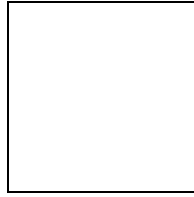


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SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Station Road, Tadcaster, LS24 9JG

School URN	121641
Chair of IEB	Mr. Philip Turnpenny
Consultant Headteacher	Mrs. Judi Morris (0.5fte)
RE Subject Leader	Mrs. Helen Tomlinson
Dates of Inspection	27 th May, 2010.
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs. Marie McClelland

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Joseph's School, Tadcaster, 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 inspector attended whole-school Collective Worship (CW), observed Religious Education (RE) lessons throughout the school and held meetings with staff, parents, pupils, parish priest and a member of the Interim Executive Board (IEB). A range of evidence was seen including the RE and other related policies, the School Improvement Plan, a portfolio of assessed pupils' work in RE, current records of pupil progress and attainment, a representative sample of written work in RE since the beginning of the current academic year and other examples of pupil work on display throughout the school.

Description of the school

St. Joseph's, Tadcaster, is a small Voluntary Aided primary school in the Diocese of Leeds catering for 43 children with an admissions number of 10. It serves the local area and surrounding villages welcoming children from all backgrounds and faiths. Currently, 70% of the children are Catholic. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. One in five is from a minority ethnic background. All pupils speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. All pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, divided between three teachers. Deployment of the 2.5fte Teaching Assistants provides full-time support for SEN and also for the Foundation/KS1 class, and part-time support for KS2 classes. The school has achieved the *Inclusion Quality Mark* and the *Activemark* awards. A privately managed pre-school shares the school site.

The school has experienced considerable upheaval in the past 12 months and has been led and managed by a number of acting headteachers since January 2009. A Diocesan S48 Review took place in October 2009 and an IEB replaced the governing body in November of that year. The current Consultant Headteacher (0.5fte) has been in post since January 2010.

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.

The overall effectiveness of the provision for Catholic life and RE is good because of many factors. The school acknowledges intensive additional support from the Local Authority and the Diocese during the challenging times alluded to above. The loyalty and affirmation of parents whose children remained at the school during this period is testament to their confidence in the professional and faith commitment of staff. The smooth transition between successive acting headteachers and the composure and dedication of staff is deemed to have minimized the impact of the upheaval on the children's education. The Senior Leader for RE (SL for RE) played a key role in this continuum of provision and still does.

In what is now, according to the current Consultant Headteacher, a definite period of recovery the school is graced with experienced and key decision-makers. Following consultation with parents, staff and pupils, the very experienced IEB has audited school

needs, prioritized a timetable for action and drawn on its links with other professionals to widen St. Joseph's network for improvement. Individual IEB members pay regular visits during the school day and often talk to parents at the playground gates. As a result, the IEB has a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and on-going areas for development.

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

Aspects identified for improvement in the previous S48 inspection, (24 January 2007), have been addressed. The school has:

- Reviewed the timetable to ensure 10% teaching time is accorded to RE;
- An on-going programme of development for refining teaching, learning and assessment in RE;
- Confirmed that RE teaching is monitored formally and informally;
- Explored initiatives for raising pupil awareness of life in a multi-cultural world.

The capacity to make further improvements.

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

- The commitment and determination of staff to work effectively with the IEB and with each of the temporary leadership appointees to provide stability and strategic direction for the school.
- The confidence and expertise of the IEB to identify, prioritise and target strategic needs without compromising the Catholicity of the school.
- The current Consultant Headteacher's professional discernment in targeting aspects of the quality of planning and teaching in order to raise standards of learning.
- The competence and commitment of the RE Subject Leader (SL) to embed agreed practices and support initiatives for the development and enrichment of religious education.

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

- 1 Secure the core-subject status of RE by:
 - (a) continuing to refine current assessment and evaluation systems to ensure that pupil progress in RE *across the school* is identified, recorded and targeted appropriately for improvement and development;
 - (b) enabling pupils to become more aware of standards of attainment in RE so that they are personally motivated to work towards them and to want to celebrate them.
- 2 Consider the provision of an indoor '*prayer room*' or an outdoor '*quiet area*' as an extended and creative opportunity for spiritual development for all members of the school.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

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

The IEB (in post since November 2009) and the Consultant Headteacher (0.5fte, in post since January 2010) are providing strong leadership and direction for the school. Together with the competent SL for RE, they are committed to the school's Catholic mission and in a strong position to drive improvement forward at a rapid pace.

