

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
BARNOLDSWICK
BB18 5EN

School URN	119685
Chair of Governors	Mr J Bond
Headteacher	Mrs C McDonald
RE Subject Leader	Mrs K Henderson
Date of Inspection	23 rd + 24 th November 2009
Section 48 Inspector	Barbara Ford

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Joseph'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.

Description of the school

St Joseph's is a small, voluntary aided Catholic Primary School on the outskirts of Leeds Diocese serving the two parishes of St Joseph's Barnoldswick and St Patrick's Earby. The school is an active partner in the Pendle Network Learning Community and has many awards, including IIP, Lancashire and National Healthy Schools Status, Learning Excellence Award for Innovative Practice, Active Mark Award 2007/08 2008/09 and FMSiS

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.

St Joseph's is an outstanding Catholic school. Leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school and Religious Education are outstanding. The dedicated, enthusiastic head teacher is supported well by the deputy head and RE coordinator. The development plan for RE clearly identifies strengths and areas for development; the action plan informs the School Development Plan which is clear and focused on continuing to develop the Catholic life of the school, and raise standards in RE.

The school is very well thought of by parents and there is a strong sense of being a home-school-parish community. *'St Joseph's is a family school'*.

The quality of teaching is very good and often outstanding throughout the school. Provision for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Collective Worship at all levels in school encourages children to reflect on their lives and how they can make a difference to the lives of others through their actions and prayer. Behaviour is outstanding, children respect each other, want to help each other and care for each other.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has continued to develop ways of supporting parents on their spiritual journey and further their understanding of the Sacraments and the Catholic faith in the context of their daily lives and developed effective ways to challenge the more able pupils in RE

The capacity to make further improvements

The school's capacity to improve is excellent, because of strong leadership and very good teaching.

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

To improve the Catholic life of the School further the school should:

- Involve all stakeholders in cooperative ways of making the current, very comprehensive school mission statement more accessible to pupils, by choosing a more appropriate biblical quotation, then displaying it on each document, using "child friendly" and "age appropriate" language in each learning space, so it is lived and owned by all.

- Facilitate, with the full co-operation of the staff and governors, the active presence in school of the Parish Priest, using the structured annual plan to consolidate new patterns of Mass, Sacramental preparation, children's liturgy and visits
- Adopt the Diocesan planning format for Collective Worship and seek ways to provide greater opportunity for the pupils to plan and lead liturgy and worship.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

Leaders communicate a strong sense of spiritual purpose, with a focus on promoting high standards and the fullest, personal development of the pupils.

The governing body is closely involved in both parish and school life, commenting "We are doing this job for the children". The buddy system between classes and governors, attendance at school religious celebrations and strong links with the parish, enable the governors to develop their understanding of the Catholic life of the school as a faith community. They are to be commended on their dedication to ensuring all initiatives such as "Safeguarding young people" are implemented and evaluating their internal committee procedures, regularly.

"*The Word was made flesh and lived amongst us.*" quotation is inappropriate for Primary pupils and the recent review of the mission statement by pupils, should be considered by all stakeholders. Morale in the school is very high, with a dedicated team, enthusiastically following the headteacher's example, promoting the spiritual and moral development of all pupils.

Opportunities for the spiritual development and prayer life of the staff, allow for quiet reflection and evaluation helping them to grow spiritually, with the impact seen in the positive ethos promoted in the school.

Excellent links exist with the wider community through the PNLG, ensuring that social cohesion is well-promoted, with arts, music, environmental, academic, and sporting links in the community. The pupils make a positive contribution by designing fundraising activities for The Good Shepherd, the Wheelchair Foundation and CAFOD, who praised St Joseph's as one of two schools in the Leeds Diocese noted for good practice in links with other schools and social cohesion work. The children are delightful and their behaviour is exemplary. At the heart of the positive behaviour policy is Jesus' command: "Love one another as I have loved you."

