

# DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

## SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST. NICHOLAS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
OAKWOOD LANE, GIPTON, LEEDS LS96QY

School URN

108029

Date of Inspection and OE  
grade

25<sup>TH</sup> - 26<sup>TH</sup> September 2014  
OE Grade: 1 Outstanding

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uk

Chair of Governors

Mr. A Britten

Headteacher

Mr. P. Lawson

RE Subject Leader

Mr. D. Kane

Date and grade of last S48  
inspection

April 2009 Grade 1: Outstanding

Section 48 Inspector

Mr. D. G. Gott

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:** how effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

1

*The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:*

- *Outcomes for pupils,*
- *The provision for Catholic Education*
- *Leaders and Managers*

**OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

1

**THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

1

**LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

1

**Summary of key findings:**

**This is an outstanding Catholic primary school.**

- Outcomes for pupils, Provision for Catholic Education and Leaders and Managers are all outstanding at St. Nicholas Primary School, Leeds.
- The chair of governors, RE Governor, Headteacher and RE subject leader provide strong and cohesive leadership and a clear vision for RE/Catholic Life of the school. They are very ably assisted by all teaching and support staff.
- The school's mission "*Love one another as I have loved you*" is "lived out" by governors, staff and pupils in the day to day classroom life of the school. It underpins all that the school seeks to achieve.
- Collective Worship is a strength of the school. It fully conforms to the school's Foundation Trust Deed and is central to the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of the majority of RE teaching is outstanding but it is never less than consistently good. Teachers' excellent RE subject knowledge and differentiated planning (including assessment) are strong features of the most successful lessons.
- The standards pupils achieve in RE are very high.
- Teaching Support Staff have a very positive impact on pupil learning outcomes- especially for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
- Pupil behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are proud of their school and take a pride in their RE work.
- The Parish Priest (RE governor) is a popular, well respected and very frequent visitor to the school. He is instrumental in helping to build strong home, school and parish links.
- The provision of a Catholic Care Social Worker in the school is having a very positive impact on school standards and pupil wellbeing.
- The school's RE curriculum fully conforms to Bishops' Conference recommendations.
- Under the strong leadership of the chair of governors, foundation governors have ensured that all canonical and statutory responsibilities have been met.

- Issues identified for action in the last section 48 inspection have been satisfactorily addressed.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further.**

- Working jointly within the school's already strong partnership links, continue to develop further, strategies to moderate pupils' RE work both internally and across the partnership schools to ensure consistency and accuracy in the assessment of RE.

### **Information about this inspection**

The Inspection of St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School, Gipton, Leeds 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 Diocesan Administrator 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 2012).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- How well key issues identified for action in the previous section 48 inspection have been addressed.
- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the School.
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education (RE).
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship (CW).
- The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in RE.
- The extent to which the RE Curriculum promotes pupils' learning.
- The quality of CW provided by the school.
- How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvements to outcomes for pupils.

The inspection was carried out by 1 inspector over a 1 ½ day period. A sample of 5 RE lessons and 5 acts of CW were observed - covering all key stages. In addition, a KS2 hymn practice was observed. Meetings were held with the Headteacher and Senior Management Team (SMT) – including the RE subject leader; teaching and support staff; parents, pupils and parishioners; the Headteacher of the Corpus Christi Catholic College, to which the majority of pupils transfer for their secondary education; the Chair of Governors, staff governor and the governor with responsibility for RE; KS1 and KS2 pupil prayer leaders; the school's Justice and Peace Group leader and pupils; officers of the parish St. Vincent de Paul (SVP) group; a volunteer reader; committee members of The Friends of St. Nicholas School and a Catholic Care Social Worker, employed by the school on a part time basis.

In addition, a very comprehensive range of documentation relating to the RE/ Catholic Life of the school was scrutinized – including policies, pupils' work books, pupil tracking data, RE action plan, minutes of governors' meetings and Headteacher reports to the governing body. The school's website was also sampled, as were RE portfolios, RE displays and RE focal areas in classrooms and public areas of the school. School RE newsletters were also sampled.

