

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Malachy's Catholic Primary School
Halifax.
HX2 8JY

School URN	107545
School DfE Number	3813306
E-mail address	head@st-malachys.calderdale.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Fr. Peter Nealon
Headteacher	Mrs. Christine Russell
RE Subject Leader	Mrs. Claire Cade
Date of Inspection	27 th - 28 th June 2011
Section 48 Inspector/s	Mrs. Barbara Ford

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St Malachy'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. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors (2010).

The inspector visited Religious Education (RE) lessons in FS 2, Y2 and Y6, to observe teaching. She held meetings with the headteacher, RE subject leader, staff, Parish Priest, governors, school council and met parents. She examined school documentation including the RE subject leader's file, planning and assessment files, monitoring and evaluation records, meeting minutes and pupil consultations.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work, looking in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of development planning processes undertaken by leaders and managers;
- the formal monitoring of the provision for Collective Worship;
- monitoring and evaluation strategies being used in RE;
- the action taken by the school as a result of pupil surveys and the impact of that action.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Malachy's is a one-form entry Catholic primary school with nursery, situated in an area of significant social economic disadvantage on a housing estate in North Halifax.

The school deprivation indicator is double the national average, with 23% of children on the SEN register, of whom, a quarter have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties and 34% of pupils entitled to free school meals, whilst 70% of pupils are on the vulnerable register. Children's attainment on entry to the school is below national expectations in all areas. The number of pupils has fallen in recent years and as a result, years 2-5 are currently running as mixed age classes, due to revert to single age classes in September. Links with the Parish of St. Malachy are strong, particularly preparation for first sacraments and charity fundraising. Due to the closure of St Catherine's High School, pupils could transfer to All Saints in Huddersfield, however, currently only 2 pupils will transfer there this year, the majority going out of the Catholic system. The staff has, until recently, been made up of long serving members of the school, but due to their gradual retirement, younger members have been recruited. A new acting headteacher and interim deputy will take up post in September 2011. The school has achieved Basic Skills, National Healthy Schools, Investors in Pupils, Investors in People, Activemark, and Halifax, Yorkshire and Britain in Bloom awards.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 is Satisfactory, 4 is Inadequate

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

This is a summative judgement based on the 2 judgements below: Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils, provision for Catholic education (includes effectiveness of leaders and managers) and capacity for sustained improvement.

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS, PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

2

Main findings

At St Malachy's the outcomes for pupils and the provision for Catholic education are outstanding. During last year's parish visitation, Bishop Roche found St. Malachy's to be a shining example of a Catholic school doing God's work in challenging circumstances. He was very impressed with the pupils' knowledge in RE, their politeness and their eagerness. The pupils understand and live out the Gospel in their everyday lives. St. Malachy's is distinctively Catholic in its nature; reaching out to the wider community.

At St Malachy's there is a deep commitment to caring for the needs of the whole child and consequently pupils show a high level of care and consideration for each other and for the staff. Their behaviour is exemplary in all given situations. Pupils build confidence, enjoy performing and raise self-esteem, through choral speaking and at the wonderful First Holy Communion Mass, it was noted how confidently pupils proclaimed the Word of God. The provision for Collective Worship is a significant strength of the school being central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration.

The outstanding local community involvement in developing the environment, includes junior wardens, and the award-winning Gardening Club, whose remarkable achievements were celebrated at the June Open Garden Day. Pupils appreciate God's creation, watching seedlings propagate on the classroom windowsills and seeing their bulbs flowering on the estate.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

Continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the new RE scheme of work, '*The Way, the Truth and the Life*' through existing quality assurance procedures.

Embed rigorous systems for assessment, including moderation of work in RE, to confirm staff judgements of the levels of attainment.

Continue to develop new partnership links with All Saints Catholic High School in Huddersfield.

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.

1

From a starting point, which is well-below national expectations, pupils achieve well in RE. They take a pride in their work and are interested and enthusiastic about their learning. The social, moral and spiritual development of the pupils is a significant strength of the school and this is the direct result of the wholehearted dedication and commitment of every member of staff to the Aims and Mission of the school.

