

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Sacred Heart CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
HEMSWORTH**

School URN	108262
School DfE Number	384 / 3329
Chair of Governors	Mr John Morrison
Headteacher	Mrs Marlyn Morgan
RE Subject Leader	Mr John Knowles
Date of Inspection	May 20 th / May 21 st 2010
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Kathryn Carter

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of Sacred Heart 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

Sacred Heart School is a Voluntary Aided Catholic School in the Diocese of Leeds and is located in the southeast section of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council. The school is in an area of socio-economic disadvantage. There are currently 107 pupils on role. 32% of pupils are on the SEN register with 16% of pupils qualifying for free school meals. 31% of pupils are non-Catholic but are of Christian denominations. There are no pupils from other faith backgrounds. The locality is predominantly white and school currently has 2 children from Eastern Europe with English as an additional language.

The school has no nursery provision and pupils enter Reception class at 4 1/3 years many of whom have had no previous Early Years education. The large majority of these children enter school at well below age expected attainment and leave to go to the local Catholic high school at age 11 years.

Sacred Heart Primary School is a small, family school that has served the local Catholic community for many generations and the staff pride themselves on knowing their families well. Strong links exist between the home, the parish and the school, which is well regarded by parents and parishioners. The needs of the individual and their developing spirituality are paramount at Sacred Heart School. The Governing Body is well informed, it has a shared vision for the future of the school and actively supports them in any way they can.

Although the building is old, it has been well cared for and provides an energetic learning environment for its pupils and staff. The welcome everyone receives, supported by the physical décor of the entrance immediately conveys the Catholic ethos of Sacred Heart Primary School.

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.

The overall provision of Catholic Education at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School is good. Every aspect of school life is good and some outstanding. Leadership and management of the faith life of the school are highly effective and are influential in promoting and maintaining a very strong sense of mission within the school community. Very effective governance by the dedicated Chair of Governors supported by the full governing body, together with the inspiring leadership and management of the Headteacher supported by the Deputy Headteacher ensures a high quality provision of Catholic education at the school. A cohesive evangelical vision based on the teaching of the Gospel is shared. Through example, dedication and commitment a clear direction for the whole community is provided, promoting high quality care and education for the

individual. All staff work as a close team to provide a broad curriculum, which meets the needs of all the pupils.

The provision for the liturgical and prayer life of the school is good as is the leadership of Religious Education (RE). Pupils' attainment and progress in the subject is also good. The pupils are happy at school and parents who are delighted with the 'open door' policy, are proud of their local family school to which generations of their family have attended.

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

The school have made outstanding efforts to enhance learning experiences through more creative teaching practice since the last inspection.

A more effective moderation process has been developed which has resulted in the production of a comprehensive portfolio of agreed and levelled work. This has improved teacher's assessment skills and is raising standards in RE.

Liturgical improvements have been a major focus over the last few years with the influential involvement of the Parish Priest.

The capacity to make further improvements

The school has a very good and stable leadership team. All leaders have a strongly developed sense of mission with a good sense of what needs to be done to improve. Resource provision is a high priority. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and the children are well behaved and enthusiastic. Therefore the inspector is confident that the capacity for further improvements to be made at Sacred Heart Primary School is good.

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

1. Embed the assessment system in RE.
2. Ensure all teaching and progress are good or better by:
 - making objectives plain as to what the teacher wants pupils to learn;
 - clarifying at the end of lessons what pupils have learnt;
 - providing opportunities for pupils to share their learning.
3. Raise standards of pupil's achievement in RE by:
 - improving marking and informing pupils of their 'next steps in learning'.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

The Governing Body, which is led by a knowledgeable, dedicated and enthusiastic Chairperson is well equipped to provide direction for the Catholic life of the school. The governors discharge their canonical and statutory duties effectively. They provide challenge for the Headteacher and staff, whilst also supporting them in the difficult job they do. Meetings are frequently held in different classrooms and start with the class teacher speaking to governors about the learning experiences the pupils in that classroom have encountered recently. The inspector sees this as a useful monitoring opportunity. The School Development Plan is reviewed annually in consultation with other stakeholders. Priority is given to the Faith Life of the school in this process. Leadership at all levels; including the Parish Priest have a very clear idea of what the school's priorities are and how these should be achieved. They are keen to stress the work the school does to ensure they meet the individual needs of pupils and their families as well as delivering fairness and justice.

The inspector sees the school's impressive links with other local Catholic Primary schools as a distinct strength. The governors regularly access training specifically designed for them through the Wakefield Catholic Cluster. The Mission Statement of the school was created some years ago and is still relevant today, however the inspector suggests it be reviewed in the near future with the incorporation of a strap line and that this is done with the full involvement of parents, pupils, governors and staff. The school runs very smoothly and through its developing quality assurance procedures has a good understanding of the quality of its Catholic life and its future development needs. The inspector was impressed by the way the leadership of the school, including the Learning Mentor, had addressed some challenging circumstances regarding vulnerable pupils and their families with sensitivity and consideration. The school makes good use of the services offered by Catholic Care, the local Children's Centre and the exemplary support, cooperation and advice available through the Wakefield Catholic Partnership. The school plays an active part in the local community. The School Council were keen to tell the inspector about various projects they had been involved in, particularly the competition to name a local road and to design a piece of public art.

Parents are very supportive and fully involved in the life of the school. They are proud that up to four generations have attended Sacred Heart School. They were openly pleased that their children attended a small, family school where they were personally known by staff and felt that they were listened to. Communication with parents is good and they particularly praised 'Wednesday Word' as a religious link between home and school. One parent said, ***"Even if I don't read it my son brings it to me to read"***.

