

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST ROBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
AINSTY ROAD, HARROGATE, NORTH YORKSHIRE
HG14AP

School URN	121642
Date of Inspection and OE grade	30 th June - 1 st July 2014 Outstanding Grade 1
E-mail address	admin@st.roberts.n-yorks.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Mr. N. Kelly
Headteacher	Mr. P. O'Rourke
RE Subject Leader	Mrs. M. Harrity
Date and grade of last S48 inspection	June 2009 Outstanding
Section 48 Inspector	Mr. D. 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, governors and managers are all outstanding in their overall effectiveness in ensuring that pupils at St. Robert's Catholic Primary School Harrogate are provided with an outstandingly effective Catholic Education.
- The School Mission Statement is lived out on an everyday classroom basis ensuring that St. Robert's is, 'a holy place of safety to love, learn and grow' ... 'Love one another as I have loved you'.
- The headteacher, governors and staff are deeply committed to the School's Catholic Mission. Staff and pupil morale is very high and belief in the school's success runs throughout all areas of the school.
- The very experienced Religious Education (RE) Subject Leader (deputy head) leads by example, setting high expectations in RE/Catholic Life of the school, and ensuring that staff and pupils are kept up to date with recent developments in the subject.
- A majority of the RE teaching is outstanding but it is never less than consistently good.
- Standards pupils achieve in RE are very high.
- Collective Worship (CW) is central to the life of the school and is particularly enriched by the timetabled high quality music input of the headteacher and a choral director from the Leeds Diocese 'Schools Singing Programme'.
- Parish clergy, catechist and youth minister are frequent and very welcome visitors to the school. The very experienced RE link governor is highly effective.
- Pupils have a strong sense of their own personal worth. They respect the dignity of others. Pupils are proud of their school. Their behaviour both inside and outside of the classrooms is exemplary.
- The school's RE curriculum meets Bishops' Conference requirements including the school's Education for Personal Relationship (EPR) Programme.

- Foundation Governors have ensured that the school fully operates under the provisions of the Trust Deed of the Diocese of Leeds and that all canonical and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- Drawing on existing expertise within the school, arrange further staff training in handling and analysing pupil tracking data in RE.
- Build up further resource provision to support the school's RE teaching on other World Faiths.
- Provide access to high quality Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for all staff (teaching and support) to deepen their knowledge and understanding of the RE/Catholic Life of the school.

Information about this inspection

The Inspection of St Robert'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 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:

- The extent to which key issues for action identified in the previous Section 48 RE Inspection have been satisfactorily 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 RE.
- 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 in particular the extent to which pupils respond and actively participate in the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education – including planning and implementing improvements to outcomes for pupils.
- School partnership working –including home/school/parish links.

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over 1 ½ days. A sample of 5 RE lessons and 5 acts of Collective Worship (CW) covering all key stages were observed. Meetings were held with the headteacher, RE subject leader and other staff, chair of governors, Parish Priest, parish youth minister, parents and pupils.

A comprehensive suite of RE/Catholic Life monitoring and evaluation documentation was scrutinised, together with written and digital samples of pupils work. The school website was also scrutinized.

Information about this school

- St. Robert's Catholic Primary is a very popular, heavily oversubscribed, slightly larger than average school, serving the 2 parishes of St. Robert's and St. Aelred's which cover a very large and diverse socio-economic area of Harrogate.
- The school has a Pupil Admission Number (PAN) of 40. Currently there are 282 pupils on roll. Of these 92% are Baptised Catholics. Pupils are taught in 10 classes, 3 of which are mixed age.
- Currently pupils join the reception class from 27 different pre-school settings. Around 10% of pupils have English as a second language. An increasing number of pupils join or leave the school other than at the usual times.
- The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Seven pupils have a statement of special education need.
- Since the last Section 48 (S48) inspection there have been a number of staff changes, including the appointment of a new headteacher, a new Chair of Governors and 2 Newly Qualified Teachers. The current RE Subject Leader was in post at the time of the last S48 Inspection.
- The School has 12.6 full time equivalent (fte) teachers, of whom 7 (fte) are Catholic. Ten (fte) teachers teach RE. Four teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) or equivalent. Currently no class teachers are undertaking CCRS or equivalent. The headteacher is completing a Master's Degree in 'Catholic School Leadership'.