A high level of effort is invested in the creation and maintenance of a loving, peaceful and respectful culture in the school where each individual is supported nurtured and celebrated. Children clearly enjoy being here; they all know each other by name and are known to all the adults by name. They are very proud of their school and can articulate reasons for its successful reputation within the local community in general and at inter-school sporting events in particular. Parents are effusive in their appreciation of the strong Christian family ethos and its impact on the personal and social development of their children. Staff are to be commended for maintaining such a stable ethos during a twelve-month period of five acting-headteachers and intense involvement of Local Authority and Diocesan officials. Parents confirmed that the standard of care and education has been consistent throughout this troubled time because of the strong commitment of staff.

Relationships between the school and parish are good. The Parish Priest (now in his second year at the parish) is known by name to the children and often features in their RE written, oral and illustrated work. He values the school as a place where children are 'introduced to God' and are 'accompanied by spiritualized people'— an especial benefit for those who are not from church-going families. He confirms a seamless involvement of school staff, parents and parishioners in sacramental preparation, in training of altar servers, and in many liturgical celebrations at school or in church. The Parish Youth Club organised by parents meets every two weeks in the church hall, is attended by most Key Stage 2 children, and contributes further to the school's strong sense of *togetherness*.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

Collective Worship (CW) at St Joseph's is good. The CW policy ensures a planned range of formal and less formal settings for prayer and acts of worship. Themes from '*Here I Am*' and special events in the liturgical calendar provide the focus for these gatherings and an 'ethos statement' is presented as key inspiration at the start of the week. CW themes are displayed within classrooms, in the hall/dining room and in the corridors providing opportunities for on-going reflection or reminders at age-appropriate levels. A large photographic wall hanging in the hall provides an eclectic summary of the impact of the liturgical life of the school and ways in which 'we help each other'. One of the school's aims is to be a place where '*God's love is shared and nurtured by ... making space each day for sincere moments of prayer, reflection and worship and providing opportunities for*

daily prayer'. The provision of a dedicated *prayer room* or *quiet garden area* would help to enrich further spontaneous moments of grace for staff and pupils.

School Masses, often attended by parents, are held in the church at the beginning and end of term and on other special occasions when the older children prepare the readings and prayers. Many families and staff also attend the parish Mass on Sundays in church and this impacts on the religious literacy and receptivity of children in school. Records show that particular groups of pupils have prepared and led acts of worship with confidence and reverence that reflect a sincere and growing personal spirituality. Pupils are becoming skilled at using Scripture, religious artefacts, sacred music, hymn books and other forms of prayer. There is a tendency, however, in view of the small numbers of pupils at the whole school CW gathering to default, at times, to the ethos of a lesson with hands raised in response to questions posed. Discussion about this point with the SL for RE showed a ready awareness of ways to engage pupils differently in these sessions to ensure a more liturgical ambience.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

Pupil achievement in RE is satisfactory. Following a Diocesan Review in October 2009, a structured approach to recording pupil progress in RE was formulated. Staff are now using the new levels of attainment to assess pupils' work but the records do not yield sufficient information yet for judging progress of individuals, cohorts, or whole year groups *over time*. The SL for RE has this matter in hand. A *Portfolio of Moderated Work* has already begun and a scrutiny of pupils' written work since September 2009 indicates steady signs of improvement. Feedback to pupils in exercise books is always respectful and sometimes provides tips for ways to improve. Pupils are, however, still unaware of performance indicators in RE and there is a real need to address this matter in order to raise standards and to ensure that RE is accorded core-subject status. In discussion, some of the older pupils could talk about the 'driver words' in RE (these were on display in the classroom) but were still happy to rely on the teacher to judge the standard of their work. In this school, where virtually all pupils evince a good attitude to their work in RE, focused opportunities for self-assessment would motivate pupils to become more aware of their own progress in the subject and to know what to do to improve further. Pupils with learning difficulties and inabilities are very well supported by excellent Teaching Assistants.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are teaching and learning in RE?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some very good features. Pupils enjoy their work in RE at St. Joseph's and there is a strong culture of faith sharing in the school family. Parents expressed their appreciation of the 'well nigh private tuition' their children receive because of the small class sizes and the extent to which all children are known to

