

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Kennedy Drive
Goole
DN14 6HQ

School URN	118045
Chair of Governors	Mr Richard Kettlewood
Headteacher	Mrs Diane Marten
RE Subject Leader	Mrs Diane Marten
Dates of Inspection	25 th & 26 th June 2009
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Marie McClelland

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Joseph's 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. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Goole, is a small school with an admissions number of 15 and 104 pupils currently on roll. It serves the Catholic communities of Goole and Howden and welcomes children of all backgrounds. The number of pupils from minority ethnic or Eastern European groups is 12 with a total population profile of 50 Catholics and 54 pupils of other Christian denominations. 15.45% are on the SEN register with 1.9% in receipt of a statement of SEN. These figures are broadly in line with national comparatives. The majority of the children live within the town of Goole. At age 11+ the majority of pupils transfer to Holy Family High School, Carlton.

There has been a recent turnover of staff at the school and less than 50% are Catholic. From among 5.2 (fte) teachers, 4 are engaged in the teaching of RE. The current headteacher has been in post since Easter 2007 and has assumed responsibility for RE on the retirement of the previous post holder in the last academic year. A new RE subject leader has been appointed to take over the role following an appropriate induction period starting in September 2009.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic life of the school and RE, and the school's main strengths and areas for development.

St Joseph's Primary School provides a satisfactory Catholic education. Many aspects of the school's Catholic life and Religious Education (RE) are good and the positive behaviour of pupils and their contribution to the school and broader community are, at times, outstanding. On the appointment of the current headteacher, the Mission Statement was reviewed and shared widely resulting in a re-defining of the school's aims. The school can quite rightly boast of a caring, dedicated staff who lead by example and with a shared vision. Governors are proud of the efforts being made to build closer relationships with the parish and to encourage greater parental participation in the life of the school. The Parish Priest is very appreciative of the contribution the school makes to the parish.

Strategies used successfully to improve standards in the secular curriculum are being adapted to effect similar results in RE. The leadership and management team is very honest and accurate in its self-evaluation. School development plans (SDPs) over a three-year cycle show that strengths are known and celebrated and there is a constant attention and commitment to improvement. It is time now to be decisive and focused about effective assessment and targeting pupil progress.

Management of the liturgical and prayer life of the school is effective. The appointment of a new coordinator for Collective Worship (CW) signals a determination for further training and enrichment experiences for the benefit of staff and pupils.

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

Aspects identified for improvement in the previous (s23) inspection in 2004 have been addressed - most noticeably since September 2007:

- The new Prospectus embodies the school's Mission Statement,
- RE teaching time has been raised to 10%,
- The Headteacher has taken on the role of the RE subject leader,

- Considerable efforts have been made to encourage more families to be actively involved in the school and in the parish and local community,
- Knowledge & understanding of other World Faiths (OWF) are being taught as required,
- A more comprehensive monitoring and evaluation cycle for RE is to start in September 2009 and the new *Profile of Moderated Work* is evidence that this is a serious commitment.

The capacity to make further improvements.

The school's capacity for improvement is secure as a result of:

- The teamwork, enthusiasm, and competence of the Senior Leadership team;
- The confidence and commitment of all staff to embed Assessment for Learning (AfL) techniques to support improvement in teaching and learning RE
- New staff appointments for RE and CW Co-ordinators roles from September 2009.

How might the school further improve the provision of Catholic education?

The school has an accurate view of its own strengths and areas for development. The latter include:

1. Providing training and support for the new RE subject leader.
2. Seeking help from the diocesan adviser in the implementation of the school's programme for monitoring and assessing levels of attainment in RE so that pupils will know how to achieve and excel in the subject.

