

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST. MATTHEW'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
SAFFRON DRIVE
ALLERTON
BRADFORD
BD15 7NE

School URN	107336
Name of Chair of Governors	Fr. C. McGinn
Name of Headteacher	Mrs. Katy Cox
Name of RECo / HoD	Mrs. Elizabeth Finn
Date of Inspection	18 th & 19 th March 2010
Section 48 Inspector	Mr. Peter Thompson

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Matthew'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. Matthew's is a Voluntary Aided Catholic primary school. At the time of the inspection there are 234 children on roll (including 38 in the Nursery), an increase of 20% since the last inspection. The school serves the local community of Allerton and the parish of St. Matthew's and Sacred Heart, Thornton. The pupils come from a very wide range of socio economic and cultural backgrounds. One quarter of the pupils do not speak English as their first language at home. Upon entry to Nursery attainment is well below the national average. However, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The school benefits from having ten full-time teachers, five of whom hold the Catholic Teachers' Certificate. The school has been recognised for its hard work by the following bodies: Healthy Schools, Activemark, Investors in People, FMSiS.

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.

St. Matthew's is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. It has a very welcoming atmosphere. The school is very inclusive. It has a clear motto and vision. It is determined in its drive to continue to raise standards, whilst at the same time it maintains a very Catholic identity. It has made significant improvements since the last inspection. The behaviour of the children is outstanding. The Leadership and Management of this Catholic school is outstanding.

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

The last Section 48 inspection was carried out on 3rd April 2007. Since the last inspection the subject leader has taken a more active, effective role in the life of the school, ably supported by the headteacher. She has undertaken lesson observations, scrutiny of work and carried out pupil interviews. As a result, the senior leadership is now clear about standards in RE and what needs to be done. Standards are improving in the subject of RE. There is now a consistent approach to the delivery of Collective Worship. The school has also created the opportunity for the RE Leader to carry out formal lesson observations, followed by feedback and recommendations on how to improve.

The capacity to make further improvements

St. Matthew's has a good capacity to further improve. The headteacher, senior leadership team, parish priest and governing body have a clear vision for the school. There is a determined drive to continue to raise standards. The school has robust documentation to track pupil progress and in this it sets out and shares challenging targets. The subject of RE and the Catholic life of the school do feature in this evaluative, well planned document. Since the last inspection a number of key appointments have been made to the teaching staff, notably that of a very capable headteacher, whom one stakeholder described as "a gift". Key, well qualified governors are taking lead roles and the whole community is fortunate to have the backing of the Parish Priest who many people appreciate for his commitment and love of the school.

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

- Continue to monitor and evaluate pupils' learning thoroughly through moderation of levelled work in RE and to consistently marking it.
- To seek and implement the views of parents and governors in establishing greater parental involvement in the life of St. Matthew's School.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

A number of key stakeholders of St. Matthew's School play an important part in making this community feel distinctively Catholic. The leadership team, RE Leader, parish priest and governors realise the importance of the school motto 'Come follow me'. The Mission Statement, symbolising the aims of the school, and the Statements to Live By. As the RE governor said, "Underneath all areas of the curriculum is one thread, Jesus." It is significant that the subject of RE, Collective Worship and cultural enrichment experiences feature prominently in the school's monitoring overview in the Raising Attainment Plan. The school has made some very useful appointments to lead this critical aspect of the school's mission. The stakeholders support each other well in their various roles. The staff feel justifiably proud of their school. Parents' questionnaires are very supportive of the school. 97% of them stated, 'I read the newsletter and discuss the Statement to Live By with my child'. The rich, varied curriculum interests and enthuses the children. As a result, the children have a good understanding of their own faith and an appreciation and respect of how others worship God. The children can empathise with children from other lands, recognising how they are similar and in other ways different.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

Overall the quality of Collective Worship is good, although some aspects of worship are outstanding. Children take some part in simple liturgies and make up delightful prayers of their own. The children are reverent and enjoy singing. Good use is made of simple focal points. Sometimes this is enhanced by the children adding work or artefacts of their own. Each Collective Worship concludes with the children being given a Mission or a thought to keep in their minds. For example: 'Remember we are all God's children.' Collective Worship at St. Matthew's is indeed a spiritual experience, which contributes greatly to the spiritual development of the children and staff.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do learners achieve in RE?

Foundation Stage pupils, at St. Matthew's, show an interest in their RE work. They listen very attentively and mix together very well. Their social skills are particularly good. During Key Stage 1 the children continue to make good progress on the whole. One Year 1 child was able to explain why the people on his picture looked sick, "Some people in Africa drink dirty water, so we are trying

to help them.” In Key Stage 2 children look at Bible stories and can describe how they would have felt if they had been there. One Year 5 child wrote about being in the Synagogue in Nazareth when Jesus came in ‘Jesus said, “The Spirit of the Lord has anointed me to bring the good news to the poor.” Everybody was shocked, surprised and I was glad he was from our town.’ The children at St. Matthew’s are able to show a great empathy. They are thoughtful and reflective. One Year 5 child wrote her Christmas wish ‘I wish that people in poorer parts of the world will get a decent Christmas and also have an easier way to get food and water, rather than having to walk so far.’ Standards are continuing to improve. The latest data shows that approximately 80% are working at Age Related Expectations.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

The quality of provision for RE is good. Teaching is good and through continued careful support and monitoring will get even better. Lessons are well planned, with staff now making more use of ‘Driver Words’ to enable the children to fulfil their potential. Special Needs children and those with English as an additional language are included and as a result they progress well. In some lessons some activities could be remodelled to stretch the more able. Each RE lesson observed included the use of ICT, which is an area which all stakeholders felt was improving significantly, particularly with the advent of a new website and new laptops which Year 6 children were particularly enthused about. RE is clearly having more prominence in the rich curriculum offered at the school and the teachers have a good subject knowledge. This is enhanced with support from the school’s leadership. Regular monitoring of lessons and scrutiny of work enables the subject leader to offer guidance to staff. Teachers refer to the lesson objective, refer to classroom displays and current enrichment activities. In turn the children respond well and enjoy their learning. Work is generally well marked. Further developments should include increasing the quantity of recorded work in books and joint moderation of levelled work.

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

The RE curriculum at St. Matthew’s is rich and varied. It stimulates the children and they enjoy it. Displays are colourful. The school is well resourced. Other cultures and other faiths are studied well. The school draws upon the families of the school to explain what their culture is like through cooking, role play, national dress. For example, when the school had a Big Read, 25 countries were represented. As a result of this wide ranging curriculum children learn well. They empathise with others. Indeed, their cultural, social, moral, and spiritual development is outstanding.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

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

The Leadership and Management in RE are both good. The RE Leader works effectively with senior leaders to promote the importance of this core subject and they enthuse and support the rest of the staff. Improvements in monitoring and in-service training and guidance are helping to raise standards. Children in turn are expressing their love of the subject. The presentation of their work is good and they show a good understanding of new concepts. The RE governor, Headteacher and Chair of Governors, value the work of the RE Leader. She has accurately identified the further steps she needs to implement. The RE Leader recognises the need to maintain her prominent role in continuing to drive up standards. She also recognises, as does the headteacher, the importance of using the SEF 48 as a tool for further developmental work.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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?	1	OUTSTANDING
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	2	GOOD
How well do learners 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 learners?	1	OUTSTANDING
How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in RE?	2	GOOD