*"I have over 38 years association with the school and think it is a fantastic family school."
(Parent's comment)*

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.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1

- St. Robert's is a very welcoming school with a strong family feeling of belonging. The school logo is prominently displayed in the main entrance/reception area alongside a very attractive stained glass window which features pupils' artwork - much of which reflects the school's Christian ethos.

- Pupils are eager to lead and take responsibility for helping to shape the Catholic Life of the school. They value and respect the school's long Catholic heritage and its strong links with the parish communities of St. Robert's and St. Aelred's.
- A key pastoral care aspect of the school is the 'Special Friends Programme' designed to support pupils new to the school. Year 6 pupils meet and greet the reception class children and their parents when they attend school for their induction day. The Year 6 pupils are paired with a new reception class child. They take them on a tour of the school and eat lunch with them. Often life-long friendships are formed between the children. Parents say how much they and their children value this supportive experience in helping their child to feel secure and welcome when joining the school. Similarly Y6 pupils say how much they enjoy taking on the added responsibility. Year 6 pupils, reception children and their parents share a joint assembly and Act of Worship together later in the Autumn term.
- In proportion to their years, pupils show a joyful capacity for community praise and celebration. The musical input of the headteacher, together with the regular timetabled support of a choral director of the diocesan 'Schools Singing Programme', are having a marked and very positive effect on the pupils understanding and significance of music and singing in the liturgical life of the school. Pupils from St. Robert's took part in a BBC Radio 4 'Sunday Worship' Programme broadcast live from Leeds Cathedral earlier in the year.
- The Parish Priests are regular and very welcome visitors to the school. They celebrate school Masses at key liturgical periods throughout the school year, for example St. Robert's Feast Day, Advent, Lent, First Holy Communion and Y6 Leavers' Mass. The school promotes both contemporary and traditional Catholic prayers. During lent, a Mass is celebrated in school each Tuesday morning before the start of the school day. Attendances have averaged around 60 (adults and children).
- The parish youth minister also plays a very active role in the development of the children's spirituality. As part of their transition preparations for high school, the Y6 pupils take part in an off-site day retreat at the parish centre organised by the youth minister in conjunction with the class teachers. Similarly, the school's 'Signing Club' also join in church services organised by the parish youth minister.
- During their first term, Y5 pupils take part in a residential retreat based at Myddleton Grange. Pupils say how much they enjoy the whole experience –particularly preparing and leading liturgies and celebrations- a skill they further develop back at school in Y6.
- Pupils treat others with high levels of respect, recognising that all are unique creations of a loving God and that as such, should be nurtured, celebrated and valued. Pupil behaviour at the school is exemplary.
- Pupils are very alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the immediate school community. The school supports Catholic Care through the 'Good Shepherd Fund'. Working with the parish deacon, the school also supports annual CAFOD projects. Working with the parish youth minister, the school has formed mutually supportive links with the Spiritan Youth Centre in the Philippines.
- The school is increasingly welcoming pupils and families from a variety of differing cultural traditions. Currently, either Malayalam, Polish, Filipino, Arabic, Italian, Russian or Spanish are the first language for around 10% of the pupils on roll.
- Families are always encouraged to share their differing customs and faith traditions with the wider school and are becoming increasingly confident in doing so. A family from Sri Lanka shared their traditional Advent preparations with the school. A Polish family shared their Easter traditions.
- Standards pupils achieve in RE are very high. Attainment indicators for the end of KS2 2013 show accelerated progress. Progress is at least good in each key stage for different groups of pupils and is exemplary in some. Most pupils concentrate very well, enjoy their RE work, and are rarely off task.

