

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
NOVA LANE, BIRSTALL WF17 9LQ

School URN

107752

School DfE Number

3823405

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Chair of Governors

Mrs. P. Booth

Headteacher

Mr. A Rush

RE Subject Leader

Mr. A Rush

Date of Inspection

23rd and 24th May, 2013

Section 48 Inspector

Mr. David 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 school

- St. Patrick's Birstall is an extremely welcoming school. The visitor does not have to be inside it for long before they become keenly aware of the strong Catholic ethos and the very powerful 'family feel of belonging' which pervades the whole school.
- The School Mission actively seeks to recognise and celebrate the unique giftedness of each member of the wider school community. In recognising 'that every person has a divine origin and an eternal destiny' all education provided by the school is 'rooted in the Catholic faith', and as such 'children are encouraged and supported to live the Gospel values of Jesus Christ through all aspects of the Curriculum and the events in their daily lives'.
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT), staff and governors form a high performing cohesive team, united with a clear vision for implementing the School Mission. They are exceptionally well led by the very dedicated and experienced headteacher/Religious Education (RE) subject leader who 'leads by example'.
- A majority of the teaching in RE is outstanding but it is never less than consistently good. Strong teacher subject knowledge was noted as a key aspect of the outstanding RE lessons observed.
- All 13 teachers at the school hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) or equivalent qualification.
- Teaching support staff have a very positive impact on the purposeful learning of pupils in RE, especially for those pupils who have specific learning needs.
- Standards of pupil attainment in RE at the end of Key Stage 2 are mostly above average. Most groups of pupils make at least good progress and some may make outstanding progress with nothing that is inadequate.
- Strong Foundation Governors have ensured that the school still remains faithful to the school's original Trust Deed.

- The Parish Priest/school chaplain is a popular, frequent visitor in school and a highly respected member of the wider school community. Mass is celebrated in school on a regular basis. Grand/parents, carers and parishioners attend in good numbers.
- The quality of Collective Worship (CW) provided by the school and the pupils positive response to it, are outstanding. Pupils know the importance of prayer in their life and of the precious nature of quiet moments of reflection.
- The standards of choral music at this school are exceptionally high.
- Pupil behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite and helpful to visitors. They willingly accept responsibility for caring for each other- especially younger pupils.
- The school promotes collaborative working with others for the common good. Home, school, parish links and primary/secondary school transition arrangements are well established.
- The school works in partnership with Leeds Trinity University in offering student teacher placements.
- The school's RE curriculum meets Bishops' Conference requirements and is responsive to diocesan priorities.
- The school has addressed the 'points for further action' identified in the last S48 Report (2008)
- All canonical and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- Working with the diocesan coordinator for RE and the cluster of Catholic schools to which St. Patrick's belongs, continue to embed usage of 'The Way, The Truth & The Life' and in particular to ensure that all teaching staff are confident in setting appropriate tasks and assessing levels of pupil attainment in RE.
- Continue to build up moderated portfolios of assessed pupil RE work for each key stage not only to provide secure evidence of pupil attainment, but also to assist in staff training and development purposes for those teachers new to RE assessment either currently or in the future.
- Look towards succession management planning for future leadership of curriculum RE to ensure continuation of the current strong position and to provide aspiring staff with professional career development opportunities at SLT level.
- Continue to enable staff and governors to have access to high quality Continuous Professional Development (CPD) opportunities in support of the RE/Catholic Life of the School.

Information about this inspection

The Inspection of St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School Birstall 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 good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils.
- The quality of teaching and how purposeful pupil learning is in RE.

- The quality of CW provided by the school and how well pupils respond to and actively participate.
- The effectiveness of leaders, governors and managers in promoting, monitoring, evaluating and further developing Catholic Education.

The inspection was carried out by 1 inspector over a 1 ½ day period. A sample of 7 RE lessons (taught by different teachers) and 7 acts of CW, covering all 3 key stages, were observed. In addition, a choral music lesson and a whole school Mass were attended. Meetings were held with the headteacher/RE subject leader, chair of governors, teaching and support staff, parish priest, parents and pupils. Monitoring and evaluation documentation relating to the RE/Catholic Life of the School was examined. Headteacher reports to the governing body and minutes of governors meetings were also sampled. Scrutiny of pupils' RE work, RE resources, displays, and school newsletters were also evidenced. The school's RE budget allocations over the last, current and next financial year total £6,300. This is higher than for other core curriculum areas over the same period. Funding has been invested in purchasing the RE Scheme: 'The Way, The Truth & The Life' (WTL) and associated planning discs for all year groups. New liturgical banners, RE 'Story Bags', class Bibles, 'The Wednesday Word', 'travelling cribs' and class liturgy resources boxes have also been provided. Support has also been directed towards enabling a Year 6 residential visit to take place at Myddleton Grange.