Following a visit to St Malachy's church, very young children know that 'God lives in every church' and can prepare their role-play church and label the altar and religious artefacts. They prayed, "Dear God, thank you for all the flowers in church, they are beautiful and I love you. Amen."

In a lesson on the early Christian community, pupils were able to say why people who believe in God, do certain things, "Suddenly they felt brave and strong, they realised this is what Jesus was talking about, the Holy Spirit was with them and they went out, telling everyone about Jesus, speaking different languages."

As a result of skills learned in the Enterprise project, the oldest pupils, displayed excellent teamwork, during a lesson on 'Called to Serve', showing good attitudes and encouraging each other to identify visible and hidden talents, "My friend is trustworthy, he has spirit and says 'Get your heads up' if we are losing at football."

Pupils say they find the new scheme of work '*The Way, the Truth and the Life*' both interesting and challenging. "It's better for understanding difficult things and learning more about Jesus."

All classes have a 'Wonder wall' with deep thoughtful questions, for example 'I wonder why people think less of the disabled, because they put up with a lot. We really do take our gifts for granted.' 'I wonder how they get the beads on a rosary.'

Pupils are very happy at St Malachy's. They take on specific responsibilities such as 'Lunch Bunch', mini whistlers, play-leaders, and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school, exemplified by the School Council who drew up an action plan and wrote to governors, appreciating that they are 'listened to', their views are valued, and that reasonable suggestions and requests are taken on board. Recent initiatives, part funded by the pupils through fund-raising activities, have seen the provision of outdoor play equipment, activity club games, visits from Zulu Nation and sports coaches. They are passionate about supporting CAFOD, (with lots of input from the parish), Haiti and Catholic Care and keep everyone up to date with the excellent podcast on the school website. Pupils show a high level of care and consideration for each other and for the staff. Their behaviour is exemplary in all given situations.

Pupils gather voluntarily to pray the rosary, enjoy their Prayer Garden, set up the altar for mass and participate joyfully in Collective Worship. Prayer corners are 'well-used'

throughout school; “Dear Jesus, please look after my Grandad”; “Dear God, please be with me as I go to High School.”

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
• the quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
• the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
• pupils’ attainment in Religious Education	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship.	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

1

The quality of teaching in RE is at least good and is securing effective learning. All lessons are well planned and resourced. IT facilities are used effectively to enhance learning. Teachers’ good subject knowledge and their willingness to share their own faith journey and strong faith commitment, inspires and challenges the pupils and contributes to their good progress. Support staff are trained and experienced in helping those who are struggling, using differentiated work, where appropriate, whilst Learning Mentors work with pupils to solve their relationship problems or self-esteem difficulties, using SEAL and promoting better attendance and punctuality via the ‘Ready to Learn’ project. Teachers make a ‘best fit’ judgement each term using the assessment evidence, recording which strands have been assessed, on a class record sheet.

Some pupils evaluate their own work and receive guidance on what they have done well and how to improve their work from the teacher’s marking. Their use of ‘I can’ statements is inconsistent; being mostly initialised by the teacher, rather than the pupil. Good examples include these responses to, ‘I can explain what beliefs and values from the Holy Spirit inspire me ‘I use the gift of perseverance, at this sad time when my Grannie is ill’; ‘I use my gift of courage as I prepare for High School.’

The most recent acquisition, following extensive consultation and staff in-service training is the new RE scheme ‘*The Way, the Truth and the Life*’ which is now being used throughout the school. The early indications since the scheme’s adoption are encouraging. Circle time, using the ethos statements, re-inforces St Malachy’s commitment to caring for the needs of the whole child.

During ‘One World’ week the pupils learnt about the needs of those in the third world, as well as termly lessons and assemblies delivered and resourced by CAFOD representatives. The Creative arts project, ‘Journey’, using dance, art, and music enabled pupils to meet and relate to elders from Pakistan. An elder had told them, “I could hear my mum’s voice echoing through the mountains” and at Colden school, pupils stood at the top of the hill and practiced the echo for themselves.

