

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Eden Way, Argie Avenue, Leeds LS4 2TF

School URN	108031
School DfE Number	383 3377
E-mail address	mcdonac07@leedslearning.net
Chair of Governors	Mr. Tom Brannigan
Headteacher	Mrs. Cathy McDonald
RE Subject Leaders	Mrs. Helena Angstmann & Mrs. M. Stevens
Date of Inspection	23 - 24 October 2012
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs. Marie McClelland

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. 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 attended six sessions of Collective Worship (CW), observed seven Religious Education (RE) lessons, looked at RE work and teachers' comments in current workbooks as well as some workbooks from the previous academic year, and visited various classrooms to discuss/view samples and displays relating to RE. The deputy headteacher was present at one lesson observation. Discussions with staff, parents, pupils, and Parish Priest were held over two days. A range of evidence was seen including the RE subject leaders' files relating to assessment, moderation, monitoring and evaluation. Several written communications to and from parents were perused, as well as extended photographic evidence of special visitors, projects and themed work since the last inspection. Information on the school's newly updated website was also consulted.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart Primary School is situated in inner city Leeds and serves a diverse intake from across a large geographical area with a variety of needs including high deprivation and second language speakers. Recent re-organisation of Catholic parishes in Leeds has resulted in new challenges and opportunities for the liturgical life of the school. From November 2012, the school is to be assigned to the pastoral care of the priest at St Urban's Catholic Church (a distance of about two miles) in the newly created Parish of St Jeanne Jugan.

Sacred Heart Primary has an admission limit of 30. Sixty-two percent of the current population of 201 is of the Christian faith and Roman Catholics comprise 37% of these. The last two years have seen significant staff and governor turnover during which time the school was subject to intensive support from the Local Authority and the Diocese. Three new teachers were appointed in September 2012. Subject leadership of RE has become a shared responsibility with the deputy head. The Acting Headteacher, seconded since October 2011, has accepted the substantive headship from November 2012. Since the last S48 inspection (June 2010) there is a new Chair of Governors and a number of new foundation governors. The Mission Statement was reviewed in December 2011 to include the precept *Work & Achieve*.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

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

2

CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

2

Main findings

Guided by its Mission Statement (MS) – ‘*Faith in God, Work & Achieve, Belief in Ourselves and Love for Each Other*’ Sacred Heart Primary is a good Catholic school. It is a busy and welcoming place where children are loved and respected and where, in turn, they show spontaneous and impressive levels of respect and concern for each other. School leaders take great care to preserve, sustain and develop the Catholicity of Sacred Heart and to communicate it to all parents and pupils. Yet this is also a school where differences of faith, first language, ethnic grouping and culture are accepted, appreciated and celebrated with dignity. Teachers and support staff evince a very caring attitude and this contributes to a familial sense of belonging in pupils. Considerable effort has been expended on generating a partnership of trust with parents. One parent praised events like the debut Sacred Heart celebratory dinner for building ‘*a greater sense of community cohesion*’ while another summarised that ethos as ‘*we all care about each other’s children here*’.

Teaching and learning in RE is confident with 71% of the lessons observed being good and there were some instances of outstanding practice. School leaders know well the professional strengths and needs of all staff and can show how these are being deployed and addressed. Integration of the new resource *The Way, the Truth & the Life* (TWTL), and its related assessment tools, is well on its way to targeting and raising pupil attainment consistently so that ‘*Work & Achieve*’ is more visibly applicable to RE as well as to other core subjects. Collective Worship (CW) throughout the school is good and well resourced. It contributes to pupils’ spontaneous use of religious vocabulary, gesture and movement. On a daily basis and in a variety of CW settings, pupils are reminded that, ‘*Individually (they are) unique, and together (they) can be outstanding,*’ because they are, ‘*God’s work of art*’.