"When we have looked at The Wednesday Word newsletter we pass it on to my mother in the nursing home as she can't get out to Church now – she passes it on to others."

(Parent's comment)

Information about this school

- St. Patrick's Catholic Primary and Nursery School Birstall is a larger than average, heavily oversubscribed, Voluntary Aided school of the Diocese of Leeds, in Kirklees Local Authority.
- The school serves the 2 parishes of St. Patrick's Birstall and St. Paul of the Cross Cleckheaton.
- The school's published admission number (PAN) is 35. (On average the school receives 80 reception applications each year).
- Of the 262 pupils on roll (including part time nursery) 96% are baptised Catholics. Pupils are taught in 8 classes (including nursery).
- There are 10 full time and 3 part time teachers (11.3 full time equivalent). All 13 are Catholic teachers and all hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) or equivalent. Nine teachers teach RE.
- The headteacher was appointed to St. Patrick's in September 2003. In 2012, the previous long serving RE subject leader (Sister of Charity of St. Paul) retired and the headteacher took on curriculum responsibility for leading the subject. The parish priest/school chaplain was appointed to the parish in October 2012.
- A new chair of governors was elected in October 2013 (having served as a governor at the school for over 15 years).
- The school draws pupils from a wide geographical and socio-economic area.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium (additional funding) is below national average.
- The proportion of pupils identified as disabled and/or with special educational needs; those requiring 'school action' or 'school action plus' (additional support) are below national averages.

- The majority of pupils on roll are of White British heritage, with English as their first language. A small proportion of pupils are of Polish heritage.
- Pupil attendance is above national average. No pupils were excluded in the last academic year.
- The school works in productive partnership with a number of others, for example the Diocese of Leeds, Calderdale and Kirklees Catholic Schools' RE Cluster, Leeds Trinity University, the Birstall 'Churches Together' initiative, Catholic Care and Leeds Cathedral Choral Music Directors. Close links also exist with the Sisters of Charity of St. Paul, whose convent is in the parish and St. John Fisher Catholic High School Dewsbury, to which the majority of Year 6 pupils transfer for their secondary education.

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.	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1

"I still love singing the hymns that I learnt here as a child – now I'm singing them with my grandchildren here! – it's like coming back home – it's just such a lovely caring family school."

(Grandparent's comment)

- Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils at St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School Birstall are outstanding.
- There is a very strong, deep and inter-generational spirituality about St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School, Birstall. It permeates into the whole school's unique character, creating a calm, peaceful and purposeful working 'family atmosphere'. The lasting effects of this are evidenced by the high percentage of parents who, as former pupils of the school themselves, say that they actively sought to have their own children educated at the school to enable them to experience the same faith journey which formed their own early Catholic life.
- The School Mission is proudly proclaimed in the main school entranceway alongside pupils' RE work and ceramic artwork depicting the school's patron saint.
- Pupils value and respect the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the wider parish community. They enjoy taking part in Sacramental preparations and leading seasonal liturgical celebrations.
- Pupils are proud of their backgrounds and beliefs and have a strong sense of personal worth. The school helps to promote social cohesion in the local and wider school community by preparing its pupils for life in a world of diverse cultures and beliefs.
- Pupils' behaviour and general attitudes are outstanding. They treat others with high levels of respect and know acutely that their behaviour always has consequences.
- Pupils are alert to the needs of others. The many charity certificates displayed in the school give powerful testimony to the school's charitable outreach and fund raising. Pupils also seek justice for all within and beyond the school community through their work on Cafod projects.