## Information about this school

- St. Nicholas Catholic Primary, Gipton, Leeds is a larger than average sized, Voluntary Aided school of the Catholic Diocese of Leeds, situated within Leeds Local Authority (LA).
- The school principally, though not exclusively, serves the needs of the families of the recently re configured Parish of the Blessed Edmund Sykes (which includes St. Nicholas Church, Gipton and Our Lady of Good Counsel Church, Seacroft).
- The school's Published Admission Number (PAN) is 40. Currently 281 full time pupils are on roll (256 at time of last S48 inspection 2009). Of these 82% are Catholic (51% at time of last inspection).
- The school has no nursery provision. Reception class children are currently drawn from 19 external pre-school settings.
- The school is staffed by 12 full time equivalent (fte) qualified teachers, of whom 9 (fte) are Catholic. Eleven teachers teach RE. Eight teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) or equivalent. Currently no teachers are undertaking CCRS.
- Pupils are taught in 10 classes, the majority of which are of mixed age groupings.
- Eligibility for pupil premium is well above average (28%) as is the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language (29%). The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average (10%). The proportion of pupils joining/leaving the school at other than normal term times is above average (17% mobility rate in some year groups).
- The school provides a Breakfast Club and a wide range of after school activities linked, where appropriate, to local outside agencies, for example West Yorkshire Playhouse and Leeds United AFC.
- The school works in partnership with Leeds Trinity University on teacher training placements.
- The Headteacher sits on the Department for Education National Primary Headteacher Consultative Committee. The Headteacher mentors newly appointed Headteachers. The school is an active member of the East Leeds Network Learning Community and the Corpus Christi School Partnership Cluster.
- Since the last inspection, new building work has improved and extended the provision for Foundation Key Stage. New outdoor play and prayer garden facilities further enrich the learning environment with funding support from the Friends of the School Committee.
- The current Headteacher, Deputy head, RE subject leader and chair of governors were all in post at the time of the previous section 48 RE inspection.
- The school has achieved a number of National Standards including the "Inclusion Chartermark" and the "Stephen Lawrence Award" for its work in fostering social cohesion.

## Full report - inspection judgements

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are Outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	<b>1</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	<b>1</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	<b>1</b>

- Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils at St. Nicholas Catholic Primary are outstanding. This is a school which knows itself very well. The experienced governing body, Headteacher and SMT (including RE subject leader) have a very clear vision of the strengths and areas for further development in the RE/Catholic Life of the school.
- Governors and staff are not complacent, but work hard as an effective team to implement timely, workable and effective monitoring and self-evaluation systems which quickly alerts them to areas in need of attention, in order to further drive up school standards in RE/Catholic Life of the school.
- Pupils lead and take responsibility for shaping activities with a religious character, in the school and the wider community. They take full advantage of the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development and for evaluating the Catholic Life of the school. For example, the inspector observed KS2 pupil prayer leaders teaching younger pupils the school prayer in the prayer garden at morning break. One prayer leader commented, "I love helping the reception and Year 1 children to learn more about God."
- Pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life of the school – as witnessed by the way in which they "live out" the school Mission Statement: "*Love one another, as I have loved you*" in their day to day school lives.
- Pupil behaviour is exemplary. Pupils treat adults and each other with high levels of respect and know acutely that their behaviour always has consequences.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the long and rich Catholic heritage of their school. In addition to the school's patron saint, each class has also adopted a patron saint. Pupils can recount details about the lives of these saints.
- There is a very strong family feel of "belonging" at St. Nicholas School. Pupils say how much they love being at the school: "The teachers are kind and help us – they make our learning fun!" (KS2 pupil). Parents and grandparents who were themselves pupils at the school, say how happy their children and grandchildren are at the school. "They get such a good start here! The staff really know the children well and do everything they can to help them."(Parent) Past pupils frequently seek to undertake their high school work experience placements back at their former school. Some members of the support staff are former pupils and say how pleased they are to be working at the school.
- Parents of pupils with particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities, say how much they value and appreciate the efforts that the school goes to in ensuring that their child is "included" in normal school activities.
- Pupils are keenly alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school. The school has established a very effective "Justice and Peace Group" which KS2 pupils attend on a voluntary basis, during their break time.
- "Pupil Voice" is given plenty of opportunity to be heard at St. Nicholas Primary School. The School Council is highlighted by the LA as a model of good practice.

- The school has established supportive links with a wide variety of local, national and international educational and charitable organisations, for example CAFOD, Catholic Care and a school in Tanzania. The school council help to plan and organise a wide and inventive range of seasonal fund raising activities in support of these and many other charities.
- Standards pupils achieve in RE are very high both for individuals and for groups of pupils. Attainment on entry, as evidenced by RE baseline assessments, is notably below age related expectations. However, by the end of Foundation Key Stage (FKS) pupils have made accelerated progress. This progress continues to be built upon in Key Stage 1 (KS1) (L2+ 95% L3 18%) and Key Stage 2 (KS2) (L4+ 92.5% L5 19.5%).
- Pupil achievement and progress are recognised and celebrated in special school assemblies to which parents are invited.
- Pupils say how much they enjoy their RE lessons and most concentrate very well in class and are rarely off task even in extended periods without direction from an adult.
- Pupils prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm and in a variety of gatherings including outside in the prayer garden. They are skilled, relative to their age and capabilities, in using a variety of methods to support their private and public prayer showing confidence in their use of scripture and religious symbols.
- During the inspection, the inspector observed a KS2 voluntary prayer group taking place in the school's prayer garden over the morning break period. The group were discussing "The Mysteries of Light" with the pupil prayer leaders. A Polish pupil informed the group that Pope John Paul II instigated the "new" mysteries of the Rosary.
- Pupils' response to and participation in the school's CW is outstanding. Acts of worship fully engage all pupils and inspire in them authentic responses which are reflected in pupils' beliefs and exemplary behaviour in the wider school environment.
- In a beautiful Reception Class CW on "God's Love," a child said she was "going to be talking to God". As the children sang and signed the hymn "God Made Me" they placed their hands over their hearts to remind themselves that they were all created and loved by God. The teacher invited each of the children to take a little inter linking heart shaped card and place it on the worship table as they sat together for the closing prayer.
- In a calm, purposeful, KS1 CW led by Y2 pupils, in the main school hall, through clever use of a puppet, scripture readings, silent reflection, prayers and hymns, the pupils reminded everyone that Jesus is always their friend and that he wants them to be good friends with each other too - especially if the other person is feeling lonely.
- Pupils are at ease and act with respect when praying with others who have different beliefs and attitudes to spirituality.