The capacity for sustained improvement is secure because of good professional relationships between key personnel and their commitment and dedication to the Catholicity of the school particularly over the last two years. The school has come through

difficult times but the especial combined leadership qualities of the acting headteacher and her deputy, and their ability to lead by example, have ensured that *'faith in God'* and *'self belief'* are still key components of the school's Mission Statement in action.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- (1) Continue to build on the very good impact of the introduction of *The Way, the Truth & the Life* and the *CW Pray Together* resources, and more specifically, to:
 - Ensure that Levels of Attainment in RE are better known to pupils and parents so that pupils are self-motivated to work towards achieving them.
 - Explore opportunities for pupils to engage in planning and leading CW sessions in age-appropriate ways.
- (2) Consider a whole school approach for developing RE pupil workbooks as a special element of potential faith-sharing outreach.

PUPILS

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

2

Significant changes have been made since the last inspection in the way that RE has been planned, resourced and taught. The learning needs of pupils are identified by systematic tracking records and are supported by a team of dedicated teachers and teaching assistants. The quality of pupil response observed in RE lessons and workbooks is convincing and augurs well for continual success. The school can show that recent targeted improvements in reading and writing demonstrated over a short period of time are gradually impacting on measurable progress in RE. This judgement is confirmed by the very obvious progress of new-arrival pupils, especially those with English as a second language. A lively class of Yr2 pupils was enthusiastic to share understanding of 'The Story of Joseph'.

One boy remarked, *"When you are jealous of somebody, it makes you want to do bad things to them."*

They prompted each other spontaneously with key literacy skills to write an interesting account of *'This story from Genesis'*.

In the Yr1 classroom, a group new to spoken English was enabled to sing and enjoy the chorus of the animal song during a lesson on Noah and the Flood, thanks to painstaking effort and planning of the teacher and teaching assistant. School leaders appreciate there is a need for *all* pupils to become more attuned to standardized benchmarks in RE and how to achieve them so that progress is maintained.

Enthusiasm to engage in RE is evident in every year group. RE displays and written work are good and generally consistent with current standards in other core subjects. Each classroom has a dedicated prayer area that is 'used' interactively and reverently by staff and pupils. Pupils' knowledge of scriptural stories, and related key discussions in past lessons, contribute to a growing and mature understanding of what it means to be a witness to Christ. The welcome and respect for families of other faiths is embedded and this is reflected in the variety of responses to the first home-school activity relating to the

Year of Faith. Pupils are at ease when praying and, from an early age, they clearly love to choose which hand and body gesture to use.

School Council (SC) members are good ambassadors for the school. They articulate opinions with confidence, courtesy and humour and are discerning about each other's personal qualities as good and effective SC leaders. Pupils are undoubtedly alert to the needs of others within and beyond the school community and they engage in fund-raising events for many charities and good causes. They are rightly proud of the many out-of-school clubs provided for them and of the annual pilgrimage organised by staff on the feast of the Sacred Heart. There is scope and talent in the present pupil cohort, however, for some imaginative '*pupil-led*' club or project(s) to showcase their independent leadership and learning skills and to begin to work towards an even higher grade for this aspect.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	3
Taking into account:	
• the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
• 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.	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	2

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

2

A range of teaching styles and activities is used to motivate interest, to sustain concentration and to help pupils assimilate new learning in RE. In the best lessons distractions are minimised by good classroom management skills and a focus on the core skills of active listening, thinking and evaluating. For instance, an attempt to generate arresting similes for a flyer to describe what God might be like evoked a long list of ideas amid an impressive hum of work in Yr5. '*God is like chocolate cake split into equal pieces*' it was claimed, or even '*like Spiderman always doing extraordinary things*'.

Similarly, some well-timed and well-managed mini research activities in Yr4 to recall three biblical stories enabled pupils to discuss and reflect on ways in which God still speaks to his people today through sacred scripture. Effective teacher intervention and encouragement throughout a very lively Yr3 drama lesson kept pupils on task to clarify and articulate reasons for each sign and symbol used in Baptism. Faith sharing by staff enriches the impact of teaching and learning in this school. During a Yr6 discussion about the benefit of cultivating a habit of forgiveness at an early age, the teacher explained that *accepting an apology* and *offering forgiveness* can often become much harder precepts to adopt in adult life. RE is materially very well supported especially with the TWTL scheme and a variety of artefacts, seasonal prayer-bags, and on-line resources. Interactive whiteboard technology is used to good effect throughout the school. Possible improvement towards a consistent style, purpose and potential outreach of written feedback in RE workbooks has been discussed with senior leaders.