- Standards pupils achieve in RE are broadly in line with other core curriculum areas. In the final key stage pupils are attaining generally above average standards in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2) in all key stages. Most groups of pupils make at least good progress and some may make outstanding progress with nothing that is inadequate. There are no significant variations in achievement across key stages. (KS1 RE L2 + 94% L3 30% and KS2 RE L4+ 97% (L5 49%).
- The school recognises the need to further develop their RE portfolios of assessed work in order to provide more examples of pupils levelled RE work in the topics covered in the new RE programme of study. Leadership and management have correctly identified this aspect for future action within the school's RE Action Plan. The school is already moving well in this direction of travel in partnership with the diocesan coordinator for RE and the RE cluster partnership of Catholic Schools to which St. Patrick's belongs.
- Pupils enjoy their RE work and are very keen to do well in RE. They generally apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace. Most pupils seek to produce their best work and are interested in, and enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils say they very much enjoy the artwork, music, drama, role play and research aspects using technology in their RE lessons. By the end of Key Stage 2, they are able to work independently for extended periods on RE projects.
- Pupils pay good attention to the presentation of their work. They take a pride in the quality and volume of their RE work. Teachers ensure that 'next step prompts' are included in their marking of RE work to inform pupils how their RE work can be further improved.
- Pupils actively respond and enthusiastically participate in the school's CW. At St. Patrick's, experienced and conscientious staff carefully plan age appropriate CW which enable all pupils to take part.
- CW takes a number of different forms at St. Patricks. For example, the class based worship evidenced was often child led, where private intentions and more intimate forms of focused worship invoked a strong response from pupils. Such occasions tangibly helped to bind the pupils closer together into a more cohesive, caring and inclusive class group.
- From their earliest days at the school, all children are actively involved in the vibrant prayer and liturgical life of St. Patrick's School. For example, in a calm circle time setting in a lower Foundation Key Stage (Nursery) Class, the children gathered around an RE focal point featuring a statue of Mary, bluebell flowers, a candle, a Bible and a sample of RE pupil artwork, family photographs and baby scan pictures. Using 'driver words' the class teacher very skilfully prompted discussions about Mums and babies and Mary and Jesus in particular. Pupils placed a special treasure (coloured bead) on the display as they answered questions. The children re-enacted the visit of the Angel Gabriel to Mary in actions, costumes and song. A nursery child was able to tell the inspector that, "An angel told Mary that she was going to have a baby".
- The lesson concluded with the children singing and signing 'Thank You God for Mary the mother of Jesus' and 'Thank You God for giving me such a lovely mummy'.
- Pupils 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. They demonstrate an excellent understanding of the Church's main seasonal celebrations. They are at ease and act with respect when praying with others who have different beliefs and attitudes to spirituality. Parents say that the experience of living and working in a praying community has a positive effect on the development of their children, irrespective of their ability or faith background.
- Pre Eucharistic Liturgies (P.E.L.) allow KS1 staff at the school to skilfully guide their children through particular parts of the Mass, deepening their understanding of what

they see at school and Church Masses. In a P.E.L. witnessed by the inspector, one group of pupils confidently dramatized the scenario of inviting friends and relatives to a family meal, seated around a table at home. A parallel group of pupils dramatized Jesus and his disciples sitting together to eat at 'The Last Supper'. A pupil wearing vestments also re-enacted the words and actions of the priest at the Consecration of the Mass at the central RE focal point (an altar with a chalice and lit candles).

