

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

**CANON LAW 806
FINAL INSPECTION REPORT
INCORPORATING
SECTION 48**

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
FINKIL STREET, BRIGHOUSE. HD6 2NT

School URN

107559

Date of Inspection and OE
grade

9th and 10th February 2017 -
Outstanding (1)

E-mail address

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Chair of Governors

Ian Goulding

Headteacher

Mary Hodges

RE Subject Leader

Catherine Foxcroft

Date and grade of last S48
inspection

14th-15th March 2012 - Good (2)

Section 48 Inspector/s

Alan Dewhurst

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: how effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:

- *Outcomes for pupils,*
- *The provision for Catholic Education*
- *Leaders and Managers*

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

1

THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

Summary of key findings:

This is an outstanding Catholic School.

- The inspirational head teacher, supported by a dedicated staff and committed governing body, has ensured that St Joseph's is a vibrant, welcoming and inclusive Catholic community that meets the needs of its pupils in an outstanding manner.
- The school mission statement can be seen in clear evidence in the daily life of the school, and is perfectly reflected in the school's motto: 'Love, Learn and Live in Christ'.
- Pupils are extremely polite and helpful and exhibit excellent behaviour. They contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school in exemplary manner. A pupil's comment – "We're like one big family" – sums up the positive atmosphere in the school where caring for each other, forgiveness and living like Jesus are central to daily life.
- The leadership of Religious Education (RE) is very effective. The RE subject leader, supported within the Senior Leadership Team, is knowledgeable and experienced. She ensures that all teachers have appropriate support and good advice in carrying out their roles.
- Much of the teaching in RE is outstanding, and the remainder is consistently good. Children are immersed in the values of the school from the moment they enter nursery or Reception, and their understanding is developed creatively and progressively as they move through the school.
- Standards in RE are very high by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are able to consider religious issues on a deep level, and apply moral and spiritual values to current situations.
- Parents recognise the quality of RE that is offered to their children. "My son's understanding of faith is remarkable" was a typical comment.
- The school's RE curriculum is carefully planned and thoughtfully delivered. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard to provide pupils with a rich diet of experiences and

learning activities. Because of this, pupils express their enjoyment of RE forcefully and enthusiastically.

- Collective Worship (CW) is an outstanding and central part of the Catholic character of the school. Pupils are imbued with a communal sense of the importance of prayer in their lives. They love gathering together as a community, but are also keen to take advantage of the opportunities for personal prayer on offer.
- The school extends its role as a worshipping community into the parish and into family homes. The interweaving of the school with the parish and parishioners can be seen in the links that exist in supporting sacramental preparation, in the development of liturgy and in the participation in Masses in school and church. 'Worship bags' have successfully helped families to pray together at home throughout the year.
- The school fulfils all of its canonical and statutory duties, including dedicating 10% of curriculum time to RE. It has taken appropriate steps to address the recommendations of the previous Section 48 inspection report.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- Further raise the standards of teaching and learning throughout the school by sharing existing outstanding practice. Ensure that innovative and challenging approaches are used consistently, and that pupils' independence in recording their learning is encouraged so that they can fully demonstrate the range of their achievements.
- Build pupils' confidence and skill in planning and leading CW through extending the range of structured resources available to them, thereby helping them to deepen their own prayer life and that of their peers.
- Extend the current links with other Catholic schools to involve all teachers in sharing outstanding practice and gaining fresh insights into their teaching of RE, the assessment of pupils' progress and the development of classroom worship.

Information about this inspection

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 Diocesan Administrator 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 2012).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- The extent to which any key issues for action identified in the previous Section 48 RE Inspection have been addressed;
- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school;
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE;
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's CW;
- The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in RE;
- The extent to which the RE Curriculum promotes pupils' learning;
- The quality of CW;
- How well leaders, governors and managers promote and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education, and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one and a half days.

