

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
HEALDS ROAD, DEWSBURY, WF13 4HY

School URN	107733
School DfE Number	382/3310
E-mail address	head.stjosephsdews@edukirklees.net
Chair of Governors	Leigh Manton
Headteacher	Maureen Fletcher
RE Subject Leader	Kimberley O'Connor
Date of Inspection	1 st & 2 nd November 2011
Section 48 Inspector	Mark Brennan

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School was carried out by one inspector over a period of approximately 1½ days 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 which is sent to the inspector along with a variety of other documentation prior to the visit. The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

The inspector visited each class group to observe either Religious Education teaching or Collective Worship. Meetings were held with the Headteacher, RE Subject Leader, Staff, Parish Priest, Chair of Governors, Pupil Council and a group of parents. The inspector examined school documentation including the RE subject leader's file, children's exercise books, planning and assessment files, monitoring and evaluation records, meeting minutes, questionnaires, school improvement plans and conducted an assessment of the physical learning environment etc., He also joined the pupils and staff in the celebration of Mass on the Feast of All Saints.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's Catholic Primary is a one-form entry voluntary aided school serving the parish of St Joseph's Dewsbury. The school is popular, enjoying a good reputation locally. It is oversubscribed and full.

The school serves the parish of St Joseph's, Batley Carr and has a wide catchment area which covers seven council wards in the Kirklees area, with the majority of pupils coming from Dewsbury West, Batley West and Batley East. It serves a mixed area of housing, including council built and private housing with a significant number of families renting from private landlords.

There have been significant changes to the intake of the school in recent years and the proportion of Catholics is presently at around 70%. A small number of these Catholic pupils have Polish or Filipino backgrounds. Approximately 20% of the pupils are from non-Christian backgrounds. The overwhelming majority of these pupils are Muslims.

The school is proud of its motto: 'Love – Peace – Respect' which all adults and children try to live by.

The school is popular locally and enjoys a good reputation. Parents speak highly of the school and its ability to provide their children with an education based on gospel values. The school actively participates in a variety of activities, partnerships and organisations within the local and wider community.

There have been some significant changes in staff in the last year or so, effectively amounting to a turnover of nearly half the teachers. This period has also seen the appointment of new Key Stage Leaders and a new RE Coordinator, who only started her role in September 2011. The new Chair of Governors officially commenced his role in October 2011.

The school has had substantial building work undertaken in the last few years, something which has particularly impacted positively on the provision made for Reception children. There have also been important improvements to the school's ICT provision.

Most of the Catholic children leaving St Joseph's will move to St John Fisher High School with which it has close links.

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

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School provides a consistently good Catholic education for the community it serves. The parents believe it is a good school where children are safe and happy, where they reach their potential and where they learn about how much God loves them. The school has a good leadership team in place and with the continued support and encouragement of the governors and parents it has a good capacity to achieve further improvement in the future.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Continue to improve teaching strategies to extend attainment in RE at the end of KS2 so that more pupils are reaching Level 4.
- Increase the participation and engagement of parents and parishioners in the Faith Life of the school, including developing further strategies to include their views on current and future school provision.
- To add a new Global Dimension to the Curriculum by developing the emerging links and partnerships already in place
- Extend the spiritual life of pupils further by organising an annual Retreat Experience for Year 6.
- Evaluate current SRE provision and in consultation with all stakeholders implement any new ideas, policies and procedures.

PUPILS

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

2

Outcomes for pupils at St Joseph's are good. Most children make at least good progress in Religious Education. The inspector observed some outstanding practice in lessons observed, particularly when children enter the school and as they near the end. There was no inadequate teaching observed. Attainment at the end of KS2 is broadly in line with the national average. The school is working hard to ensure that the new RE scheme 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' (WTL), introduced in January 2011 becomes more embedded, so that increasing numbers of pupils will be able to achieve higher levels of attainment at the end of KS2. The hard work that has been carried out by the newly appointed RE Leader and the Headteacher on this objective is already showing a positive impact in the discussions and debates children have with their teachers. Highlights observed by the inspector were when in a Year 2 class a child commented that he thought his mum, dad and all his friends and family would be with him in Heaven and in a Year 5 class, where the children were very quickly able to recall as many as ten different Christian religious symbols during a very active 'search and find' activity. In Year 6, whilst learning about Buddhism, one boy wondered how a belief in reincarnation might impact on a person who came back as a Christian or a Muslim in the next life.

The monitoring of pupil progress in RE has been significantly improved in the last year, with systems having been established which put the subject on an equal footing with Numeracy and Literacy. Good assessment and evaluation practices are being well embedded. They are increasingly being used to drive planning forward and to improve standards. Substantial expenditure has taken place in the last year and the impact of the additional resources is very obvious. The leadership team should be congratulated for the financial investment made in RE and Faith Life.