The excellent confirmation programme led by the Parish Priest, has resolved an anomaly in which pupils move to Fisher More in the Salford Diocese where preparation for confirmation has taken place at feeder primary school. Being on the fringe of the Leeds Diocese is problematic, because local liaison is with Salford Diocesan schools and there are many differences in policy and practice.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The Eucharist is celebrated at appropriate times in the school's year and pupils know its significance in the Catholic life of the school. They have the opportunity to participate in the Eucharist with the parish community and experience Church in a wider sense, during the Advent service. Pupils are involved in Sunday worship, in their own "Children's Liturgy" with dedicated, school and parish catechists.

Home and parish support the sacramental preparation done in School, with close liaison by the Parish Priest in Reconciliation, Eucharist and Y6 Confirmation preparation. He gave a powerful lesson on the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The impact of the structure of collective worship, with prayer and reflection central, is that it creates a positive atmosphere in school, demonstrating a willingness to live in the light of gospel values.

“Follow Jesus’ example. Help the world to join hands, love one-another and live in peace”

A range of strategies, including incisive questioning was used to develop children’s understanding of how the topic of “Friends” is relevant to their lives, and this contributes to excellent spiritual and moral development. Children wrote these prayers:-

Dear Lord, Help us understand that friends are kind and caring ; help us be a good friend to othersBeing friends with Jesus can change our lives.”

Pupils have some opportunities to lead and participate in assemblies and class worship (leavers) but time prevents this from happening very often.

Inclusion is a strength of the school and as with all areas of school life, prayer, Collective Worship and liturgy are fully inclusive. Pupils feel they are part of God’s family at St Joseph’s School.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

Attainment on entry, is broadly in line with national averages across the core subjects except in RE; increasingly in reception, school is introducing a significant number of the pupils to Christianity, other world faiths and belief systems.

Standards and achievement in RE in all classes are high and pupils use their knowledge and skills learned in other subjects to enhance their RE. All pupils are able to make good progress because of differentiated tasks, targeted support and a modified curriculum.

The school is embedding the pupil tracking, and monitoring and evaluation systems in RE, in order to maximise the progress and attainment of individuals and groups of pupils.

The commitment to improve the written content of RE work and to extend the more able child has resulted in a rise in standards in RE to good by the end of KS1, which is sustained throughout KS2. The creative use of interactive white boards and the high level of ICT skills demonstrated by teachers, captivate pupils’ interests and support a positive attitude to learning. Children enjoy RE and say they like the opportunity to do role play and art in RE. All children remain on task, work hard and co-operate well in pairs or small groups. Children, with learning difficulties and disabilities, are assisted by caring support staff.

Children demonstrated very good understanding of the RE topic “Friends”. A young child (using the knowledge and skills gained over a period of time) said *“Jesus is all around us. He cares for us. We think about Him, go to church to worship Him, and never be mean”*

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

The teachers’ excellent subject knowledge and commitment to teaching the Faith lends confidence to their teaching styles.

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, and often outstanding. Teachers use a range of strategies, including role play, hot seating, posters, plays and discussions. This approach

to teaching, (using Assessment for Learning procedures, effectively to focus learning on key objectives), engages pupils, offering a rich curriculum and ensuring pupils enjoy and achieve. High expectations with effective use of open ended and probing questioning ensures that the pace of lessons is brisk and pupils are on track.

Teachers encourage the development of the skills and confidence needed for independent learning.

Children in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 demonstrate good listening skills, enjoyment and concentration when working on individual and group tasks.

“When water was blessing me, I was crying, because it was cold. I heard Father say “I baptise you, in the name of the Father.....”

KS2 pupils were actively engaged, producing very high standards of work as a result of focused teaching based on learning outcomes. Pupils are articulate and confident, making very good use of literacy skills in Religious Education tasks.

Commenting on the qualities of the Early Christians a pupil wrote *“We share the gift of Forgiveness. God forgives us in the sacrament of Reconciliation. We forgive people all the time”* Good use is made of teaching assistants to ensure support is given to those less able, ensuring all pupils maintain a positive attitude and achieve success during lessons.