- During the inspection 5 RE lessons were observed, 3 acts of CW and an informal recital by the school choir.
- Formal meetings took place with the Head, RE Co-ordinator, Designated Leads for Safeguarding, the Chair of Governors, two groups of pupils and a group of parents.
- Informal discussions were held with a wide range of pupils and other employees in the school. Documentation was viewed and a selection of pupils' workbooks was scrutinised.

Information about this school

- St. Joseph's is a one form entry Catholic primary school. It serves the parish of St. Joseph's in Brighouse and educates children from 3-11years.
- There are currently 67% of Catholic pupils attending the school which is a feeder school for All Saints' Catholic High School in Huddersfield, although pupils also transfer to other neighbouring schools
- The school has an equal amount of girls and boys.
- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average as is the percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- The number of pupils with a special educational need is below the national average while the number of pupils with a Statement of Need or EHC Plan is above.
- There are 7 full time and 4 part time teachers, 7 of whom hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. St Joseph's also employs a Catholic Care worker to meet the needs of families in the school.
- St Joseph's has achieved the 'Primary Quality Mark', 'Fair Trade Schools Award' and 'Healthy Schools' status.
- It has recognition certificates from 'Yorkshire in Bloom' which were awarded for the flower gardens and also for the vegetables and fruit grown in school.
- The school choir and sports teams have won many awards.
- The school has a wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Full report - inspection judgements

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are outstanding.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1

- Pupils' contribution to the Catholic life of St Joseph's is outstanding and they benefit greatly from all that is on offer.
- They are welcoming, polite, confident and open. They are keen to talk about the opportunities that the school provides for them.
- They enjoy the togetherness that they feel in their school community. They are committed to looking after each other and to celebrating each other's achievements.
- They particularly gain benefit from their involvement in the school's varied acts of worship, in the classroom, in the school hall and in the parish church.

- Pupils play a full part in supporting charities, local and national. They acknowledge that others are in need, and that their Christian duty is to offer help. For instance, the school has built a 'virtual village' from their many gifts to CAFOD, such as buying a donkey, sending a child to school, helping to begin a business and creating a water well. The display in the hall depicts the many examples of the school's generosity.
- Other charity support has been given to MacMillan Cancer, the NSPCC, Catholic Care, and schools in Calderdale damaged by floods.
- Pupils take responsibility willingly, for example, as playground leaders, Year 6 buddies for Reception children or as members of the worship team.
- Pupils have contributed to evaluating the Catholic Life through questionnaires and focus meetings with staff. They use the suggestion box to recommend improvements, such as asking the parish priest to "come in and talk about the vestments he wears." The Junior Leadership Team (JLT) helps to put suggestions into action.
- They acknowledge how the church's values have impacted on their wellbeing: "We're like one big family" said one pupil.
- All children consulted expressed their enjoyment of RE, and were very keen to talk about their lessons. They understood very well what they were meant to be learning, and how it was relevant to their lives.
- Pupils begin to understand the importance of God's presence in their lives from their first days in nursery, and readily adopt the gospel values that they are taught.
- They acquire knowledge throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 through a range of learning activities that engage and enthuse them. Pupils then build on this understanding of key concepts to consider challenging issues relevant to their faith in the modern world.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, standards pupils achieve in RE are very high, showing an ability to consider issues at a deep level. They acknowledge how much progress they are making and how their teachers are guiding them: "From last year I've definitely progressed, my understanding has really increased" and "I'm getting more confident each week, with the teacher's help," were typical comments.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They focus readily and for a sustained period, they co-operate very well with each other and have a drive to engage with and pursue a task to its conclusion. Examples seen during the inspection included children organising themselves efficiently in groups to act out the story of the Prodigal son; an older group used ipads to promote the 'Our Father' prayer, including going into the kitchen to knead dough as they recited "give us this day our daily bread"; and another group maturely considered the plight of refugees refused entry to another country.
- Children's response to CW is profound and whole-hearted. In nursery, they begin to understand very quickly that prayer is talking to God, and that it is a very special time for the class when they gather together.
- From the moment pupils in Reception take their special stone, with the help of their Year 6 'buddy', and place it in the heart-shaped basket that represents the whole school community, to the time when they remove their stone as they leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2, they know that they "belong in the family of the school, the parish and God's family".
- Pupils approach worship eagerly, knowing that it can be joyful, as in the singing – "this is the best part of it; everyone's really happy" – and that it is a time for reflection and peace – "everyone's quiet, and thinking of things".
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship in the classroom from the earliest age. They are given good guidance and enjoy the responsibility of participating in a particular manner, such as reading or choosing the religious objects to place on a prayer table. As they move through the school, they become more aware of how to choose passages from the scriptures to highlight a theme.