all staff. Appropriate and varied use is made of ICT and other resources to make the work interesting. Literacy and ICT skills are developed through RE. Staff evince a secure knowledge of the RE curriculum as evidenced in thoughtful and focused lesson planning throughout the school. Children in all classes are given opportunities to engage in independent learning where they often draw on knowledge from previous lessons to augment their responses. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is especially vivacious and engaging with work appropriately adapted for those with additional learning needs. As a result of teacher intervention, children are often challenged to think spiritually, ethically and theologically. Use of strategies like *Godly Play* could help to facilitate training in similar thinking skills in the Foundation/KS 1 mixed-age class. Parents are kept abreast of themes covered in RE with termly letters from the '*Here I Am*' resource. In addition, a large weatherproof noticeboard in the playground serves as a permanent reminder of key events and activities.

Much work has been done in the past year to develop and share common approaches to planning, teaching, and assessing in all aspects of curriculum RE. The SL for RE reports back to colleagues from regular RE inservice meetings and diocesan training days. A member of the IEB, an experienced RE Adviser, provides professional support to the SL. Occasional use of a 'demonstration lesson' in RE, where all staff can contribute to the feedback, could enhance the quality of teaching and learning by sharing some of the excellent practice already in the school. The Consultant Headteacher knows the teaching styles of all staff. Her professional guidance is a key strength for rebuilding staff confidence at appropriate times.

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. Focus on other world faiths follows the recommended teaching time within the '*Here I Am*' programme and pupils are taught to respect the way of life of other faiths and cultures from an early age and to respond to the needs of others. Most pupils are able to make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. There is a planned programme in place for education in personal relationships and citizenship and this is shared with parents and approved by the IEB.

Pupils' very thoughtful and courteous interaction with each other in this small mixed age school community is evidence of the good impact of the RE curriculum on their personal and moral development. They find good role models among all members of staff and reciprocate with equal sincerity. Parents confirmed that this thoughtful attitude spills over quite naturally into life outside school. Pupils initiate and engage in regular fund-raising activities for CAFOD and for more locally based charities as well as for school needs. The Toys at Christmas project, for example, enables each pupil to buy his/her choice of gift for less well off children. Such gifts are presented during the school Christmas Mass in church to a representative of a local charity each year for distribution. A similarly generous and spontaneous fund-raising response often greets news of national or world disasters e.g. the earthquake in Haiti.

The school has a rich programme of involvement in neighbourhood activities, inter-school events and residential visits, visiting speakers and educational visits. Dialogue with some

of the older pupils showed a mature appreciation of the benefits of encountering this wider community from such a secure small school-family ambience.

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 firm, competent and committed to the school's Catholic mission and to the faith development of pupils. The inclusion of all learners is central to its vision through its belief that all are created in the image of God. Members of the IEB with professional experience in RE have worked closely with the SL for RE to ensure that quality assurance procedures have been refreshed in line with diocesan guidelines and embedded in practice. Networking links with other schools beyond the local area have provided opportunities for some staff to make professional visits and to discuss strategies for raising standards in teaching and learning. Following a recent diocesan training day on '*The Way, The Truth, and The Life*', the school decided on a staged introduction of the resource from September 2010 with especial interest in its support for assessment activities.

Despite the turbulence of the last year, there is a strong sense of positive recovery thanks to decisive actions of the very experienced IEB and the support of the acting headteachers. The current consultant headteacher agrees that this sense of recovery is secure. The SL for RE is deeply committed to her role. Her excellent teaching skills and her capacity for working under pressure are an inspiration to her colleagues. She knows the school's major strengths and areas for development including the performance of pupils. Her confidence and commitment augur well for the future of the subject.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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