- As pupils move along their faith journey at the school, they become increasingly religiously literate. They show growing confidence in their use of the correct vocabulary and terminology relating to aspects of scripture and religious symbols.
- Collective Worship (CW) is a strength of the school. Pupils appropriately respond to and actively participate in all forms of worship from their earliest years at the school. CW is central to the life of the school. Pupils are skilled, relative to their age and capabilities in using a variety of methods to support their private and public prayer. Pupil behaviour during CW is reverent and respectful at all times.
- Using the guidelines with the support of the RE Subject Leader, the school is very successfully following the diocesan planning and progression guidelines for CW. From the school's RE budget, each class has been provided with a liturgy resources box to assist pupils and staff in planning their CW.
- In an outstanding CW observed in Foundation Stage, the children were actively involved in selecting appropriate RE artefacts from the Liturgy Box to set up an RE focal point for the CW. Even at this young age, children know and can say why a candle is lit when they gather to pray.
- Higher up the school, pupils regularly plan and lead their own CW. Pupils make excellent use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to select and provide appropriate music, project digital images and scripture readings relevant to the CW theme to emphasise and engage the class in high quality reflective CW experiences, for example: an excellent whole school CW planned and led by Year 6 pupils based around the theme: "Trust in God", used the diocesan liturgical planning guidelines to skilfully lead pupils and staff through a series of beautiful scripture readings and thought provoking questions digitally projected on to a screen. All helped to allay any fears that pupils may have had and the CW encouraged them to put all their trust in God. The Y6 pupils' thoughtful prayer petitions, their vibrant singing and signing of the hymns and their respectful behaviour throughout, exemplified the school's mission in action.
- An outstanding lower KS1 CW on the theme 'We know that Jesus will always help us' included a very powerful period of reflective silence. This followed a calm, thoughtful CW on how Jesus helped the sick man to feel better. Following further discussions, a pupil said, "Jesus always helps us if we are his friend." The children then enthusiastically sang and signed the closing hymn: 'I Have a Friend' and were encouraged to be good friends of Jesus by helping and caring for each other.

*"My son is now a member of Leeds Cathedral School Choir
–he gained the interest in singing whilst at St. Robert's."*

(Parent'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

- A majority of the RE teaching is outstanding but it is never less than consistently good. Teachers and other adults know their pupils very well, have high expectations of all their pupils and possess a strong RE subject knowledge. RE lessons are exceptionally well planned, inclusive and build upon prior learning.

