

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
TENTERGATE ROAD,
KNARESBOROUGH,
NORTH YORKSHIRE,
HG5 9BG

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| School URN | 121637 |
| School DfE Number | 3371 |
| E-mail address | headteacher@st-marys.n-yorks.sch.uk |
| Chair of Governors | Mrs Angela Wicken |
| Headteacher | Mrs Christine Wray |
| RE Subject Leader | Mrs Christine Wray |
| Date of Inspection | 22 nd - 23 rd March 2012 |
| Section 48 Inspector | Mrs Barbara Ford |

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. 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 2010). The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- the extent to which the pupils contribute to the Catholic life of the school;
- the effectiveness of the use of assessment to support learning in RE;
- the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school;
- the overall effectiveness of leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school.

She shared class worship in Year 4 and a whole school act of Collective Worship. She observed Religious Education (RE) lessons in FS, Years 2 and 6. She held meetings with the chair of governors and two more nominated governors, deputy headteacher, members of staff, school council, Ghana group, parents and Parish Priest. She examined school documentation including the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF), the School Development Plan, monitoring, assessment and tracking records, samples of teacher planning and pupils' RE books.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is a popular one form entry school serving the parish of St Mary's, Knaresborough and responsible to Leeds Diocese and Ampleforth, drawing from a wide community. There are 203 pupils on roll, of whom 78% are Catholic. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage with a well-integrated group of 'Travelling' families. The proportion of pupils entitled to Free School Meals is below National average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although the number of pupils in receipt of a statement of need is above that for similar schools. St Mary's is presently over subscribed for September 2012. Currently there are five pupils with English as an additional language. Around 12% of children have been identified as able, gifted and talented (academic, sport and creativity). A new deputy headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. There are 8 (fte) Catholic teachers three of whom hold CCRS or equivalent. The school has benefited from considerable building development programmes in recent years. The school has received the Basic Skills award, Investors in People and the IQM, and is an inclusive school. The school follows the principles of the Healthy School's award and Dyslexia friendly status and both form part of the School Development Plan.

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 Mary's is a good, inclusive Catholic school with outstanding elements, where there are no barriers to learning. The outcomes for pupils are outstanding and the provision for Catholic education is good. At St Mary's there is a deep commitment to caring for the needs of the whole child and consequently pupils show a high level of care and consideration for each other and for the staff.

The excellent 'Personalised learning time' enables individual pupils to research and study areas of special interest, including time to plan and prepare Collective Worship.

The provision for Collective Worship is a significant strength of the school, being central to the life of the school and a key part of every school and shared parish celebration. Pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well and make good progress.

The superb outdoor learning facilities in the woodland enable pupils to appreciate God's creation, following the way of the cross, during Lent, watching seedlings propagate, fruit and vegetables grow, be cooked and eaten and especially sending their seeds to Ghana for St Joseph's school to utilise.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Embed rigorous systems for assessment, including target setting, pupil tracking and moderated assessments to ensure security of judgements in RE. Make more consistent the use of the 'I can...' statements, thereby, developing self/peer assessments.
- Promote a culture of on-going self-review by continuing to develop relationships and engage parents more fully in the life of the school.
- Explore ways of formalising feedback from parents, pupils, staff and governors, and envisage the value/impact of such feedback in the School Development Plan.

PUPILS

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

1

Pupils achieve well in RE, taking a pride in their work and demonstrating enthusiasm for their learning, finding the new scheme of work *'The Way the Truth and the Life'* both interesting and challenging. Very young children were enthralled during an outdoor Godly Play lesson about Peter's denial in the superb woodland environment, learning that we can forgive those who hurt us, just as Jesus forgave those who hurt Him. Following a visit to St Mary's church, young children know that 'The church is the house of God.' They took photographs and wrote captions and recounts, taking particular interest in the 'investments' (sic) and blessing themselves with holy water.

In a lesson on offering gifts to God pupils recalled invisible gifts they give to others, for example, sympathy, respect, patience, as they enthusiastically decorated their gift boxes. The oldest pupils were challenged to reflect on what Jesus passion and death means for us. They learned in detail about those who were too afraid to do the right thing, like Peter and Pontius Pilate and wrote powerful diary excerpts. They received personalised verbal feedback and suggestions for improvements. Pupils are reflective in their work often writing prayers using a poetic form:

'O Lord, You are the lovely light of the world. You are the helpful happiness to come. You were cruelly crucified. Amen.'

Pupils of all abilities and particular learning needs are very happy at St Mary's enjoying all opportunities to live by and spread Gospel values and participating constructively in the Catholic life of the school.

From a starting point, which is broadly in line with national expectations, pupils attain well in RE. Their attainment is good in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2)

By taking on specific responsibilities such as Lunchtime Pals, play-leaders, Buddies and School Council they have good opportunities to develop their social skills, sense of responsibility and service to others. The School Council's successes include re-ordering the dining room rota, drawing up dining room rules, introducing Silver Super-Stars and gathering feedback from pupils on the new-build. The Ghana group are passionate about supporting St Joseph's school (with lots of input from the parish). They appreciate that the seeds they sent were grown, harvested and sold to buy more food and seeds to enable the Ghanaians to be self-sufficient.

