

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Barnsley Rd
Moorthorpe
WF9 2BS

School URN

108266

Chair of Governors

Marie Gibb

Headteacher

Catherine Murphy

RE Subject Leader

Christine Chadwick

Date of Inspection

29th & 30th June 2009

Section 48 Inspector

Barbara Ford

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Joseph's 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. Joseph's Catholic Primary School serves the recently established parish of Sacred Heart, Hemsworth and St. Joseph's Moorthorpe (September 2008). The majority of pupils come from the immediate locality, whilst some travel from outlying areas on the popular 'yellow bus'. The pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. Most pupils are of white British origin, however, since 2006, an increasing number of pupils attend school who speak little or no English. These families are mainly from Eastern Europe.

The school has an admission number of 30 and there are currently 223 pupils on roll of whom 65% are Catholic. 35% have no recorded Faith. Pupil eligibility to free school meals is below average. There are six pupils with statements of special educational need. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with national expectations. There are currently no pupil exclusions. The majority of pupils transfer at age 11+ to St Wilfrid's Catholic High School, Featherstone

Of the 9 teachers, 6 are Catholic; 2 teachers possess additional Catholic qualifications and 1 is currently following the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) training course with the diocese.

The school has a fourth Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and Inclusion Now 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.

St Joseph's is a good Catholic school. Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is good and the school's mission statement, which is in 5 parts, begins "St Joseph's is a Catholic School Community with the presence and power of Jesus Christ at its centre."

The tangible Catholic ethos is immediately apparent and shared by all.

The spiritual and moral development of the learners is a strength of the school, as is the care, guidance and support given to the pupils.

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

- The RE subject leaders have been afforded every opportunity to further develop their roles and through direct monitoring of teaching and learning in 2007/8 promoted an overall improvement in the achievement in RE. (A new leader took over in September 2008)
- School provided opportunities for staff to undertake peer-observation of good practice in the teaching of RE. (Several changes of staff have since taken place)

The capacity to make further improvements

The dedicated headteacher, gentle, reflective RE co-ordinator, staff and governors are committed to further improvement and this capacity is good.

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

The school needs to :-

- become more confident in using the levels of attainment, ensuring that pupils know their RE targets; then embed the tracking of R.E assessments and evaluate how the targets and tracking are impacting on standards in RE
- plan for CPD, including one INSET day, annually to facilitate quality time for spiritual renewal and deeper knowledge and understanding of RE and the Catholic Life of the School
- explore ways to make the mission statement more accessible and meaningful to pupils
- review the overall provision for Collective Worship and seek ways to provide greater opportunity for pupils to be involved in planning the Liturgy

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

“St Joseph’s is a Catholic School Community with the presence and power of Jesus Christ at its centre” (mission statement)

The governing body has a shared vision of Catholic education and provide good support and challenge to the school by their regular visits and reports. The headteacher leads through the example of her evangelising commitment to the Catholic Faith and promotes a spiritual and moral faith journey for the school, lived through the lengthy mission statement, which she plans to tease out with the pupils to make it child-friendly.

St Joseph’s Catholic School and parish is a community displaying close relationships, with a “natural attachment to church with the monthly family masses”. Together they ensure that the presence of Jesus and the gospel message flourishes in the pupils’ lives. The weekly ‘Ethos Statements’ are embedded in school and family life (weekly newsletter) “They are our RE targets and we are really proud to get the certificate”

The regular visits from Father Fenton and his spiritual direction, consolation and sense of humour are greatly appreciated. “Mass relates to everyday life, I like the children to see the clergy as ‘homely’ but with a spiritual depth. Behaviour and respect in class and around the school are very good. Children show a real concern for others”

Together with the Wakefield partnership, staff are encouraged to reflect on providing the best Catholic education, with no distinction between the sacred and the secular. Teaching Assistants had their own learning day. “The role of Teaching Assistant is valued in our partnership schools. We discussed the importance of the school’s ethos and religious display and I brought back new ideas”

The school’s contribution to community cohesion is very good. “Live Simply” messages came to life with ‘buddies’ carrying full buckets of water across the field “We take water for granted, they have to walk to get water to survive, on a daily basis”

The pupils are actively involved in fundraising for local, national and international needs (eg. CAFOD and Good Shepherd) The children enjoy going to partnership days to learn Liturgical dance and to play sports together. As a pupil said “I believe in Jesus and learn how to be more like Him; everyone makes wrong choices, but we ask for forgiveness ”

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

“Prayer, Worship and Liturgy are significant and meaningful experiences, which enable us to grow in our love of God and one another” (mission statement)

Collective Worship is good and the Eucharist is acknowledged as central to the life of this Catholic school. Pupils have many opportunities to reflect and pray during whole school, Key Stage and class worship. Pupils are reverent and participate with enthusiasm. Liturgies, appropriate to the age of the pupils, are planned for, but could be enhanced by using the agreed Diocesan format and more pupil-involvement. Collective Worship makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

During class Worship, pupils reflected on last year’s flooding and how “good neighbours had come round to take us to Grandma’s”

School and home, support the sacramental preparation in the parish. The RE co-ordinator liaises closely with the catechists at St Joseph’s. The First Holy Communion programme has engaged both the pupils and their parents/carers in spiritual development. Parents feel Fr Anthony has a real rapport with the pupils and uses good analogies ‘He added blackcurrant juice, drop by drop to clear water to show the children how frequent encounters with Jesus, can deepen our Faith and love of Him.