The school is confident that its current systems for assessment and monitoring of standards in RE are in line with diocesan guidelines and inform planning to meet the needs of all pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and generally inspires and

challenges pupils to work to their potential. Support staff make a significant contribution to the quality of learning. There is, however, a need to ensure that pupils themselves are aware of *Levels of Attainment in RE* (LoAs in RE) so that they can be self-motivated to achieve them just as they are with other core subjects. LoAs in RE should also feature in reports to parents to harness additional support and encouragement at home.

Sacramental preparation for 2012 involved several parishes including the Cathedral during the period of parish re-organisation. First Communicants from Our Lady of Lourdes gave an animated account of their preparation sessions in school, their visits to church to paint a small section of the fresco, and to Hinsley Hall and the Corpus Christi Convent. Collective Worship at Sacred Heart is good because it enriches pupils' understanding and observation of liturgical seasons and feasts and is a key factor in age-appropriate spiritual formation. In class-based and Key Stage CW sessions, individual pupils take turns in leading prayers and scriptural readings or sharing their reflections. They sit and move with reverence; they pray in silence or collectively without distraction and they enjoy singing hymns. During October there was a special school-wide emphasis on the Rosary. On the feast of the Sacred Heart the whole school made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Lourdes Church where Mass was celebrated – followed by a picnic lunch in the hall. The Parish Priest and school staff are ready and eager to re-build regular pastoral links with the newly assigned parish from November and to begin a schedule of class Masses in school.

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.	3
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	2

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

The school's website boasts '*our faith supports everything we do*' and this is reflected in the determination of all staff to work together to overcome an extended period of challenging times. Under the skilful leadership of the acting headteacher and her ability to discern talent and empower others, Sacred Heart Primary is a happy and aspirational Catholic school. Teaching resources for all subjects including RE & CW were replaced and/or renewed to enhance pupils' learning. With IWBs now installed in Nursery & Reception and computers restored to classrooms, there is full access to ICT, IWB and internet from F1 to Yr6 with positive impact on teaching and learning. The revised SRE programme '*In the Beginning...*' is used with parental permission. RE subject leadership became a shared responsibility with the deputy headteacher as part of the plan to develop middle leadership roles within subjects. Inservice training in RE has been focused and appropriate. Shared development activities with partner Catholic schools provides access to speakers of national or regional repute.

An extensive programme of refurbishment and redecoration was completed in the summer 2012. The resultant brightened classrooms, corridors and toilets have an almost tangible impact on self-esteem and confidence. At a CW session in the Nursery the teacher radiated so much joy at interacting with the pupils that one little boy exclaimed, "*Oh you are very special!*"

Reception pupils were adamant that their happy ‘*Good morning Jesus*’ song should not be missed because it reminded them ‘*Jesus is always here*’. In recent months there have been many demands on governor time and expertise in relation to problems of standards, staffing, safeguarding issues and links to pastoral care. Guided by local authority and diocesan advisers, appropriate changes have been effected to ensure that all statutory requirements have been fulfilled. The school is now poised to move forward. Now that Sacred Heart primary is officially assigned to a parish, it would seem appropriate to renew parish priest involvement with the school’s Governing Body as soon as possible either as occasional visitor or associate governor.

Written and verbal parental feedback affirms the positive impact of partnerships with outside groups. Pupil involvement with a local HCPT group and its pilgrimage to Lourdes at Easter 2012 was a particular highlight and their experiences were shared at assembly. Annual fund-raising efforts for CAFOD and Good Shepherd charities encourage solidarity with others who are less fortunate. Community cohesion is instinctive and embedded because of the multi-cultural mix of the school population and the varied opportunities to engage with each other in different age groups or activities, in residential and day trips outside of school, and as ambassadors at special events. The school choir enjoys a special reputation for its performance at the Christmas Religious Unity Service in Leeds.

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.	2
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.	3
How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being.	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	2