Older pupils are confident to plan and deliver thoughtful and meaningful Collective Worship for their peers and the school, including pupil-made power-points. This is part of a prayer written by the oldest pupils to be used in a Collective Worship on Friendship. 'Help me O God, to be a true friend. To be always loyal and never talk about them behind their backs in a way I would not do to their face...This I ask for the sake of Him who is the greatest and truest of all friends, Jesus.'

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school. | 1 |
| How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship. | 1 |

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

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| 2 |
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The teaching is consistently good and effective in ensuring that pupils are motivated and engaged. Teachers are good role models, living the faith, knowledgeable and catering for different learning styles. Support staff are trained and experienced in helping those who are struggling, using differentiated work, where appropriate. Circle time, using the ethos statements, re-enforces St Mary's commitment to caring for the needs of the whole child. Teachers develop very good links with literacy, science, art, music, drama and ICT, in RE.

The excellent 'Personalised learning time' enables individuals to research and study areas of special interest, including time to plan and prepare Collective Worship. This time is also used for intervention groups, which address the issues from assessment outcomes. The school has recently established a tracking system for RE so that pupils' progress can be carefully monitored and evaluated. Their assessed work needs to be moderated more widely. The school places a high emphasis on outdoor learning and benefits from a well-used woodland area which includes a vegetable plot, orchard, reflective prayer garden, amphitheatre, pond and woodland walk, which engage pupils with their different learning styles.

The curriculum effectively provides pupils with a deep insight into their Catholic Faith and helps pupils see it in relation to other World Faiths. The RE governor noted that when shown the tabernacle, on a visit to church, Year 1 children were able to make a link to its importance in Judaism. The RE curriculum provides extensive opportunities for pupils' excellent spiritual and moral development. Extra curricular opportunities are varied, have a high take up and are much enjoyed.

The provision for Collective Worship is a significant strength of the school. It is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. Family Masses are very popular and invitations sent out garner a good response. Developing children's abilities and confidence to be involved in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship starts at a very young age.

Pupils' liturgical formation is well-planned, and shows progression. Sacramental preparation is a partnership and valued greatly by pupils, parents, school and the parish.

A parent commented, "I was particularly impressed by the recent Service of Reconciliation, prepared for Year 3, which managed to strike the right balance between reverence and a relaxed non-threatening atmosphere, suitable for seven and eight year olds."

A variety of themed events take place each year, for example CAFOD days, May procession, Lent and Advent liturgies. Travelling cribs and *Walk with Jesus* Lenten packs differentiated by age are taken home by pupils overnight to share with their families and prove to be very popular. The Parish priest says Mass in school for special feasts and celebrations and visits classes. He is thrilled with the pupils' involvement in worship and proud of the remarkable job St Mary's staff do in caring for and educating the pupils so well, giving them the tools to engage in Mass appropriately.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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| 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. | 1 |

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School

2

Leaders are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education, and good role models, ensuring that improvements to the Catholic life of the school are integral to the School Development Plan. The headteacher is well-thought of and dedicated.

A parent said, "We are particularly grateful to the headteacher, who guides our children in this nurturing environment, maintaining strong Christian values, which we see reflected in their smiling faces."

As RE subject leader, she effectively monitors and evaluates outcomes for pupils in RE throughout school by observing lessons and providing feedback; work scrutiny, monitoring planning, display and prayer corners, and plans to develop the moderation of assessed work within school and the cluster to enable better tracking of individuals and groups.

The governing body is passionate about meeting the needs of the pupils and highly supportive of the life of the Catholic School and the RE curriculum, being aware of and fulfilling their statutory responsibilities. Governors attend assemblies, masses and school events and appreciate that St Mary's school is an important part of the parish. They notice how well older pupils care for the younger ones and their delightful reciprocation. The RE Governor, who is active in the parish, is a member of the Curriculum Committee and chair of the new Catholic Life and Pastoral Care Committee. She and the parent governor work consistently to promote links with the wider community, especially parents and the parish. Governors have organized two 'Tea and Ideas' sessions with parents to listen and gather their views. Subsequently there has been improved communication via the new website, texts and newsletters.

A parent said, "I chose this school because of the tangible Catholic ethos. Pastoral care, inclusion and demonstrable forgiveness for mistakes, are part of every-day life at St Mary's."

The school has strong partnerships with other providers, organisations and services including, the nurse, Social Welfare, Educational Psychologist, CAFCAS, Police, Fire service and CAHMS. The headteacher is involved in Diocesan meetings, co-ordinators meetings and days, and working parties. Parish links include the active Liturgy groups, a termly report to the Parish Pastoral Council, Prayers and Pizza, school-led Sunday Family Masses in church, a shared book of prayer requests, the Key Stage 2 nativity play in church and musical events with the parish and Catholic High School.

School ensures that curriculum time is given to the teaching of EPR (The headteacher is on the Diocesan working party) and other faiths with workshops, themed weeks, focused upon promoting the understanding of diversity and community cohesion and school has a good relationship with the parents of the traveller children.

The school actively promotes pupils' initiative in learning about and supporting charities at local, national and global levels - particularly those charities which promote greater international understanding, social justice, peace, love for the poor, and respect for the integrity of creation through care and improvement of the environment. Pupils take part in locally held events and competitions including, design a flower-bed, Knaresborough in Bloom, Yorkshire in Bloom, Purple Pinky Day, and Sadie Rose Day and the remarkable choir featured in the Ghana Concert and has attended Young Voices on two occasions.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| 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. | 1 |
| 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 |