

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Coppice Rise
Harrogate
HG1 2DP

School URN

121643

Chair of Governors

Miss Patsy Rochester

Headteacher

Mrs Julie Muddiman

RE Subject Leader

Mrs Helen Fletcher

Date of Inspection

2nd & 3rd February 2010

Section 48 Inspector

Mrs Christine Rothwell

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 Catholic Primary School is a popular, smaller than average school on the outskirts of Harrogate and serves the parish of St Joseph's. There are 186 pupils on roll of whom 86% are Catholic. St Joseph's has increased rapidly in size over the last three years from 169 to its present number on roll. Most pupils transfer to St. John Fisher Catholic High School in Harrogate. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below national average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities with only one pupil having a statement of educational need. There is a very small minority of EAL pupils. There are 8.8 (fte) teachers, 5.8 (fte) of whom are Catholic, in the school of whom three hold CCRS or an equivalent qualification.

The school has benefited from a number of improvements over the last three years including provision of an enclosed outdoor area for both the Foundation Stage and Year 1, upgrade of doors, windows and toilet provision for the majority of the school, partial rewiring, new lighting and updating of ICT hardware and software, a hygiene suite and facilities for children and adults with disabilities including ramp access to all areas of the school.

The school holds the Investors in Pupils award, the Inclusion Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools award and the Sports Mark.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

The overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic life of the school and RE, and the school's main strengths and areas for development.

The quality of Catholic Education at St Joseph's is outstanding in almost every aspect of school life. The leadership of the school by the headteacher and those with leadership responsibility is exemplary and the impact is found in the strong sense of mission within the school community. Governance of the school is good but there are some areas which, though minor, if addressed would further increase effectiveness. Following a period of constantly exceeding targets the provision for prayer and worship in the school is now outstanding as is the teaching and learning of RE. Leadership of Religious Education is inspiring, sets clear direction and supports all who work in the school. There are highly effective and rigorous systems in place for planning, monitoring and assessment in RE leading to continual improvement in the subject. Teaching of RE is at least good with the majority of lessons being outstanding. Pupils' attainment and progress in the subject is outstanding with many pupils attaining level 5 in Year Six. The pupils are very happy at the school, are well behaved and their parents are delighted with the overall provision. All these factors impact on the Spiritual and Moral development of the pupils which is also outstanding.

The effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last Inspection.

All aspects identified for improvement in the previous (s48) inspection have been addressed successfully. Particular attention has been paid to the development of the senior leadership team which has directly led to the major improvements in all aspects of this Catholic school.

The capacity to make further improvements.

The progress made by the school since its last inspection and the clear and accurate self evaluation demonstrate an outstanding capacity to make further improvements and the school indicates its intention to do so through the School Improvement Plan.

How might the school further improve the provision of Catholic education?

- The Governors should continue to take an active and challenging role in their governance of the Catholic life of the school and RE ensuring that all policies and procedures are up to date. They also need to keep a formal record of courses they have attended with evaluations of them and disseminate this back to other Governors.
- The phased introduction and implementation of the new RE scheme recommended by the Diocese.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

The school's Mission Statement is the driving force and core of all that takes place in the school and is quoted by the children daily. The leadership and management of the school are outstanding in relation to the school's Catholic foundation. Leaders at all levels set clear direction and have a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and the role of the school in expressing it. The Governors, though supportive and active in the life of the school, need to ensure that all policies and procedures are up to date and that courses attended are evaluated and disseminated to the Governing Body. The Parish priest state, "I could not do my work in the Parish without the help and support of the staff and Governors."

The headteacher is totally dedicated, clearly focused on the school's Catholic mission, and her leadership is exemplary. She is very well supported by staff at all levels who, through their vocation, actively endorse and promote the aims and values of the school community. The school maintains high standards and the fullest personal development of the pupils. The school is very effectively managed in a way that ensures the very best use of resources, thorough rigorous monitoring and quality assurance procedures undertaken by senior staff. Relationships are strong and morale is very high. Good links exist with parents and parish to reinforce the high standard of care, guidance and support the school provides to ensure its pupils' safety and general well-being.

The Parish Priest is a frequent visitor to the school and his influence is appreciated by all members of the community. The pupils enjoy him 'popping in' and have a superb rapport with him. He facilitates the development of the spiritual life of all staff as well as the pupils, thereby raising their self-esteem and confidence. School Masses held in the Parish are enjoyed by parishioners and well supported by parents. One parent stated that, "links between Parish and school were unbelievable." Whilst another parent felt that the Parish Priest's support of her family whilst preparing to be welcomed into the Catholic faith was "truly understanding and supportive".

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they share deep understanding of other faiths and cultures. They play an active part in local community initiatives and are generous in their support of those in need locally and around the world. The school is inclusive by nature and the needs of individual pupils and their families are given great consideration. The pupils behave well in and out of class, are polite, courteous and considerate.

St Joseph's is very much a 'family' school where strong partnership links exist with parents, parish and the local community.

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship at St Joseph's is outstanding. Prayer and liturgy are regarded as central to the life of the school community with good use of a wide range of stimulating resources. Vibrant acts of worship engage pupils' and staff interest and inspire deep thought and heartfelt response.