- Particularly striking aspects of this CW were the respectful and self confident ways in which all the pupils taking part behaved. The diction of the dramatized aspects of the liturgy, particularly the words of Consecration, were outstanding and spoken without any notes or prompts. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of what they see when they attend Church was very greatly enhanced as a consequence of their active participation in the dramatization and role play involved.
- Pupils also experience differentiated, age appropriate, 'Infant Praise' (KS1) and 'Junior Praise' (KS2) on seasonal liturgical aspects of the Church's calendar. For example, in an Infant Praise evidenced, pupils reflected on the theme 'Mary our Mother' by 'Thinking About Our Mums'. Year 1 pupils shared artwork pictures of their mothers. Year 2 pupils respectfully read scripture accounts of key moments in Mary's life (e.g. The Annunciation) whilst other pupils dramatized the event. The 'praise' concluded with vibrant singing of the hymn, 'Oh Mary We Crown Thee with Blossoms Today' sung to piano accompaniment played by the choir of governors. The children processed around the hall and placed a floral crown on the statue of Mary.
- In a Junior Praise evidenced, Year 4 pupils shared topical bidding prayers which they had composed seeking prayers for the children and families in war torn Syria and those affected by the devastating tornado in Oklahoma, USA. A group of Year 5 pupils led a knowledgeable question and answer session for pupils on aspects of the 'Glorious Mysteries' of the Rosary which they had been researching. Their lively, spontaneous approach (without notes) firmly held the attention of all those present. (Far more pupils wanted to answer the questions posed by the Year 5 pupils than there was time to hear.) Interspersed between the different year group contributions, pupils enjoyed singing Marion hymns. A Year 6 pupil also performed a most moving solo rendition of the song, 'Let it Be'.
- Staff, supported and guided by the School's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and the RE subject leader (headteacher), ensure that all pupils' needs in RE are adequately planned for and met most effectively and that the rate of progress in RE made by children with specific learning needs is in line with their peers.
- The school gives high priority to choral music. One of the directors of music at Leeds Cathedral visits the school to give singing lessons. This has a very positive impact on both the pupils' enjoyment of singing and the high quality of singing achieved at the school. A significant number of pupils (boys and girls) have successfully auditioned for the Cathedral Choir which involves them in attending choir practice at the Cathedral one evening a week and singing at Cathedral Masses on a monthly basis. (The school believes that St. Patrick's School, Birstall has the largest number of pupils in the Leeds Cathedral Choir)

"A symbol shows you something that you can't really see – like a white dove is a sign of peace."

(Year 3 pupil's comment)

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

"We had to write persuasive letters to Mr. Rush about our Cafod fund raising ideas".

(Pupil's comment)

- The provision for Catholic Education at St. Patrick's Catholic Primary Birstall is outstanding.
- A majority of the teaching is outstanding but it is never less than consistently good.
- In lessons observed, teachers exhibited an exceptionally deep and rich RE subject knowledge. This was especially apparent in the confident, probing, supportive and interactive cross questioning of pupils in RE lessons. Pupils' visibly enjoyed rising to the challenging questions posed by their teachers in RE lessons. Teachers were also willing to volunteer aspects about their own practice of the faith.
- In a very well planned Year 5 RE lesson, pupils learned about the many different ways of praying and about praying the Rosary in particular. After viewing a brief video extract of 'The Miracle of Fatima' (in which Mary asked the children to pray the Rosary), different groups of pupils worked with 'talk partners' in arranging picture/information cards of different mysteries of the Rosary in chronological order. Pupils noted down key information to share with the wider group at a later point when they presented their own CW later in the week. The inspector overheard a lively pupil debate relating to the differences between 'The Assumption of Mary' and 'The Ascension of Jesus'. The majority of pupils knew and could correctly explain these differences to the inspector. A Polish pupil also informed the inspector that it was Pope John Paul II who introduced 'The Mysteries of Light' into the Rosary. The lesson concluded by saying a reflective decade of the Rosary.
- In RE lessons, pupils are highly motivated, sustain their concentration extremely well and thoroughly enjoy their work. Achievement and effort are appropriately celebrated, often by displaying pupils' work in public areas of the school.
- The school is innovative in the manner in which it presents the RE curriculum. The use of drama and role play in RE is particularly effective in reinforcing concepts with young pupils. Experienced teachers plan and successfully implement imaginative and stimulating lessons skilfully designed to match the full range of pupils needs and to ensure highly effective continuity and progression in their learning.
- Collaboration with other schools has been used effectively to extend and improve the curriculum for pupils. For example, the 'A – Cross' project involved each school within the St. John Fisher High School pyramid making a cross which travelled to the other schools in the pyramid during Lent. A joint Holy Week liturgy was then hosted at the high school.
- Numerous charitable fundraising efforts are also organised and run by pupils. A total of £4000 is raised each year in support of local, national and international charities- notably Catholic Care, Cafod, and the annual Poppy Day appeal. 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. The school choir also performs to audiences locally, for example at the Birstall Armistice Day Act of Worship, Christmas Carol Singing and seasonal liturgical celebrations both

in the parish church and at school. St. Patrick's has also led the annual Batley Torchlight Procession and Benediction.

