2006 there have been significant staffing changes with the appointment of a new Headteacher in January 2008 and a re-structuring of the Senior Leadership Team through the introduction of TLR posts. The RE subject leader has held the post of responsibility since September 2008. There are 9.1 teachers at the school (full-time equivalent) the majority of whom are Catholic.

The school has been awarded the Investors in People standard in 2005; the Kirklees Gold Healthy School standard in 2007; the national Healthy Schools standard in 2007; the Bronze Eco Schools Status in 2007; Activemark in 2008 and is currently working towards the Eco School Award.

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

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### **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.**

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St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides good quality Catholic education for the pupils and community it serves. The school provides a welcoming, family atmosphere where expectations are high and excellent relationships underpin a strong morale. Overall governance and leadership of the Catholic life of the school is effective in promoting and maintaining a vibrant sense of mission where Gospel values are at the heart of school and community life.

A significant strength lies in the fact that all adults in the school actively subscribe to and endorse their mission of '*Love, Peace, Respect*', through their daily action. This is extended through a particularly close relationship shared between school, parents and parish. The school effectively promotes an evangelical mission spreading God's message throughout the community. Families are actively encouraged to pray together at home, based on themes that link into the liturgical calendar. The school shares the 'Wednesday Word' with families each week and also sends home

a 'Home-School Worship Bag' to provide a focus for prayer in the home. The home worship opportunities are welcomed by families and the response is always positive. Some members of staff have completed a Family Life Ministry course and will act as facilitators for parenting courses commencing September 2009 in the parish centre. The school has been involved in events with the local Surestart Centre and aims to nurture this further by providing support for parents who have English as an additional language.

All adults are committed to the education of the whole child. This is evidenced in many ways including the time they give to support extra curricular activities such as netball, gardening, choir, recorder, science, ICT, maths, orchestra, Library Club, multi-skills, craft club and Parish events.

The provision for the prayer and liturgical life of the school is thoughtfully planned and takes account of the ages and needs of all pupils. Spiritual acts of worship engage pupils, staff and parents and inspire deep thought and heartfelt response. The school's provision of Collective Worship contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils which is very good indeed. The parish priest is a regular and popular visitor to the school and is actively involved in pastoral and liturgical activities. The parish priest is vice-chair of governors and through a governing role maintains an interested and involved oversight of RE. The governors have also allocated significant management time to RE which supports their clear intent raise standards in the subject.

Teaching in RE is satisfactory overall with many elements of good practice. The school is striving to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good across all age groups in the school. Pupils' achievement in RE is good overall as is their progress. The financial resources allocated to RE indicate that the school regards the subject as the core curriculum area. The management and leadership of the subject is effective in providing a broad curriculum fulfilling local and national requirements and meeting the needs of all pupils.

The pupils play a full and active part in the life of the school and are deeply committed to its mission and ethos. This is clearly identified in their relationships with one another and their behaviour which is exemplary. Through fundraising they support many charities including Catholic Care, Indiability, Operation Christmas Child, CAFOD, the Peru Missions, the Royal British Legion, Children in Need and Comic Relief.

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

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Despite significant changes in the composition of the Governing Body and Senior Leadership since the last s48 inspection in April 2006, the school has been conscientious in its undertaking to effect continuous improvement in all aspects of Catholic life and RE.

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### **The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.**

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It is the Governors' clear intention to consolidate and embed good performance. The senior leadership team is highly motivated and consistently communicates high expectations to staff about securing improvement. It directs the enthusiasm of staff and channels their efforts to good effect. Realistic and challenging plans are grounded in increasingly accurate analysis of the pupils' achievement and are being used effectively to improve outcomes.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

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

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Leadership and Management of the school is good. Governors discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. There have been several changes to the governing body in recent times and the governing body now has a working sub-committee structure ensuring it is well placed to challenge with rigour, and support, the aims of the school and promote its ethos. Each school year begins with a service of commission for all members of the school staff and governing body. The governors remain actively involved in the life of the school sharing celebrations and liturgies as time permits. Each governor is assigned a class in school and maintains contact with the class throughout the year. The end-of-year Governors' Awards are presented to the pupil in each class who has best achieved the aims of the school Mission Statement. Following a period of significant change the governors could now update their systems for seeking the views of parents and mechanisms for acting on these.

The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The Headteacher has a clear vision of how to move the school forward. She has been instrumental in identifying a clear direction for improvement and has established a leadership team structure to facilitate this. The SLT is devoted to the task and is a source of inspiration for the whole community. There is clear evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is a priority along with the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. This is reflected in the school improvement plan, self evaluation form and other documents. Self evaluation at all levels within the school is a reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. This will lead to well-informed targeted planning. As a result pupils have a clear understanding of the school's mission, share its purpose, and are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it.

