

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Upton Street
Batley
West Yorkshire
WF17 8PH

School URN

107732

Chair of Governors

Mrs. W. West

Headteacher

Mrs. N. Grant

RE Subject Leader

Mrs. J. Blanchfield

Date of Inspection

15th & 16th October 2009

Section 48 Inspector

John J Boyle

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Mary'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. Mary's is a larger than average Catholic Primary school serving the parish of St. Mary of the Angels in Batley. The school serves a catchment area that is acknowledged to experience high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Free school meal uptake is below the national average. The school population is mainly white British with a small percentage of minority ethnic groups a small percentage with English as a second language. At 19%, the percentage of pupils with special educational need is around the national average. Currently there are 306 children on roll, 86% are Catholic; 7% are of other Christian denominations; 2% of other faiths and 5% no designated religion. There are fifteen teachers, fourteen of whom are Catholic. Three teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or equivalent. Another teacher is currently studying for the award.

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.

Leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school is good. Leadership at all levels is focused on the Catholic mission of the school and raising standards and promoting the faith development of all pupils. All adults are all good role models. Pupil behaviour is excellent and all pupils have opportunity to access quality assured worship and religious education experiences and consequently all make good progress. The quality of Collective Worship is good. Pupils are keen to participate in and lead acts of worship that are planned and regularly monitored and evaluated. The Parish Priest and Sisters are effectively supportive of the religious and pastoral life of the school. Their contribution and support in the recent bereavement was much appreciated.

Pupil achievement is good. Given their capabilities and attainment on entry, pupils achieve good standards in Religious Education. Pupils display excellent attitudes and motivation and all enjoy their work. The quality of observed teaching and learning ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. Overall teaching and learning is good. School monitoring reports indicate quality that varies from satisfactory to good. Pupil work is planned to take account of ability and sufficiently challenging. School acknowledges that more work needs to be done in the area of assessment and teaching quality with outcomes used to inform future planning and delivery. The quality of the RE curriculum is good. The RE curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. Children are helped to develop morally and spiritually within a caring environment wherein the needs of the less fortunate are considered and acted upon.

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

School has worked hard to ensure;

- That the Catholic Life of the school has had higher prominence and development especially with parents.
- That Governor participation in the monitoring and evaluation of school performance has been further developed.
- That marking and feedback to pupils has continued to develop.

The capacity to make further improvements

Given the strength and commitment of the leadership team and the wider team involved in the life of the school, there is good capacity for improvement.

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

The leadership team knows their school well and has identified the following areas for further development:

- to enhance the quality of teaching in Religious Education by way of observation and sharing of good practice to ensure a more consistent and higher standard throughout school;
- to review assessment and recording procedures to better facilitate tracking individual and cohort progress and to include RE targets for pupils.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

Leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school is good. Governors are more prominent and effective in the life of the school. The senior management team is actively developing its role; identifying priorities and implementing strategies to ensure these are met and are seen to enhance the quality of provision. Appropriate professional development opportunities are available and undertaken to better enable all staff to plan and deliver quality worship opportunities for all children. The Parish Priest and local Sisters are regular visitors to school providing a focal point for discussion on topics/themes and visits to Church. They were particularly helpful to children and adults in their recent bereavement. Spiritual and moral development is nurtured by all members of the school team. Adults have had a good experience of a retreat and this is likely to be repeated. School should also consider using "Before you begin" material prior to teaching the themes for the term ahead. Pupils are very aware of local, national and global issues and are positive in their response to these by way of fundraising to support the less fortunate and marginalized. As a consequence school makes a positive contribution to social cohesion. Children are positive in exercising responsibilities by way of School Council, prefects, play leaders, befrienders. School has developed and implements an effective behaviour policy, consistently applied throughout school resulting in high levels of motivation and participation in the life of the school and local community.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of collective worship is good. Worship is planned with a thematic approach, delivered conscientiously and with commitment. Training needs are identified and resources provided to ensure consistent high quality experiences for the pupils. Effective monitoring is carried out by staff and Governors. Pupils participate with enthusiasm and are prayerful and reverent during worship. Pupils respond positively to the evident high expectations and their behaviour is excellent. School acknowledges the need for pupils to have greater opportunity to prepare and lead acts of worship. The quality of singing in whole school and class worship is commendable as is the singing at Mass. Key Stage One pupils burst into song when they heard the music being played to exit from assembly. Collective Worship makes a good contribution to children's spiritual and moral growth. Parents and Governors support and participate in Collective Worship opportunities. There was a good turnout of parents present at the Thursday morning assembly lead by Year 3. All pupils have opportunity to participate fully in the Catholic life of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

Pupil achievement is good. Attainment on entry is slightly below the national average while language and communication skills are significantly below. Given that, all pupils make good progress, responding positively to high expectations as to behaviour and attainment. Work is neat and well presented. Pupils display an excellent attitude and take pride in their work. ICT is used well to support teaching and learning with some older pupils producing an interesting report on the recent Batley Torchlight Procession. A varied range of teaching strategies is employed to develop and encourage reflection about their faith and its implications for everyday life. This occurs within a positive school ethos of love, respect and tolerance.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching quality is monitored by way of observation and work scrutiny with outcomes used to inform planning and guide improvement. School acknowledges the need to enhance the quality of teaching in Religious Education by way of observation and sharing of good practice to ensure a more consistent and higher standard throughout school.

Teaching is geared towards individual needs ensuring that all have access to the curriculum and as a result all are appropriately challenged. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and marking of their work is developmental, indicating how well they have done and how they could improve. A variety of teaching strategies are deployed to ensure pupil interest and to encourage progress. Pupils display good attitudes and are able to work well together. Pupils are challenged and extended by the good questioning technique employed by teachers. As pupils are engrossed in their work behaviour is excellent and they all make good progress developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. Parents and Carers have many opportunities to be involved in their children's learning within RE.

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

The quality of the RE curriculum is good. The RE curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, based on the Life and teaching of Jesus and the Church and the beliefs, celebrations and way of life of Catholics. Children are helped to develop morally and spiritually within a caring environment wherein the needs of the less fortunate are considered and acted upon. Children are encouraged to reflect on the implications of being a Catholic and to develop knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures. Literacy and ICT skills are developed through RE. The curriculum promotes respect for all in positive classrooms, positive playgrounds and is exemplified in the quality of relationships experienced on entering the school. This aspect allied to the efforts which pupils make to support CAFOD, Catholic Care, the Christmas Child and their inclusion in a twinning project emphasizes the positive contribution made to social cohesion. Sex education is included within a programme for teaching spiritual, moral, physical and emotional development to each of the year groups in school appropriate to the age and maturity of the children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

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

The quality of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE is good. The Acting Headteacher articulates a vision of Catholic education strongly focused on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and promoting the faith development of all pupils.

This vision is shared by the wider school team and consequently informs all that is undertaken in school. RE enjoys a high profile and is included in the performance management process within school. Appropriate training and resources are provided to ensure that quality experiences are available to the children. Quality of provision is monitored by way of observations and work scrutiny. Areas for development are thus identified and support given to improve. School acknowledges the need to continue the level of support and training to the newly appointed coordinator and to ensure that there is opportunity for her involvement in observations, work scrutiny and sharing good practice. Governors are frequent visitors to the school and they monitor and evaluate provision asking relevant and challenging questions.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

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