The overwhelming majority of pupils demonstrate very good attitudes towards their RE learning. All the children the inspector spoke to said they liked their RE lessons. As they grow older, pupils increasingly learn how to concentrate for more extended periods of time. They are keen to participate in the learning activities and in more successful lessons they are engaged in very practical and creative tasks such as playing in an area of a classroom made to look like Heaven, or making miniature people for a display or engaging in a heated debate about whether Christians should be soldiers. Children are increasingly aware of their own learning and they are beginning to be able to identify for themselves how they can improve.

At the time of the inspection the whole school was involved in an Inter-Faith Week. Most year groups were going to be visiting a place of worship or a cultural centre or museum. RE lessons at the school focused on key aspects of belief in the major world religions. Children across the school demonstrated good understanding of the faith lives and cultures of others. They showed respect for the different beliefs and the people who practice them.

Children with additional educational needs are given appropriate support by the well qualified teaching assistants and teachers, some of whom have had specialist training in, for example dyslexia. At lunchtimes, the supervisory staff engage in a friendly and positive manner with the pupils and their care and expertise helps to ensure that the pupils enjoy

their lunchtimes and are ready to go back into school in the afternoons in a relaxed, calm and positive a frame of mind. As a result of this expertise these pupils are able to engage successfully in lessons and to achieve at least in line with SEN pupils nationally.

Pupils take on responsibilities very enthusiastically and confidently. Older children help to supervise younger pupils during playtimes, lunchtimes etc. Older pupils also take on responsibilities such as choosing entry and exit music or operating the OHP in assemblies and Collective Worship. The House Reward System works very efficiently and helps to bring younger and older children together for a common purpose. The inspector enjoyed speaking to various individuals and small groups of older children in unplanned encounters on corridors and at lunchtime. These conversations were mostly with children who were happy, confident, eloquent, knowledgeable and very polite. Pupils on the School Council say that bullying is extremely rare, but when it does occur the problem is always sorted out quickly.

Parents, who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, say that the children are respectful, well behaved and very happy at St Joseph's. One parent said that her child is always, "Desperate to get back to school after the holidays because she loves it so much." Parents say they feel welcome in the school and are always received warmly by staff. They are pleased with the improvements made to the fabric of the building in recent years. One issue mentioned, which is an action point for the governors already, was the need for boundary fencing to be upgraded.

Children are used to the expression of their spirituality and the inspector observed that they were generally reflective, reverent and respectful during times of prayer and worship. This is especially evident when teachers and adults are confident in doing the same, for example: by sharing personal experiences, thoughts and feelings with their pupils. One teacher told the children that they chose to become a teacher to help others learn. Another was able to share her emotions about the death of her grandma and the birth of her sister's child.

Display around the school is good. All classes have prayer corners/focal points and children's work features prominently. Correct liturgical colours are evident throughout the school to help children understand the changing seasons of the Church calendar. St Joseph features prominently within the environment, in the form of pictures, statues and even songs. Many displays around the school demonstrate very tangibly the caring approach evident throughout the school. 'Stars of the Week' are chosen for being polite, kind or hard working or because they have acted like a Good Shepherd. In the Reception classroom a WOW display encourages children to share their achievements from home with their teacher and peers.

The First Sacraments programme is based in the parish but is supported by work done in school within the RE scheme. Parents of children on the programme are expected to attend Mass regularly with their children.

The RE Coordinator is an exemplar of good practice despite being very new to the role at St Joseph's. Liturgies are well planned, monitored and recorded. Staff and governors pray together whenever they meet and voluntary opportunities for prayer are enthusiastically attended by staff and some pupils during important times of the year, such as Lent and Advent. Liturgies in school are generally open to parents to attend but sometimes the response is a little disappointing. The school might usefully evaluate this issue and try to determine why this is.

Pupils also enjoy whole school liturgies and Masses at the beginning and end of term and for important liturgical events or special school celebrations. They also enjoy smaller Class Masses within their own peer groups. Children are active participants in Collective worship. They sing, read out loud, play instruments, clap hands, create displays or focal points with adult guidance and make puppets to illustrate stories. Pupil behaviour and attitude in Collective Worship is good. An area for development within older classes would be to get pupils to plan collective worships with less adult involvement. The school has identified this objective themselves and there is already an action plan in place to achieve it.

Children are taught to empathise with each other’s needs and emotions. They know what is right and wrong and try to follow the school motto of Love – Peace – Respect at all times. The school community is very generous towards those people less fortunate. In the last year they have raised over £1,800 supporting local and national charities such as CAFOD, SHAP, Catholic Care, Mission Together, Children in Need and Oxfam.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
• the quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
• 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

Teaching standards in RE at St Joseph’s are good overall. The inspector observed a small amount of satisfactory teaching and also some outstanding practice towards the end of KS2 and in Reception. There was no inadequate teaching.

As a result of good assessment and monitoring procedures teachers and other adults plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. Much of the improved provision has come about in the last year or so, and the newly appointed RE Leader has had a significant impact throughout the school. Other staff members appreciate the work she has done and the new ideas she has brought from her previous school.