### **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

#### **How good is the quality of Collective Worship?**

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The quality of provision of Collective Worship is good. Liturgy and worship are given high profile, are well resourced and provision is regularly reviewed. There is a good range of formal and informal opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together on a daily basis. Attendance by parents and others associated with the school is facilitated and encouraged. Themes are consistent with the Catholic character of the school, the liturgical seasons of the year, the themes explored through the 'HIA' scheme for RE and are always responsive to the religious diversity among pupils.

Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate. They sing joyfully, 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.

A significant strength of the school community is the opportunity given to the pupils, and the manner in which they take an active role in preparing acts of worship. From an early age and throughout the school the pupils prepare and lead acts of liturgy and worship with enjoyment, confidence and reverence.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE**

#### **How well do pupils achieve in RE?**

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Pupil achievement in RE is good. Attainment in AT1 (knowledge and understanding of religion) is satisfactory being on a par with national expectations. Attainment in AT2 (the ability to reflect on meaning) is a strength, being above expectations. Pupils' starting points in RE when entering the school are generally below that expected but they quickly make very good progress in the Foundation Stage. Standards of attainment at the end of KS2 indicate that pupils make good progress overall.

There are no significant variations in the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils. All pupils are keen to do well, generally apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace. They generally seek to produce their best work and are often interested and enthusiastic about their learning.

Pupils take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school beyond routine lessons and activities including evaluating their Catholic education. They are reflective and inquiring. They understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important for many people. They show interest in the religious life of others, care and respect for religious objects in the school. They understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and in the parish community. They are secure and ready to express their own views and beliefs. They are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They show signs of responding to the needs of people beyond the school. They show an understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong.

### **THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE**

#### **How effective are Teaching and Learning?**

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The teaching observed during the inspection was good in all respects. The lesson was well planned, pitched at an appropriate level with activities designed to challenge the pupils. Cross-curricular links, including the effective use of ICT, were used to enhance the subject. Pupils were fully engaged throughout the lesson, enjoyed what they were doing and made good progress. The school's own monitoring records indicate that teaching in RE is at least satisfactory throughout the school with many elements of good practice. There is no evidence of teaching which is anything less than satisfactory. There has been extensive In-service opportunity for all staff both within the school and through access to diocesan provision in recent times in a concerted effort to encourage a higher level of consistency in teaching.

The good practice ensures that pupils show interest in their work and make progress that is at least in line with their capabilities. Teachers are becoming increasingly familiar with regular and accurate assessment which will inform planning. This in turn will ensure that the needs of all groups of pupils will be met and attainment will be consistently good across both Attainment Targets in RE. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally sound. There is a good range of resources including technology to support learning but these are not yet being fully utilised by all staff. Other adult support is a significant strength in the school and contributes a great deal to the teaching and learning in RE. A reasonable range of strategies ensures that pupils are generally engaged by their work and behaviour is such that little time is wasted.

The school is developing more rigorous systems for capturing detailed and accurate information on pupils' achievement. New Baseline Assessment arrangements are being piloted in Reception Year and this is already used to very good effect to identify and meet pupils' needs. This accurate Baseline Assessment is complemented by ongoing assessment, including pupil self assessment, thus ensuring that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The school will soon be in a position to set more challenging targets for pupils and will have strategies in place to monitor progress systematically.

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**How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?**

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The curriculum in RE fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. 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. All pupils irrespective of age and ability are able to make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding and to learn to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

All staff play a key role in supporting the teaching and learning of RE, ensuring that all pupils enjoy positive peer and adult relationships in school and in ensuring that individual needs are met.

The provision for teaching and learning about other world faiths is sound. Pupils are developing a balanced understanding and appreciation of these through the taught curriculum and independent study. The broader RE curriculum makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. Pupils of other faiths in the school are encouraged to share their faith beliefs and traditions. Pupils demonstrate respect for the faiths of others in the school community and also the wider world.

The school has adopted the 'In the Beginning' scheme to facilitate the positive teaching of Relationship Education throughout the school and is monitoring developments locally and nationally with a view to enhancing this provision in the future.

Extra curricular opportunities are many and varied, have a high take up and are much enjoyed by pupils and staff alike.

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE**

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

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The RE subject leader has held this post since September 2008 and leads the subject well. In close cooperation with the RE governor she conducts a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes and her analysis provides a firm basis for accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The RE subject leader is accurate in her judgements pertaining to the teaching and learning in RE. Improvement planning is informed by diocesan advice and guidelines and is founded on sound evidence and data, tackling key areas of weakness systematically and building on areas of strength. There is substantial evidence that standards in RE are improving strongly.

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

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

### WHAT STEPS NEED TO BE TAKEN IN ORDER TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE PROVISION OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION?

Further improve Teaching in RE to a consistently good level throughout the school, thus promoting higher standards and achievement of pupils by:

- using 'Here I Am' topics to underpin the half-termly cross-curricular programmes of study;
- continuing to use 'driver' words to inform planning and continuing to plan at the appropriate level in line with other core subjects;
- assessing pupil attainment in RE at regular intervals in line with other core subjects and using the data to inform the Assessment Tracker sheets;
- effectively using all available RE resources across all age groups.