The school should also improve its provision of Catholic education by:

3. Allocating one of the five training days annually to RE as a Core Subject. This will afford time to focus on, share and explore good practice in the teaching and learning of RE and to continue to grow as a faith-sharing community.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL ~ LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

The leadership and management are committed to the school's Catholic mission. Dedicated governors have undergone diocesan training on their role as 'critical friends' and many are active in the day-to-day life of the school. The Chair of Governors plays a key role in the production of the impressive weekly Newsletter - *St Joseph Informer* – which is an attractive and informative link on the school website. There is an urgent need, however, to fill the Foundation Governor vacancies on the governing body to bring it up to its required majority status.

A high level of effort is invested in the creation and maintenance of a loving, peaceful and respectful culture where each individual is supported nurtured and celebrated. The headteacher and her colleagues are to be particularly commended for maintaining such a calm and stable ethos during the extensive building work currently under way in the school. All staff eschewed the noise and personal displacement and/or disruption caused by the building work with equanimity and positive comments like 'the outcome will be a great bonus for the children', 'we will have lovely new classrooms and lots of space'.

The inclusion of all learners is central to the school's vision through its belief that all are created in the image of God. Sacramental preparation, for instance, was timetabled for after school hours to enable pupils from without the school to attend the classes. The courtesy and respect shown to *all children* by *all staff* is deservedly reciprocated. The school can genuinely claim to be 'a school family' and parents appreciate the strong Christian family ethos.

Morning arrivals, playtimes and lunchtimes are happy and bustling times where children and staff join in *Wake & Shake, Huff & Puff* activities and where older pupils oversee the needs of younger pupils as 'Play Leaders'.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL ~ COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

Collective Worship (CW) at St Joseph's works to a planned range of formal and less formal settings for pupils to engage in prayer and acts of collective worship led by the head and by all the teaching staff in turn. Themes from *Here I Am* and special events in the liturgical calendar provide the focus for these gatherings and the school judges the quality of its CW as satisfactory. For class-based CW there needs to be a more obvious 'Prayer Corner' or RE focal point in each classroom where children's prayers are on display and where displays, artifacts and books are used to stimulate prayerful reflection.

School Masses are held in the church – a short walk away – at the beginning and end of term, and the older children prepare the readings and prayers. Staff would welcome an opportunity to have Mass in school sometimes to enable pupils to have a closer encounter with the actions of the priest and a more focused experience of the religious literacy of the Mass. Preparation for the first sacraments, for instance, would be enriched if children had opportunities to participate in school-based Masses.

The recently appointed CW coordinator works across three schools teaching music and is able to bring her special expertise to bear on the role at St Joseph's. She has formalised the CW Plan and offered detailed guidance on suitable music for gathering and stilling as well as highlighting key feast days and events. Ethos statements have been introduced this term so that the key message from CW can be carried back to each classroom. These need to be displayed more noticeably, however, in all classrooms if they are to have a continuing effect.

In-service work on CW (identified in the SDP) has been timetabled for the current academic year and the school has purchased CDs and other resources for staff. The children at St. Joseph's are very well behaved and eager to participate and share their views. They need to be provided with more opportunities for active participation as well as for quiet reflection, linking what they have learned in CW to their everyday lives. It would be valuable, perhaps, to build up a photographic album of CW for display in a central position – especially of unique off-site events like 'The Easter Carol Service' and Harvest Festival to provide pupils, parents and visitors further time for reflection and appreciation.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ~ ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

Achievement in RE is satisfactory. Assessment records do not yet yield sufficient information for judging progress of individuals, cohorts, or whole year groups over time and pupils are, to a large extent, unaware of performance indicators in RE. This is a long-standing issue but the school is aware of what it has to do. A tracking system for RE has been prepared for September 2009, a *Portfolio of Moderated Work* has already begun and the diocesan RE Adviser is working with the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and inabilities are very well supported by excellent Teaching Assistants.

St. Joseph's is part of a local primary school cluster but it is the only Leeds diocesan Catholic school in the East Riding of Yorkshire (ERY). The headteacher wishes to explore professional contacts with Catholic schools in Wakefield and in the East Riding. Successful networking of this

kind could help not just to share good practice in assessment but also to explore and discuss new resources and possible shared in-service experiences.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ~ THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are teaching and learning in RE?