- All pupils are very reverent during moments of prayer, with eyes closed and hands joined when reflection time is offered.
- Pupils particularly enjoy and benefit from the ‘worship bags’ that are prepared for them to take home to share with their families throughout the year to mark important times in the church’s liturgical calendar. They take pride in leading their family in prayer, and parents are grateful for the spiritual help this gives: “I learn from them” said one parent, and another talked of the comfort it brought during a time of loss.

The provision for Catholic Education is outstanding.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils’ learning.	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

- Much of the teaching of RE is outstanding and the remainder is never less than consistently good.
- The majority of teachers have excellent subject knowledge and they use this to ensure that pupils are challenged and engaged at a level appropriate to their age and learning potential, so that they make excellent progress.
- Where teaching is strongest, a wide variety of approach is used, so that pupils have the opportunity to learn, utilising all their senses and several sources, so that understanding is reinforced and embedded. There is much innovation in the delivery of lessons, challenging pupils to think deeply and apply their learning to their own situations, appropriate to their age.
- Reception children, for instance, were observed being able to experience the wedding feast of Cana through a teacher’s acting out of the story, and their own role play in costume, while also getting the chance to retell the story in writing and create a wedding invitation card.
- Key Stage 1 pupils have considered the story of Noah and the problem of the building of the ark through searching for wood in the school grounds; while others have acted out the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, and have interviewed the parish priest about the mystery of the Trinity.
- Key Stage 2 pupils have explored the parables of Jesus, and considered how each applies to their own lives. The story of the sower prompted one pupil to write, “It teaches me to be kind and to think what kind of seed I am.” Other pupils took on the role of Pope Francis in writing a letter to those wavering in their faith: “Have you listened to God? Have you helped someone in need? Go and spread justice and peace.”
- Teaching assistants are used effectively within lessons to support the vulnerable or less able children.
- In a few instances, opportunities to record the range of pupils’ learning are missed. An over-reliance on written responses in a narrow format denies the pupils the chance to independently present their learning.
- The interweaving of the school’s provision for worship, RE programme and its guidance for personal development (as seen in the weekly use of the ‘Ethos Statements’) has been skilfully devised to ensure that the pupils are immersed in their learning in a way that is being constantly revisited throughout the week. “RE is not a stand-alone subject” as one parent wrote.
- The school leadership have worked hard to ensure that the RE curriculum challenges children and helps them to aspire to achieve. Central within this has been the strategy

to use the 'I Can' statements as the basis for teaching the themes within the scheme 'The Way, The Truth and The Life'.