- Collective Worship is central to the life of St. Patrick's School and a key part of every school celebration. The celebration of the Eucharist, when appropriate, is seen as the heart of Catholic school belief and celebration.
- At a whole school Mass on the theme 'In Honour of Mary', celebrated with the parish priest in the main school hall, pupils took a leading part in proclaiming the scriptures, speaking the bidding prayers, taking up the offertory gifts and answering the responses. Pupils demonstrated outstanding attitudes of reverence and respect in their behaviour. The vibrant hymn singing included outstanding contributions from the school choir singing, 'My Soul Rejoices' and 'Ave Maria'.
- Staff, teaching and support, actively encourage, guide and support pupils on their journey of faith in all key stages of the school.
- Year 6 pupils take part in a 3 day residential experience at Myddleton Grange. They reflect upon their journey in faith over their time at St. Patrick's Primary School and prepare for life at high school. The entire visit is rooted in CW of the highest quality. Pupils say that they look forward to this experience. Parents who have had older children take part in it say that the experience had a very positive and lasting effect on their child/ren in helping them to cope with some of the pressures of life in later years.
- Staff regularly review and plan improvements to St. Patrick's School's provision of CW and are highly skilled in helping pupils to plan and deliver quality worship. They have a thorough understanding of the purpose of acts of worship and the wide variety of forms they can take. Staff have an excellent understanding of the Church's liturgical heritage, its rites and seasons and are passionate about ensuring that pupils have high quality experiences of the Church's liturgical life.
- The themes chosen by pupils and staff reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission and include the spiritual aspirations of all pupils.
- Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned, appropriate to their faith backgrounds and shows progression from their earliest years.

"I am looking forward to going to St. John Fisher High School but at the same time I will be so sad to leave St. Patrick's."

(Pupil's comment)

The Leadership and Management are Outstanding

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
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- The extent to which leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvements to outcomes for pupils at St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School Birstall is outstanding.
- Leaders, governors and managers are deeply committed to the Church's Mission in Education and St. Patrick's Birstall Mission Statement in particular. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community.
- The spiritual and moral development of pupils and CW are linked to the school's development plan and in particular, those aspects that form the school's RE Action Plan.

- The school's self-evaluation systems for RE/Catholic Life are thorough and accurate and are based upon key questions such as: 'What is actually happening in the classrooms?'; 'How can RE/Catholic Life at this school be further improved?' and 'Are pupils actively enjoying, and being given the opportunity to practise, what they are learning in RE at St. Patrick's?'
- Leadership of RE is informed by a high level of expertise and vision focused relentlessly on improving teaching and learning, resulting in teaching that is at least consistently good or better.
- The governing body receive regular headteacher/RE subject leader reports on the RE/Catholic Life of the school based upon termly monitoring activities.
- The Chair of Governors is a frequent and very welcome visitor in the school. Her contributions to the musical RE/Catholic Life of the school are particularly appreciated.
- The Finance Committee of the governors ensure that an adequate budget is allocated to RE so that appropriate RE resources and staff/governor training and development opportunities are provided.
- The governing body possess the skills and expertise to act as 'critical friend' to the school's Senior Leadership Team in holding them to account.
- The governors have an approved 'Education for Personal Relationships' (EPR) policy and programme which is in line with recent diocesan guidance.
- The governing body have been particularly successful in working in partnership with diocesan and local authority property officers to identify and precisely delineate public rights of way and the extent of ownership of surrounding land within close proximity of the school. By successfully erecting secure fencing around the school land, the diocese has not only made the school safer for pupils and staff, but it has also opened up to safe usage, extensive areas of the school grounds for outdoor education use. The school have been quick to make innovative use of a shaded woodland area to provide a quiet reflective nature area for pupils to use. (Creation of an 'outdoor classroom' is being considered as a future project.)
- The governing body have also been pro-active in securing funding for remodelling work to take place to the main school entrance and reception area. This will not only provide enhanced security, but will also create additional space in which pupils' RE work and RE artefacts can be displayed as a backdrop to a range of other activities designed to enhance the Catholic Life of the School.
- Religious Education has a very high profile in the life of the school, is integrated into initiatives within the school and has a profound impact on the moral and spiritual development of pupils.
- The school participates fully in developing and implementing a variety of effective partnerships. The school's provision and leadership and management make an excellent contribution to pupils' good and often outstanding achievement and well-being.
- All canonical and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled at St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School Birstall.

"St. Patrick's is a rock of this whole community – it's been the foundation stone for my family."

(Parent's comment)

"I was educated here. My children, my granddad, dad, uncles, sisters and nieces have all been educated at this school. These walls are just oozing prayers!"

(Parent's comment)