Pupils - and teachers – enjoy their work in RE at St. Joseph's and there is a strong culture of faith sharing. Appropriate and varied use of ICT helps to enrich teaching and learning.

The teaching observed in all classes was vivacious and engaging and it was clear that none of it was a 'one-off' for inspection purposes. Awareness of different styles of learning is a particular strength of the school. In **Foundation Stage**, clever use of Shirley Hughes' book, **Sally's Secret**, equipped children with an understanding of what Jesus means by being a good neighbour before they went excitedly to co-operate with their 'neighbour' to build a den in the garden. Pupils in **Yr1/2** were riveted on the IWB key-hole exploration of a painting of the *Good Samaritan*. Having thus focused so closely on gestures and postures of characters in the painting, they were better able to speculate and articulate thoughts and feelings for each character on a 'mind-mapping' chart of the parable. In Key Stage 2, the theme of neighbour was explored in different contexts. **Yr3/4** looked at the work of CAFOD and its concept of helping people to help themselves in long-term projects. 'Giving without expecting to be thanked' was seen by more reflective pupils as a key message of CAFOD, while others formulated catchy slogans on the laptops for fund-raising posters for the charity. In a fast-paced lesson with Yr5/6, the story of the *Good Samaritan* was transposed into everyday situations known to the pupils. Every child contributed to the discussion and sharing of ideas because of the skilled handling of *Co-operative Learning* techniques by the teacher. In the role-play of scenes that followed some poignant examples of, and excuses from, those who 'pass by without caring' showed that pupils do respond at different levels and are ready and receptive for focused target setting.

Written work in exercise books and/or in loose-leaf folders indicates adherence to Here I Am topics. Teacher feedback is affirming and sometimes gives reasons for the praise. Activities are varied and interesting but a focused work scrutiny across the school would effect improvements in presentation and a more consistent marking policy.

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

The RE curriculum fulfils diocesan requirements. 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. Most learners are able to make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils really do enjoy their work in RE. They deserve to be appraised of the academic standards that apply to the subject and to be challenged to excel in them. Literacy and ICT skills are developed through RE, though not necessary in a planned fashion. The curriculum in RE makes a contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the learners and they are taught to respect other faiths and cultures.

New resources and artifacts are helping to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of Other World Faiths. Children learn from an early age to care about and respond to the needs of others. They find good role models among all members of staff and reciprocate with equal sincerity. Two Yr2 children refused birthday presents last year and asked instead for a contribution to be made to CAFOD. DVD footage available during the inspection showed one member of staff parachuting from a plane and another running in a marathon to raise funds for charitable causes. SEAL and Citizenship education have had discernible impact on pupil relationships. Dialogue with pupils from the School Council evinced a readiness to praise their peers and recognise their small successes. They are also very appreciative of the energy and drive of the group of parents who form the Fund-Raising Committee.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ~ LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

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

Leadership of the subject RE is satisfactory in its commitment to the school's Catholic mission and to the faith development of pupils. Positive relationships between all staff, and unity of purpose in caring about children, are secure but quality assurance of the subject RE needs to be incisive and energetic in order to raise achievement. Closer and regular links with diocesan agencies and with other Catholic schools could contribute to a greater understanding of RE as a Core Subject. The Parish Priest is appreciative of the work done by the headteacher particularly in relation to fostering good relationships with the parish community. The Chair of Governors, the RE Governor and the Parent Governor are pro-active in their involvement in the life of the school. They have a clear understanding of strengths and can prioritise needs. There is a good rapport between governors and staff.

Spending on RE resources has been enhanced considerably in the current academic year and teachers now have responsibility for these resources within their own classrooms.

Parents and pupils are consulted by questionnaire each year for their views on the school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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