- This has helped teaching to be very focussed on pupils' achievement, as could be seen in the learning objectives within each pupil workbook.
- The school's marking policy is also helping to raise standards, with pupils' understanding of a lesson highlighted clearly, and further challenge provided through a carefully worded question by the teacher, requiring and eliciting a response from the pupil.
- The quality of CW is outstanding. Its impact on pupils and their families is evident in the comments that they make. Prayer is central to the life of the school.
- Acts of worship are planned carefully to link seamlessly to the themes of the RE curriculum and the church's liturgical cycle.
- The Ethos statements, introduced each week at a whole-school liturgy, are effectively developed in class, with pupils given the opportunity to reflect on how they can be put into action. This includes the use of an impressive reflection book for each pupil in Key Stage 2.
- Masses and other liturgies attract support from parents, grandparents and other parishioners. The school ensures that it is seen as an active part of the parish community through involvement in parish Masses on a regular basis.
- The school choir promotes the Catholic life and worship within the parish and local community very effectively. For instance, parishioners were taught the music settings for the parts of the Mass, and these are now used consistently in school and parish; and visits have been made to Halifax hospital maternity wing and the SVP party for the housebound.
- Pupils are encouraged to express themselves individually in prayer, such as in the class prayer book or by using the prayer jar in the hall. They make full use of these opportunities.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the church's liturgical year. An outstanding example of provision is the organisation of 'worship bags' that are brought home by pupils to share with members of their families each half-term. These inspirationally develop worship at home, in preparation for Advent or Lent for example, or to celebrate May devotion to Mary and October devotion to the rosary.
- Liturgical formation is well planned, including comprehensive preparation for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. The development of pupils' own planning and leadership of liturgy is good, although there is scope for pupils to become more skilled in the range of prayer and ritual that can be used.

The Leadership and Management are outstanding.

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
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- Leaders and governors have an outstanding commitment to the Church's mission in Catholic Education. They ensure that the Catholic mission of the school is its highest priority.
- The headteacher is inspirational in her leadership of the school. She leads by example and ensures that all members of the community feel welcome, involved and valued. Parents remarked about her unstinting enthusiasm and her consistent exhortations to the pupils to strive for the best.

- The subject leader for RE has a high level of expertise and is very effective in her role. She monitors standards rigorously, tracking pupils' progress, scrutinising their workbooks and interviewing them in order to gain a clear picture of the efficacy of teaching. Appropriate feedback and developmental advice is shared regularly with teachers.
- The governing body has a link governor for RE and the Catholic Life who is in regular discussion with the head teacher and RE subject leader. Governors are fully involved in strategic planning, and are able to pose searching questions and seek more information when the RE action plan is presented to them and reviewed by the head teacher and RE subject leader.
- The school's self-evaluation cycle is well established. As a result of comprehensive monitoring, with the close involvement of the senior leadership team and in consultation with staff and pupils, planning is amended in order to bring about significant improvements.
- The parish priest is a frequent visitor to the school, and is extremely supportive, working closely with the leadership to help them deliver high quality CW and curricular RE. Recently, he has made himself available to be interviewed by a number of classes on topics such as the Trinity and Vocation.
- RE and CW have a profound impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils. The school's outreach to others within the school and parish community as well as on a local, national and international level helps children significantly in developing their own view of 'loving their neighbour'.
- The charity involvement referred to earlier is also supplemented by examples such as the welcoming of a new born baby with gifts at the maternity unit on the school's feast day; and the collection of food parcels and baby clothes for distribution locally.
- RE is well resourced. An annual budget supports liturgically seasonal resources, such as Advent wreaths and Christingles, and each class has access to bibles, *God's Story* and other religious books, as well as a worship box. Needs identified in the action plan are also financed appropriately.
- The school recognises the special role of staff and governors in developing this Catholic community in a special 'commissioning' Mass at the beginning of each year. A new member of staff remarked on how welcomed this made them feel.
- The school has developed a variety of effective partnerships. The head teacher is active in the Calderdale Catholic Heads cluster, and has taken part in monitoring visits to other Catholic schools, as well as welcoming head teachers to St Joseph's. Relationships with other local schools are also well developed.
- Partnership with parents has been very effectively developed. Many remarked on how welcoming and approachable the school leadership and staff are, and on the quality of information that they receive.
- The school ensures that 10% of curriculum time is devoted to RE teaching.
- All canonical and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.