

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

# SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST AUSTIN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Back Duke of York Street  
Wakefield  
WF1 3PF

School URN	108254
Chair of Governors	Mrs O Rowley
Headteacher	Mr D Willis
RE Subject Leader	Mrs L Warters
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Dates of Inspection	25 <sup>th</sup> & 26 <sup>th</sup> November 2010
S48 Inspector	Mr J Ginty

## INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St Austin'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 the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2010).

The inspector shared prayer gatherings in each Key Stage (KS), class worship in Foundation Stage, KS 1 and KS 2, a Religious Education (RE) lesson and the celebration of Mass in KS 2 and a whole school act of Collective Worship.

He held meetings with the chair of governors, headteacher, deputy headteacher, RE subject leader, staff, and pupil council. He examined school documentation including the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF), the School Improvement Plan (SIP), the RE subject leader's extensive portfolio of planning, monitoring and evaluation together with teachers' planning and assessment tracking files.

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

1. The impact of the school's monitoring of teaching and learning on the quality of teaching and pupil attainment and progress in RE.
2. The school's provision for Collective Worship.
3. Pupils' response to the school's overall provision.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Austin's is a large Catholic Primary school drawing from a widespread geographical area serving the two parishes of St Martin de Porres and SS Peter and Paul. The school has a clearly stated Mission reinforced by the motto, *'Living, Loving, Learning in Faith'*. The school has a revised admission number of 45 and there are 336 pupils on roll of whom 65% are of the Catholic faith.

The percentage of pupils whose first language not believed to be English is more than double the national average. Around thirteen minority ethnic groups are represented in the school and the percentage of these pupils has risen in recent years and presently stands at 27%, significantly above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and three pupils have statements of special educational needs.

There are 14 full-time equivalent teachers the majority of whom are Catholic and 5 have CCRS or equivalent qualifications.

The number of pupils joining the school at times other than usual varies considerably from year to year but is often particularly high in Years 5 and 6. The school has gained the Activemark and Eco-schools Bronze awards and achieved Healthy Schools status.

# INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

The above is a summative judgement based on the judgements made below:

- Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils
- Provision for Catholic education including the effectiveness of leaders and managers
- Capacity for sustained improvement

## OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS, PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

## CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

1

### Main findings

In St Austin's Catholic Primary School catechesis and evangelisation are a living and vibrant reality. Highly effective teaching together with the opportunity to live, share and celebrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ, combine to create a community wherein children and adults alike enjoy a close and unique relationship with God in their daily life. The individual is cherished for who they are, as much as for what they achieve, and all achievement is recognised and celebrated.

The sense of belonging is tangible. It is a school community where all encounter Christ, where all are nourished by Him, and all are disciples for Him. The Spirit of God is alive in the school, giving strength and hope, promoting harmony, recognising and supporting growth and enabling reconciliation. With enthusiastic commitment and celebration, *'the things of God always take first place'*. The strong sense of shared mission, partnership and collaboration are at the heart of the school's vision. The evangelical mission of the Church extends to the wider community through the school's very presence, through its witness, through its dialogue.

The outcomes for pupils, the provision for Catholic education, the effectiveness of leaders and managers and the school's capacity for sustained improvement are uniformly outstanding. Self-evaluation at all levels is grounded in rigorous and honest analysis. The governors and leadership team inspire the school community to work towards meeting an ambitious vision through the setting of challenging targets and regular review of the impact of its action. Consequently, the school has a very clear idea of its own strengths and those areas it wishes to develop further.

### WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the new RE scheme of work and to accurately assess the impact on the quality of teaching and learning in RE.
- Provide encouragement and opportunity for pupils to further their involvement in the leading of prayer and liturgy.

## PUPILS

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

1

Outcomes for all pupils are outstanding.

In the words of one of the younger children describing life at school, *'it is like being at home'*. All pupils regard school as a safe, helpful, friendly, happy and enjoyable environment where there is always someone who will listen and, if needs be, *'sort things out'*. They feel *'special'* because everybody cares and they can confide in the grown-ups. They feel inspired by the adults around them. The pupils acknowledge that they are *'listened to'*, that their views are valued, and that their reasonable suggestions and requests are taken on board.

Pupils are keen to learn, take a pride in their work and enjoy what they are doing. Their neat and imaginative work can be seen in their RE books and in the attractive displays in their classrooms and around the school. There are good examples of pupils using IT facilities to enhance their work particularly where there is a specific learning need. This is an inclusive school where there are no barriers to learning. In the context of the distinctive identity of the Catholic school, the inclusion of all is a central goal and a shared vision.