Parents were keen to express to the inspector how much their children enjoyed going to school and engaging in the wide range of after school activities provided. Transition to high school is very smooth because of the close partnership work with the Wakefield Catholic Partnership, which starts as early as Y2, creating a smooth transfer from primary to secondary school. Pupils had recently participated in an 'Extravaganza of Talents'

Behaviour at Sacred Heart School is good and any misbehaviour is dealt with speedily and sensitively. Parents commented on the 'Buddy system' on the playground ensuring all pupils felt safe and happy.

"Everyone respects each other at Sacred Heart School," said the parents.

The school building is well looked after, clean and tidy despite its age. It is obvious that the Caretaker and his staff care about the quality of learning environment provided for the pupils. Despite financial restraints every effort has been made to provide a safe, well-decorated, bright and exciting learning environment for the pupils and staff.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

Collective Worship at Sacred Heart is good. All pupils take part in Collective Worship every morning, which is preceded by a vigorous 'Wake Up Shake Up' session. These assemblies are led by the Headteacher and are differentiated effectively so that pupils of all abilities and ages benefit. 'Wednesday Word' is well used and is celebrated as an important resource with the pupils and later goes home to all families. The involvement of the pupils in the preparation of collective worship is very good. On the first day of the inspection pupils from the dance club performed an imaginative liturgical dance as a starting point for Collective Worship. On the following day Y3/4 sensitively depicting through role play, the effects of the loss of a friend, paralleled with the emotions felt by the disciples when Jesus ascended into heaven and the subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Parish Priest, who has been instrumental in developing the liturgical life of the school, is highly valued by staff and pupils. Close links are being developed with St Joseph's Moorthorpe parish school to ensure consistency of provision. Pupils in the Foundation class shared their thoughts about how to help others whilst holding special stones in a respectful and reflective manner, as they made their promise they placed these stones in a basket.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

Almost all pupils achieve good standards given their capabilities and starting points. Pupils enjoy their work and are motivated to do well. They show very good attitudes to their work and have well developed speaking and listening skills. Pupils are used to discussing issues with their friends. The inspector was particularly impressed with the abilities of Y3/4 pupils to reference Bible stories to illustrate a point. This ability was also seen in Y5/6 class, where one pupil exemplified his answer by cross-referencing to prior learning with the Learning Mentor. Pupils' work in books is marked in a positive way by teachers but further improvements could be made by identifying next steps in learning. Pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported so that they can also make at least satisfactory progress.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

Teaching and Learning is generally good and strengths in teaching outweigh areas in need of development. Teachers demonstrate a good level of subject knowledge. In more successful lessons teachers are able to focus clearly on what they want the pupils to learn and effectively refer back to the learning objective. Learning is enhanced by imaginative, colourful, attractive displays that support the themes the children have been studying. RE displays celebrate children's work and highlight the liturgical season. It was the week before Pentecost when the inspection took place and the building was filled with symbols of the Holy Spirit. Reflection and prayer are normal elements within RE lessons. Pupils are spiritually aware and have a good understanding of how Jesus' message can be fulfilled through them. An example of this was seen in a Y5/6 lesson where pupils nominated others in the class for special praise because they had shown care and consideration for another pupil earlier in the day. Developing assessment procedures are enabling teachers to more closely tailor, differentiated learning activities matched to the individual capabilities of pupils in RE so that all can succeed.

Teaching assistants are used effectively, especially in Y5/6. Display is a strength of the school and a variety of reflective, celebratory and informative displays are evident around the school; the displays about Pentecost are particularly vibrant.

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

The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the RE Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. Diocesan policy is followed and the school has recently decided to move away from 'Here I Am' and introduce the scheme 'The Way, The Truth, and The Life' to deliver RE from September 2010. Training for staff has been organised by the Wakefield Catholic Partnership in the Autumn Term. Spirituality is a tangible strength of Sacred Heart School. ICT has been well developed since the last inspection through the RE curriculum to make lessons more interesting and stimulating. A particularly good example of this was the recordings of a radio broadcast made by pupils in Y5/6 about being present day witnesses to Jesus and His message of love. The RE curriculum makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral growth of the pupils. They are taught to respect other faiths and heritages through links with a school in Leeds who have a more culturally diverse intake. An emerging global link with a school in Malawi is a priority on the school development plan. A well-embedded PHSCE programme and the work of the Learning Mentor enhance the moral aspect of the curriculum. The School Council were enthusiastic about RE lessons and said how much they enjoy their RE lessons; one commented that '**We do a lot of RE**' whilst another went into detail about the birthday card she had made for the Church's Birthday.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

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

A robust partnership is evident between the Headteacher and Deputy. A strong sense of spiritual purpose is communicated to staff, pupils and parents and impacts not only on RE but on the overall Catholic life of the school community, this is demonstrated by every day starting with prayer. The Deputy Headteacher is effective in his leadership of RE. He sets clear direction and provides support, which leads to improvement in the subject. There is a clear focus on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and promoting the faith development of pupils. He is concentrating his efforts on monitoring, evaluating and raising standards across the school. His steady, thoughtful and calm approach, especially in developing the liturgical life of the school, has had a significant effect on both pupils and staff. He has developed a systematic approach to assessment and because of this the school is well placed to track pupil progress across all age groups. The embedding of this system is a high priority on the RE Action Plan. Resources are well used and good links exist between parents, parishes and diocesan agencies to support work in RE. The proactive support and challenge of the governors and the Parish Priest adds greatly to the strength of the leadership team. The Chair of Governors is enthusiastically ambitious for the school.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

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