Resources for the teaching of RE and for supporting the Faith Life of the school are very good. Support staff, 4 of whom are Higher Level Teaching Assistants, work closely and effectively alongside teachers to enable pupils to achieve their best. The best results happen when these adults actively engage in the lessons and spot where disruption or the need for encouragement is likely to occur, before it arrives. The Catholic Care Worker

who is employed by the school for a half day once a week makes a very important difference to the pastoral and welfare support the school is able to provide.

The introduction of WTL is having a positive and tangible impact on the school and the experience of the pupils. Children are also benefiting from the extensive continuing professional development (CPD) that has taken place into children's preferred learning styles and good 'Assessment for Learning' practice. The use of ICT to support learning in RE is a developing area, but is again something the school seems to have invested in during the last year or so and it is making a positive difference to the experiences of children. Pupils in some classes are aware of the next steps they need to take to improve their RE understanding. In others there is still some more work to do on embedding this policy.

The caretaker and his staff are dedicated to the important task of looking after the building and keeping it clean for children and adults to work in. Minor repairs, maintenance and redecoration are carried out by him and the head teacher and governors are grateful for his hard work and dedication to the school.

Extra-curricular provision is impressive at St Joseph's. Paid and volunteer adults run a huge variety of clubs after school and during lunchtimes. Parents appreciate these clubs very much. Older pupils even get involved and enthusiastically lead clubs as diverse as an Art Club and a Card Collecting Club. Adults also provide gymnastics, cheerleading, Tai Kwando, Yoga, Let's Get Cooking and gardening clubs, to mention just a few.

The school has a very confident number of singers, something which was especially noticeable in the older boys. There is a boys and girls choir who have sung at Diocesan level. Children can learn musical instruments; recorder, cello, violin, keyboards and guitar. In fact all Y4 and Y5 learn the guitar as the result of 'Wider Opportunities' funding being extended and funded by the Governing Body (GB) into the second academic year.

The school provides a wide variety of interesting and exciting additional opportunities to children as they go through the school. There are strong links and partnerships with other schools, organisations, providers and institutions. Theatre groups, trips out, residential visits (in Y5 and Y6), instrumental tuition, sport, drama and lots of outside visitors give the curriculum an extra buzz which enhances the learning, engagement and impact of school life on pupils of all ages.

The school is exploring the possibility of having a Retreat Day for Year 6 pupils in the Summer term. The inspector believes this to be a very worthwhile objective, which would help to cement the good foundations already laid by the school in previous year groups.

The school has some provision in place for educating pupils in personal relationships and puberty (EPR / SRE). However, the governors, staff and parents could usefully spend some time reviewing this provision so that they can be certain it meets the needs of the current pupil population and the pupils of the future.

The school is very much engaged in caring for the needs of children elsewhere in the world, especially through CAFOD fundraising activities. The next step is to try and form some direct global contacts/links so as to help pupils see how their lives are both different and very similar to those of others around the world, and so that these similarities and differences can forge new learning opportunities.

Pupils of faiths other than Christian are welcomed warmly into the school community and the contributions they make towards the life of the school are highly valued. Their needs are provided for wherever practical, and parents feel the school is extremely good at celebrating and enjoying its diverse community mix. In Collective Worship these children do not feel excluded and all pupils show sensitive respect and genuine interest in each others beliefs.

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.	2
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 governors and head teacher are providing a good quality of Catholic life provision at St Joseph's. The head teacher in particular is very well thought of by parents, staff and pupils.

One parent was particularly keen to praise her for her visibility and for the stability, clear direction and vision she has shown in the three years she has been at the school. She is clearly dedicated to the school and to the well being of the pupils, as well as the staff, parents and wider community. She has played a pivotal role in leading the school through the very positive changes that have been made in recent years to move the school on. In partnership with her senior leadership team she has all the skills and experience in place to continue to do this in the future.

The Parish Priest is a central figure on the governing body but is also often in school and is much loved by the staff, parents and pupils for his approachability and active support for the school community. He works closely with the headteacher and RE leader to ensure RE and Faith Life are at the top of the school's agenda at all times.

The leadership group knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school and it is in the inspectors view accurate in its self-evaluation judgements.

The headteacher, supported by the SLT and RE Leader have established a good level of systematic monitoring relating to provision. The school also has good systems in place for the identification of weaknesses and the construction of effective action plans. The governors are extremely supportive of the school and the Chair of Governors, who is new to this role, but not a new governor has already made a good start in his work with the other governors and the headteacher. The governors might move their role forward usefully by visiting the school a little more frequently and finding more effective ways to

seek and act on the views of parents. They already have a plan in place to do both these things.

The governing body fulfils all its canonical responsibilities.

Whilst St Joseph's is without doubt and very obviously and proudly a Catholic school within the Diocese of Leeds, it is also managing to provide a common sense of belonging for all its pupils and families. This is a school that respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all.

St Joseph's Catholic Primary is a good place for children to learn. The school provides it's pupils with the skills they will need in life to give actively to their community and to be positive members of society whilst also knowing that they are individually very precious in God's eyes and that He loves them very much.

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.	2
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