From a generally low starting point in RE the pupils make steady progress throughout their time at the school. The Early Years curriculum provides a solid foundation, built upon throughout KS 1, by the end of which the majority of pupils are meeting national expectations at a broad Level 2. The pupils maintain steady progress throughout KS 2 and reach a confident Level 4 in the subject by the end of Year 6. The achievement of all pupils in the subject is at least good and in some cases is outstanding. There are no significant differences in attainment or progress between different groups of pupils.

Pupils are very positive when talking about their RE lessons. They are finding the new scheme of work both interesting and challenging. They have frequent opportunities to comment on the topics covered in RE and to suggest ways in which they, or the subject, might improve. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are clear in their choice of favourite stories from the Bible with good reasons given. These pupils also have a very good idea of how well they are doing and believe they are *'doing well'*. A typical response from all pupils is, *'I really enjoy my RE lessons.'*

The pupils in KS2 have a clear awareness of what they would like to do to improve or how the subject might be improved, *'I would like to look at Christmas and Easter in a more mature way'* or *'I would like more focus on people in the Third World, poverty and hunger'*.

Pupils take on specific responsibilities as exemplified by the School Council and wholeheartedly subscribe to the philosophy and ethos of the school. In the main hall an attractive display visually representing a recent fund-raising activity proclaims the pupils' attitude and response to the Catholic mission in stating, *'We put our heart into it'*. The school has already been awarded the Eco-school Bronze award and the pupils take their eco-monitoring role very seriously indeed having a well-grounded understanding of local and global environmental concerns.

Pupils show a high level of respect and consideration for each other and for the adults in the school and wider community. They are ambassadors for the school through their

active involvement in a wide variety of local community events in the Wakefield area and through their enthusiastic involvement in local, national and international charitable fundraising activities. They are very aware of how they can help others who are in need and less fortunate than themselves. Their behaviour is exemplary in all given situations.

The pupils' response to prayer, liturgy and worship, gives clear indication that they understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year and in the parish community. Pupils are secure and ready to express their own views and beliefs. They are confident in preparing and taking part in acts of worship. From an early age they act with reverence, sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in the liturgy appropriately and with meaning.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## PROVISION

### How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

1

The provision for Catholic education is outstanding. Teaching extends well beyond the boundaries of the classroom and permeates every moment experienced by the pupils and the adults in the school. The Catholic vision proclaimed by the school, '*...we live, love, learn and laugh together in God's presence...*' are not mere words but a living reality. 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 each member of staff to the mission and vision of the school. They are excellent role models and enthusiastically share their own beliefs and values with the pupils in a challenging, supportive and caring way.

The teaching (catechesis) is of a reciprocal and trusting nature where all adults assume responsibility for teaching the children and they are the first to recognise that they themselves have much to learn from the children. The living, sharing and celebrating of the Gospel (evangelisation) consumes each school day from one day to the next; opening with the 'morning prayer' gathering appropriate to the age and needs of the child and closing with a prayerful departure.

The quality of teaching in RE is consistently good in securing effective learning. Robust systems for planning, monitoring and assessment are embedded in good practice ensuring that the needs of all pupils are being met. The teaching is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are motivated and engaged. 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 high achievement.

Governors and senior leaders traditionally ensure that the necessary funding for RE is available and this is put to very good use. 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.

Teachers particularly welcome the increased '*knowledge base*' together with the clear and attractive materials. They feel that the new scheme promotes higher order questioning from pupils and staff alike, which in turn encourages a deeper and broader sharing of faith knowledge and experience. The revised curriculum better provides pupils with a deep insight into their Catholic Faith and helps pupils see it in relation to other World Faiths. The RE curriculum provides extensive opportunities for spiritual and moral development. Teachers already sense a feeling of '*liberation*' from the ties of an over-prescriptive curriculum and rejoice in the fact '*that they can be themselves*'.

Imaginative use is made of resources, including interactive whiteboards, to maximise learning. Support provided by all supporting adults is pupil-focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning. Teachers' comprehensive planning ensures good coverage of the RE curriculum.

It is noted that the historic assessment and tracking data held by the school is based on the previous RE scheme of work. It is generally recognised and accepted that the national assessment guidance and resources available to the teachers at that time, did not facilitate the determining of accurate pupil attainment and progress across the attainment targets in

many topic areas. In this context, the teachers understandably expressed concern at the difficulty they encountered in truly representing the attainment and progress of their pupils in RE.