Acts of worship are well planned, show progression and include a variety of prayer styles and settings consistently appropriate to the age and faith background of pupils. The planned programme is relevant to the liturgical year, adaptable to include other calendar events, and has regular opportunities for staff and pupils to evaluate its effectiveness. A range of resources is used to enrich and enhance Collective Worship. Discerning use of IT resources to create atmosphere in class-based worship impacts on pupils' readiness to reflect on and respond to the provision. There is an atmosphere of calm and peace in class bases and throughout school. Every classroom has a prayer focus in addition to colourful and vibrant RE displays. All pupils are very familiar with a range of formal and informal prayers. They enjoy singing their praise to God.

Pupil participation is a normal expectation in Collective Worship and they are clearly used to planning and leading liturgy and prayer. The use of 'weekly class prayer leaders' enable pupils to lead prayers confidently. The overall provision for Collective Worship, liturgy and prayer has a significant impact on their spiritual and moral development.

The Parish Priest makes a strong contribution to the community and is well supported by the school's own structures. Parents and parishioners celebrate on occasion with the school and there are times when pupils contribute to parish celebrations. The successful Sacramental programme is seen as an active and close partnership involving home, parish and school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

The pupils' achievement in RE is at least good with the majority making outstanding progress during their time at St Joseph's. Pupils are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate across all key stages and there is no evidence to suggest that any pupils under-perform. The school's strong commitment to inclusion means that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported in RE.

The standard of oral, written and displayed work is a strength and the pupils take obvious pride and enjoyment in what they do. A range of pupil work indicates varied activities demanding good use of IT, focus on Scripture, involvement of parents, pupils' own prayers, creative and independent responses as well as those led by the teacher. Challenging questions result in mature responses indicating an understanding of issues beyond their years.

A rigorous approach to monitoring pupil attainment and progress has helped to establish a varied and creative curriculum. Consequently, pupils are interested and responsive during RE lessons. There are secure assessment procedures for RE in place with the new *Levels of Attainment in RE* being linked with a data-backed prediction of future targets. The RE subject leader is committed in her determination to support staff development and encourage pupils as independent learners.

School Council members show considerable maturity in their discernment of school strengths and needs and the extent to which they know they can realistically effect change. They respect and love the school and feel greatly respected and loved in return.

How effective are teaching and learning in RE?

The teaching of RE is at least good with many outstanding features. The teachers' subject knowledge, commitment, and teaching styles are ably supported and encouraged through exemplary leadership. The level of provision and challenge stretches whilst ensuring that individual needs are met. Teachers challenge pupils to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

All teachers differentiate through planning and delivery. Pupil tasks are varied and clearly explained. All pupils are quietly engaged and remain on focus throughout the lesson. Pupils work effectively in pairs and small groups and are developing worthwhile skills as independent learners. They greatly enjoy their RE lessons and take a pride in all they do. They are quietly confident and express themselves in a manner which demonstrates good subject knowledge and understanding.

RE is regarded by the school as the Core subject and is resourced as such.

Parents are informed and involved in promoting their child's development and understanding through regular letters regarding the RE curriculum. The parents really appreciate the work of the staff and find them "the most approachable group of people ever met" should there ever be a query. Attainment in RE is reported to parents annually and parents are invited to discuss the progress of their child at parents' evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms.

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

The curriculum in RE fulfils and exceeds the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. It is organised around the life and teaching of Jesus and the Church, and the beliefs, celebrations and way of life of Catholics who follow that teaching. All pupils irrespective of age and ability are able to make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding and to learn to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Support staff have a key part to play in ensuring that all pupils enjoy positive peer and adult relationships in school and in ensuring that individual needs are met. The progress made by the pupils consistently exceeds expected year to year progression. There is ample evidence to show that Literacy and ICT skills are developed through RE.

The provision for education in personal relationships is strong and well supported by both pupils and parents.

The provision for teaching and learning about other world faiths is outstanding. Pupils have a balanced understanding and appreciation of these through the taught curriculum and independent study. The broader RE curriculum makes an excellent contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

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

The overall leadership and management of RE is exemplary and the school is fortunate in having a subject leader whose direction and support leading to improvement are outstanding. Records of planning, monitoring, evaluation and assessment are thorough and detailed. The leadership of the

subject is strongly focused on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and promoting the faith development of pupils.

Governors take an active role in the life of the school and are eager to fulfill their duties. This will be even more effective if they evaluate the courses attended and shared their findings with other Governors. The Governors have a clearer insight into and understanding of the demands and requirements of the RE curriculum in this Catholic school.

The high quality support afforded by the subject leader ensures that a shared sense of mission has been established among all staff. Development needs are accurately identified and tackled energetically. The subject is managed very efficiently and, through its quality assurance procedures, has a well-grounded understanding of the quality of its provision.

The inclusion of all pupils is central to its vision through its belief that all are created in the image of God. It is effective in pursuing this. Good links exist with parents, parish and diocesan agencies to support work in RE. The impact is seen in the excellent progress made by all pupils.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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