The Thanksgiving after First Eucharist Mass, held in school was well-attended by home, school and parish and was a joyous celebration where we all said “Merci, danke, dziekuje, as Father explained that in Greek, thank you is ‘Eucharist’

The Y6 pupils reflect on their time at St Joseph’s and their hopes and fears for the future at St Wilfrid’s. They are also empowered to organise their own leavers’ mass choosing the readings, hymns and writing the bidding prayers.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

“We provide a broad based and spiritual curriculum, helping each child to build on their successes and to achieve their full potential as unique individuals” (mission statement)

The standards reached by pupils in Religious Education are good, in the majority of classes, with all pupils showing good attitudes to their work.

Where Teachers have a deep knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith, this pervades their teaching and consequently pupils’ learning is enhanced, as they are challenged to make better progress.

The pupils’ behaviour is very good in the classrooms and around the school. The pupils are well able to express themselves orally and in so doing, give a clear indication of their good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They demonstrate a mature level of faith commitment, lived out through their everyday life, as evidenced by this pupil’s prayer – “My dear Lord, I have turned my back on you, in times of weakness, so I ask Your forgiveness and trust that I may carry on developing under Your guidance”

The RE co-ordinator has introduced baseline assessment in RE and is encouraging all teachers to level the work accurately, using Attainment Targets to inform future planning.

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

“Through our words and actions we encourage Christian values, creating a positive relationship between home, parish and the wider community” (mission statement)

In the majority of lessons, the standard of teaching in RE is of good quality, leading to effective learning. The planning of lessons takes into account the educational needs of the pupils. In good or better lessons, the Teachers’ good subject knowledge and commitment to teaching the Faith, lends confidence to their teaching. Teachers have a good rapport with pupils; this coupled with interesting teaching ensures motivated pupils, who are well-supported by dedicated teaching assistants who make a positive contribution to teaching and learning.

Effective use of “talking partners” develops speaking and listening skills and teachers challenge pupils to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Teachers make good use of ICT to support teaching and learning.

Parents are invited to Religious activities in school and questionnaires also show that they are well informed about RE, via termly consultation meetings, annual reports and newsletters, RE leaflets and the Wednesday Word. They say “The weekly Ethos statements are lived out at school and at home.”

“At consultation evening we stuck post-it notes on the ‘Reach for the Stars chart’ Maths workshop required Get parents to dress their children in correct uniform.....Inspire workshops are a great idea, a good insight into how children are learning.....Buddy system to be encouraged, great to have good role models.....Please can we have a nice clean playground with more things to do?.....”

These suggestions and parent questionnaires have been analysed by the Leadership team and governors, with responses to ideas for improvement circulated, including the ambitious ‘Garden project’.

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

We help each member of our school community to recognise that we are all precious in God’s eyes, showing love and respect for all. (mission statement)

Curricular provision is good and fulfils the requirements of the Bishops’ Conference, organised as it is around the life and teaching of Jesus and the Church and the way of life of the Catholic tradition. School teams are good ambassadors in the local and wider community, known for their effort and sportsmanship qualities. This impacts on the celebration life of the school and pride in each other.

The buddies and play leaders are very effective at addressing concerns. The school council also enjoy organising events such as a Toy sale and carnival day to raise funds to improve outdoor activities and enhance the lives of others.

The provision which school makes for family life and sex education, education and personal relationships and citizen education is satisfactory and could be improved by involving the parents more and adopting a Diocesan approved scheme.

The RE curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils and very effectively promotes community cohesion.

Adults, who are excellent role models, encourage pupils to develop spiritually and morally and to respect other faiths and cultures via ‘Other Faith’ and ‘Global’ weeks. Pupils enjoyed the visitors from the Mosque and also benefit from the expertise of the teacher in school who is Muslim, and so are helped develop tolerance and understanding of other faiths. As a result pupils consequently grow and flourish, becoming responsible members of the school, local and global community.

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

The newly-appointed subject leader, is focussed on the Catholic mission and is committed to her own professional development, so as to bring about continuous improvement in the teaching and learning of RE

This work now needs to continue to develop towards meeting planned, challenging targets. Inclusion is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all pupils achieve as well as they can in RE. Pupils' needs are personalised and met with support from teaching assistants and the use of SEAL materials, ethos statements and circle time.

The governors ensure that RE is funded as a core subject and financial provision has been made available to obtain a good range of resources, which include interactive whiteboards, 'Other Faith' boxes, artefacts to support worship (Hall prayer space).

The chair of Governors and Fr Fenton regularly meet with the headteacher and RE co-ordinator, to work on the SEF48 or to discuss RE and the Catholic Life of the school.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

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