The new scheme, together with supporting diocesan materials, incorporates what is generally regarded as a more appropriate assessment tool that the teachers are already finding helpful, accurate and informative. Meticulous attainment and progress tracking records now give very clear indication of how well the pupils attain and the progress they make over time in relation to the Attainment Targets in RE. Early indications are that pupils are generally attaining at a good level in RE and some are achieving higher levels than had previously been the case. This would suggest an encouraging upward trend in pupil attainment and progress in the subject. In their SIP the school has outlined a clear intention to monitor the implementation of *'The Way, the Truth, the Life'* to ensure that it meets the needs of teachers and pupils and leads to the raising of pupil attainment and progress in the subject.

St Austin's is a prayerful community where Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. Following rigorous monitoring in recent years, and remedial action in aspects requiring improvement, this is now a significant strength of the school community. As the school community is committed to the diocesan *'Come and See'* renewal process, prayer opportunities are planned in a manner that attracts and facilitates attendance including parents and other adults from the parish and local community associated with the school. Parents have recently been invited to share a series of Advent prayer gatherings with their children and teachers.

Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned, appropriate to their faith backgrounds and shows progression. The themes, based upon the liturgical calendar, the RE topic theme and/or the integrated Circle Time curriculum, reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission and include the spiritual aspirations of all pupils. Collective Worship will be further developed as pupils assume more responsibility for not only preparing prayer and worship but also leading their KS and whole school in joyful celebration.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching in Religious Education.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The use of assessment to support learning in Religious Education.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of collective worship provided by the school.</b>	<b>1</b>

## LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

The school's governors and leaders are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and are outstanding in their effectiveness at all levels. There have been some changes in the governing body in recent times but the wealth of experience of the longer-serving governors has maintained an expertise which meets the school's needs and remains influential in determining the direction of the Catholic life of the school. The chair of governors enjoys a long-standing relationship with staff and pupils, demonstrating clarity of vision and acting with determination in challenging and supporting the school in tackling areas for development and so bringing about improvements.

The Governors operate a highly effective recruitment and selection policy and very effectively promote the continuing professional development of staff. The school follows the excellent programme, '*Catholic Foundation Stones*', to drive continual professional development and this facility is freely available to all staff and greatly appreciated by them.

The headteacher is innovative, dynamic and supportive of staff and pupils alike. He is instrumental in leading and promoting a collaborative working environment, wherein morale is very high indeed. All staff feel empowered to promote their strengths to the full and encouraged to develop personally and professionally in a safe and supportive environment. The leadership team provides a seamless support network and a shared drive towards ambitious goals. Governors and senior leaders together give the direction towards, and encourage others to follow, the path to Christ.

Leadership of RE is outstanding and the subject leader maintains rigorous systems for monitoring and evaluating, for challenging and supporting, for ensuring that responsibilities are being met. She has facilitated the introduction of the new RE scheme through in-service opportunities, direct guidance and regular discussion and has ensured that all staff are equipped with the required planning and assessment materials. She has also maintained oversight of RE resources to ensure that these meet the demands of the curriculum. Colleagues hold her in the highest regard and in the words of one, '*the RE subject leader is very knowledgeable and accessible when needing guidance or just a chat to make sure you are on the right lines*'.

The RE subject leader demonstrates her commitment, knowledge and expertise beyond the school into local and diocesan working groups. She chairs the RE discussions at the Wakefield Catholic Partnership and has been instrumental in setting up effective monitoring and moderation practice across the partnership.

Governors and the leadership team share a very clear vision of how the school might improve further, their aims are set out in comprehensive school and subject Improvement plans. Leaders and managers conduct a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes and their analysis provides a firm basis for accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The school participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities. These activities themselves make an excellent contribution to pupils' achievement and well-being. The school actively promotes pupils' initiative in

learning about and supporting charities at local, national and global levels and the response is repeatedly generous.

The Parish Priests both serve as Foundation Governors and are actively involved in the liturgical and prayer life of the school. The Wakefield Catholic Partnership is enhanced and augmented by the Deanery clergy who liaise on all matters do to with the ongoing life of the Catholic Church in the area.

Parents from all backgrounds are actively involved in the life of the school. Parents who feel particularly vulnerable or insecure are afforded confidential support and guidance primarily from the school's dynamic and energetic Learning Mentor. Parents speak in glowing terms of the care and dedication of staff and the high level of trust they and their children place in the school.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>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.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>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.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being.</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.</b>	<b>1</b>