The 'In the Beginning' scheme of work is used to aid in the delivery of EPR throughout the school, supplemented by the school nurse in year 6 and further involvement of parents is an area for development. Learning has excellent links with literacy, science, and ICT, including pupil-made power-points, screen savers and podcasts.

The provision for Collective Worship is a significant strength of the school. Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. The themes, based upon the liturgical calendar, the theme from 'Pray Together' and/or the integrated ethos statements, reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission and include the spiritual aspirations of all pupils, for example a young pupil responded to the reading on Jesus calming the storm, "Jesus is powerful and magical (miraculous). He is everywhere and will help us".

Each Pentecost, the whole school process to church with banners and red balloons to bear witness to the community that the Holy Spirit is here, and finish the day with a birthday party. The Parish Priest says Mass in school for special feasts and celebrations and visits classes, weekly to lead either Collective Worship (KS1) or say Mass (KS2). He is proud of the remarkable job St Malachy's staff do in caring for and educating the pupils so well. The RE newsletter and 'Wednesday Word' are sent out to aid parents in home Collective Worship.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching in Religious Education.	2
The use of assessment to support learning in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School.

2

The leadership team ensures that St Malachy's has a clear visual identity as a Catholic school with the mission statement clearly reflected in all its policies and improvement plans. The headteacher is dedicated and supportive of staff and pupils alike, having given many years service to education.

The RE subject leader sets challenging targets for improvement, and effectively monitors and evaluates outcomes for pupils in RE throughout school by observing lessons and providing feedback; work scrutiny, monitoring planning, display and prayer corners, and tracking of individuals and groups.

The governing body is passionate about meeting the needs of the pupils and highly supportive of the life of the Catholic School and the RE curriculum, being aware of and fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. Governors attend assemblies, Masses and school events and appreciate that St Malachy's school is an important part of the parish. They notice how well older pupils care for the younger ones and their delightful reciprocation and feel this is due to the outstanding role models they have in the staff, "When you are cared for and feel valued, you end up caring for others in return".

One governor with expertise in speech and drama, has enabled pupils from Reception to year 6 to build confidence, enjoy performing and raise self-esteem, through choral speaking. (101 pupils gained either merit or distinction in their LAMDA exams) and at the wonderful First Holy Communion Mass, it was noted how confidently pupils proclaimed the word of God.

The outstanding community involvement in developing the environment, includes junior wardens, who encourage family, friends and the local community to make a difference. They litter-picked Bank Edge and telephoned Calderdale Council to do repairs and make the area safe, and the award-winning Gardening Club, whose remarkable achievements were celebrated at the June 'Open Garden Day'. There is a photo diary charting progress over 4 years on meadow plantings, orchards, vegetables and re-creating the grotto. There was a massive morale-boost from the collection of 24,000 supermarket vouchers, by parents and parish, for tools and plants. Pupils appreciate God's creation, watching seedlings propagate on the classroom windowsills and seeing their bulbs flowering on the estate.

Transition activities take place every year, and the high schools provide teaching and learning opportunities in the primary schools, however there is a transport issue for pupils going to All Saints in Huddersfield, now St Catherine's is no longer Catholic. There are a number of network partnerships including the North Halifax Federation where schools of different denominations work together to improve the learning in this identified area of disadvantage, for example, the 'Aim Higher Project' at Bradford University.

School ensures that curriculum time is given to the teaching of other faiths with workshops, themed weeks, visits and visitors focused upon promoting the understanding of diversity and community cohesion.

More parents are volunteering to help in school, "This is a peaceful, superb, school, where children are happy, kept safe, taught good manners and to respect others." The PTFA were delighted at the pupils' raised self-esteem, when playing cricket and inter school sports in their new kit. Parents felt their children were very-well prepared for the first sacraments and that EPR is handled very sensitively, in the context of loving relationships.

These are the grades for leadership and management

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met.	2
How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being.	1
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	2