## The provision for Catholic Education is Outstanding

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning.	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

- The provision for Catholic Education at St. Nicholas Primary School is outstanding.
- A majority of the RE teaching is outstanding but it is never less than consistently good. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge is applied consistently to challenge and inspire pupils and ensure they make exceptional progress as learners in RE. Where teaching is outstanding, this should be shared across the school.

- The school has worked with the diocesan co-ordinator for RE and others on RE planning for mixed age classes to ensure that pupils avoid repetition of RE work undertaken in previous years.
- At the start of RE lessons, teachers discuss the learning objectives with their pupils and also make explicit the criteria by which success will be assessed. Frequently, these “guideposts” are prominently displayed and referred to at strategic points during the course of the lessons, acting as “prompts” to both staff and pupils to monitor progress and achievement.
- “Teacher talk” is clearly focused and tailored to enable maximum time for pupils’ learning to take place. Consequently, RE lessons have a brisk pace and sustain pupils’ interest throughout the lesson. This was observed to good effect in a very well planned, mixed age, KS1 RE lesson on the theme “Jesus Welcomed the Children”. Through drama, role play, arts and crafts, pupils were fully absorbed, made very good progress and thoroughly enjoyed their RE learning.
- In an Upper KS2 mixed age class, studying a CAFOD unit linked to “The Way, the Truth and the Life” on “God’s Creation”, very good use of “talk partners” was witnessed when pupils were debating six challenging statements posed on their responsibilities to be “good stewards of all creation to sustain our earth”.
- Teaching support staff and other adults (including volunteers) work as a team with the class teacher and play a key role in ensuring that high quality pupil learning is the norm in RE lessons.
- Following a scrutiny of RE books, the marking of RE was observed to be fully in line with the school’s “Marking and Feedback Policy”. Good use of “next steps” prompts and the “I Can” statements allows pupils to seek and receive regular, targeted feedback on their progress. The quality and quantity of RE work seen in pupils’ RE books are of a very high standard. Pupils clearly take great pride in their RE work and are keen to present their best work.
- The school’s RE Curriculum fully meets Bishops’ Conference requirements and is also responsive to diocesan requirements. Appropriate curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of RE and the content is designed and modified to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils at the school.
- The school has an approved Education for Personal Relationships (EPR) Policy and a Scheme of Work which follows diocesan guidelines. Parents confirm that they are appropriately consulted and encouraged to view the teaching materials used.
- The school has established “Rainbow” groups to offer support and encouragement to parents, guardians and children at particularly difficult times in their lives.
- The school organises a residential retreat at Myddleton Grange for Year 6 pupils. Corpus Christi Catholic College organise a day retreat at St. Nicholas School for Year 5 pupils.
- Good home, school, parish partnership links are fostered, particularly around the time of preparation for First Sacraments, when a series of parents meetings are arranged to explain the programme that the children will be following and to support parents in their task of helping their children to prepare well.
- Pupils with specific learning needs are provided with additional support to ensure that they are appropriately challenged and make at least expected progress.
- The RE subject leader attends regular diocesan RE cluster meetings and training days to gain knowledge and experience of identified “best practice” in the teaching, assessment and enrichment of RE and Catholic Life in schools.
- The school is innovative in the manner in which it presents the RE curriculum. Where appropriate, it skilfully supplements the school’s main RE programme, “The Way, the Truth and the Life” with resources from a range of other RE sources, for example CAFOD, “Statements To Live By” and “God’s Story”.