Comments in pupils’ books are encouraging and very positive. In many classes, effective marking offers suggestions to further challenge pupils and points to the next step in learning; further development of this aspect of marking should be encouraged in order to raise standards further. Throughout all Key Stages, pupils speak enthusiastically about Religious Education and feel that lessons are informative and enjoyable. Their work and conversation displays a high level of understanding and knowledge about the taught RE curriculum and this is visibly reflected in the strong inter-play of relationships both in class and during break times, with the Pupil Playleaders. Many opportunities, both formally and informally, are available for parents to meet with teachers. Parents are very positive and supportive of the school (*generations have come through this school*) and feel well informed about activities in school. The strong home-school-parish links make an invaluable contribution to extending pupils’ learning in Religious Education

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

St Joseph’s provides an outstanding curriculum, which meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. The school is successful and proactive in evaluating the curriculum provision against the needs of the pupils and has introduced a number of initiatives to broaden the scope and depth of the programme. A whole school approach is used and appropriate levels of the “Here I Am” scheme are in place in each classroom. 10% of total curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets diocesan and national requirements.

The school spends a significant amount of time, ensuring the children understand the ethos of the school and how they should value each other as God’s children and be respectful of different beliefs, cultures and social backgrounds.

Leaders and managers work with the Pendle Network Learning Community to ensure that pupils are given opportunities to enter into dialogue and collaborate with people from different backgrounds. Year 5 were involved in a multi-cultural week within the network, focussing on Sikhism. KS2 went to visit a mosque within the cycle of HIA; and “Building Bridges” all help pupils to gain a sound knowledge of, and develop an understanding of the teachings, beliefs, values and way of life of other world faiths. There are international links with Kenya, Mozambique and Australia and leaders are developing strategies to further improve global awareness, including issues of fair-trade and climate change.

Pupils are encouraged to investigate, reflect, and develop appropriate skills and attitudes to respond to God's call in everyday life.

They enjoy participating in the Pendle Festival, in the choir, French play, wind ensemble, etc and in the community, making cards for the Luncheon Club and supporting the parish charity shop. Full advantage is taken of opportunities to develop pupils' skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening, and to develop creative skills using ICT, in RE.

Pupils are quick to show concern for the well-being of each other, especially the weak and vulnerable. (Fundraising for the Wheelchair Foundation) They demonstrate a lively awareness that they are members of one human family responsible for one another.

The programme for family life, sex education and education in personal relationships is appropriate.

St Joseph's prides itself on being an inclusive school ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all pupils and is a community where individual faith and background is valued and respected. The SCARF project with Burnley Football club (stamp out racism in football) had a big impact on older pupils.

Curriculum provision makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. This is supported by strong links with parents, parish and wider community. and the school council are great ambassadors for St Joseph's at the Pendle conference.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

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

The enthusiastic RE coordinator communicates a strong sense of spiritual purpose to teachers and pupils alike, with a focus on promoting high standards, improving the quality of religious education and nurturing the faith development of the pupils. She supports colleagues, and she and the headteacher, monitor the quality of teaching and learning and standards in RE and have identified the future needs of RE by analysis of the assessment data; findings of work scrutiny; lesson observations and feedback from the children and staff. They realise the need to complete more than one year's cycle of the newly introduced levels of attainment and tracking system, to fully assess progress and address effectively any individuals or groups that may cause concern. Development needs are accurately identified and tackled energetically.

Although resources for RE are good, the school still need to order "The Church's Story" The inclusion of all pupils is a central goal based on its belief that all are created in the image of God, and this is very effectively promoted.

The Parish Priest is a key member of the team, as the governor responsible for RE and Catholic Life of the school. Governors share in the review and revision of the action plan and contribute to the discussions about it. They have not yet been involved in evaluation the new tracking of progress in RE.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

ASPECT	GRADE	DESCRIPTOR
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	1	Outstanding
THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL		
How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	1	Outstanding
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	2	Good
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION		
How well do pupils achieve in RE?	1	Outstanding
How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?	1	Outstanding
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?	1	Outstanding
How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?	1	Outstanding