- Collaboration with other schools is used effectively to extend and improve the RE curriculum for pupils. Excellent links are made with other agencies, the wider community, parishes and diocese to provide a good range of enrichment activities and to promote learning and engagement.
- Where possible, the school incorporates cross-curricular links into the school's RE, for example art, music, dance, drama, singing and ICT.
- Pupils' liturgical formation is very well planned, appropriate to their faith background and shows progression from their earliest years. Within the RE Curriculum, opportunities are provided to learn about the customs, practices and beliefs of other faiths.
- RE displays are of a high standard, feature pupils' own work and conform to diocesan guidelines. They are frequently accompanied by appropriate and thought provoking quotations from scripture and considerably enrich the overall learning environment of the school.
- All classrooms have a prominent and attractively maintained RE focal point area featuring seasonal liturgical artefacts (often brought in by pupils). The weekly ethos statement and displays of pupils work associated with the current RE topic being studied are clearly on view.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of St. Nicholas School. It is a key part of every school celebration. Parents, pupils, staff, governors and parishioners say how much they enjoy taking part in this important aspect of school life.
- The school gives a high priority to the singing and signing of hymns and has previously worked with the diocesan schools' singing programme. A school choir group has been established. CW is considerably enhanced by the pupils' enthusiastic singing.
- Staff regularly review and plan improvements to the school's CW. They are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver high quality worship.
- The celebration of the Eucharist, when appropriate, is seen as the heart of the Catholic school belief and celebration. All associated with the school say how they particularly look forward to the First Holy Communion Mass and celebrations
- Officers from the parish SVP group say how very grateful they are for the generous gifts of food which they are able to distribute to housebound and lonely people in the area following the school's Harvest Liturgy.

## The Leadership and Management are Outstanding

<b>How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.</b>	<b>1</b>
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- The quality of leadership and management, including governance, at St. Nicholas Primary is outstanding.
- Leaders, governors and managers are very experienced, highly effective and deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community.
- RE is very clearly **the** core subject which underpins the search for excellence in studying all other subjects taught at the school.
- The school closely links the spiritual and moral development of pupils and CW to the School Development Plan (SDP) and the RE action plan in particular. Plans are kept under review in RE/ Catholic Life.



- Progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils in RE is carefully monitored half termly by the hardworking and very conscientious RE subject leader. Regular moderation of pupils' RE work, both internally and across partnership schools further helps to ensure consistency and accuracy of school assessments in RE. Intervention strategies are planned where appropriate, in order to maintain pupil progress at the expected rate.
- Under the strong leadership of the chair, the governing body, (and foundation governors in particular) have faithfully safeguarded the precepts of the school's Foundation Trust Deed. They have ensured that currently all canonical and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.
- The governing body have established very effective procedures for the appointment of staff, as borne out by the high levels of subject knowledge and personal commitment displayed by teachers and other adults in the delivery of RE seen throughout the school. This has a very positive impact on the Catholic Life of the school.
- Every year an In-Service Staff Training Day is always devoted to spiritual reflection and renewal. This day is usually organised in conjunction with other partnership schools. Governors are always invited to attend.
- The governor with responsibility for RE is a very frequent and popular visitor to the school. He has a very clear understanding of the strengths and areas for further development in RE/Catholic Life of the school and wider parish.
- Pupils, staff and parents say how much they look forward to attending class masses and school/parish seasonal liturgies. A number of the pupils are altar servers and readers for both school and parish.
- Good communications are particularly enhanced by the excellent school website which contains updated information about planned events relating to the RE/Catholic Life of the school.
- The Finance Committee of the governors ensure that the RE budget is adequately funded and resourced. Governors conscientiously monitor the impact this funding is having on the RE/Catholic Life of the school.
- A well-established system of linking governors with specific classes/year groups is in place between governors and teachers. This helps to promote better understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. The system also promotes better communications between governors, staff, pupils and parents.
- Governors act as "critical friend" to the school and hold the Headteacher and senior staff to account for standards of attainment and progress in RE/Catholic Life. This also includes pupil conduct and general behaviour both on the school premises and when representing the school off site.
- The school's well-established Performance Management System always incorporates aspects of RE/Catholic Life. Staff are offered access to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities to further promote and deepen their knowledge and understanding of the spiritual life of the school.
- The appointment of a Catholic Care professional social worker to work in the school on a part time basis is having a very positive impact on improving school standards. The regular, timetabled, confidential, social, emotional, spiritual and practical support provided to pupils, parents and guardians is improving pupil attendance and enhancing the educational life chances and wellbeing of a significant number of pupils and gives further witness to the school's mission in action.
- In partnership with others, the governors, staff and pupils of the school, work hard to promote social cohesion and inclusion for all, both within the school itself and also within the local and wider community.
- At the time of the inspection the weekly Ethos Statement to Live By was "I can laugh and have fun". St. Nicholas Catholic Primary School Leeds is certainly a school where staff and pupils put this into practice on a daily basis.