- All classrooms include a dedicated RE focal point featuring high quality RE artefacts (including class Bibles). Pupils' artwork, written work and 'driver words' relating to the liturgical season/class RE topic are prominently displayed.
- Pupils are knowledgeable about the school/parish patron saints of St. Robert and St. Aelred. Similarly, they knew about and in some cases have visited the 4 Abbeys the school's house merit system are named after (Rievaulx, Fountains, Whitby and Jervaulx).
- High quality RE resources, including technology are used very effectively. In an excellent upper KS2 RE lesson on prayer ('Life in the Risen Lord'), the teacher very skilfully engaged the class in lively discussions on the nature and types of prayer. Very good use of the ICT 'visualizer' was made in 'diamond ranking' statements about prayer and praying. Working in groups, pupils were asked to rank order statements about prayer and share their reasoning with the class in the plenary session. Pupils visibly enjoyed their interaction and exhibited high degrees of religious literacy in communicating the reasons for their choices.
- Similarly, a lower KS2 class exhibited very good use of signs and symbols associated with belonging to a community. The pupils were knowledgeable and could explain about the meaning of signs and symbols of faith associated with the early Christian Community, for example, the 'ichthus'. They could also explain the significance of the keys and a sword appearing on pictures of Ss. Peter and Paul. Excellent use was made of ICT (ipads), dramatization, 'hot seating', poster making and storyboard writing frames in class RE activities.
- The support provided by other adults in classrooms is very well targeted. Their expertise and patience helps to optimise pupil learning, especially when pupils have specific learning difficulties/disabilities.
- The introduction of 'Godly Play' in the Foundation Early Years Key Stage, has had a very positive impact on the RE curriculum.
- The school's marking policy is adhered to in RE with particularly effective dialogue between teachers and pupils promoting further progress.
- Pupils are highly motivated in RE lessons. They take care to present their work to a pleasing standard. In the plenary session, pupils particularly enjoy sharing with their peers what they have learnt during the lesson. Achievement and effort are celebrated.
- The school is innovative in the manner in which it presents the RE curriculum. Excellent links are made with other agencies, the wider community parishes and the diocese, to provide a good range of enrichment activities and promote greater learning.
- The school networks very effectively with others and hosts the termly diocesan area RE subject leader cluster meeting. Similarly, the St. John Fisher cluster of primary school headteacher and the Catholic Early Years/Foundation/Foundation Stage network hold meetings at the school, to plan, co-ordinate and review educational developments.
- The school has adopted the diocesan approved RE programme of study 'The Way, the Truth & the Life' (WTL) and has adapted it to a 2 year rolling programme to accommodate mixed age classes. The school also supplements the scheme with support materials from a variety of other resources, for example 'RE Today' and CAFOD.
- To further support the RE curriculum and promote pupils' learning, the school arranges a number of out of school visits. For example, younger pupils explore the sense of awe and wonder on local springtime walks. Pupils also visit the parish churches associated with the school. In an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) class, the teacher skilfully helped the children to review their recent visit to the church to see the tabernacle. The children were able to say that they had seen the tabernacle. One child said, "Jesus is here in a special way". Class activities included building tabernacles from Lego.

- Residential and off site Day Retreats are organised for KS2 pupils. For example, Upper KS2 pupils take part in a residential retreat based at Myddleton Grange that enriches their spiritual lives, deepens their understanding of their faith and helps them to discern their own unique vocation. Pupils and parents say how much their children look forward to and value this experience.
- The school also arranges for visitors to come into school to share aspects of living out other faith traditions and practices.
- Additional RE resources to support the study of the Jewish faith have recently been purchased. It would benefit the school to purchase other such resources to support the school's teaching on other World Faiths.
- Good links exist between St. Robert's and St. John Fisher High School, to which the majority of Y6 pupils transfer. Year 3 pupils worked very successfully with the feeder school pyramid to present an Easter liturgy, 'Roll Back the Stone'. Parents and parishioners were also invited to attend a performance.
- At St. Robert's, the Celebration of the Eucharist, when appropriate, is seen as the heart of Catholic school belief and celebration. An annual planner is published outlining school events for the academic year –including school Masses, special assemblies and Collective Worship, to which parents are always invited and attend. They do so in pleasing numbers. Parents and grandparents say how much they look forward to attending these events.
- Pupils take a very pro-active role in the liturgical life of the school. They enthusiastically sing and 'sign' hymns, respectfully read scripture, reverently pray contemporary, traditional and their own personal prayers. Many pupils are also altar servers in their own parish.
- The RE Curriculum provides inclusion of a diocesan approved Education for Personal Relationships (EPR) programme.
- The school provides a very extensive number of school clubs (19) which cover a wide range of activities, for example sports, cookery, signing, sewing, Spanish, keep fit, book café, creative writing, science and inventions. The school also currently offers instrumental music tuition in violin, keyboard, brass, guitar, singing, orchestra and woodwind. Upper KS2 pupils also are invited to attend a variety of after school classes at St. John Fisher Catholic High School.
- Guided and supported by the Diocesan Co-ordinator for RE and information shared in RE cluster meetings, the headteacher and RE Subject Leader have worked hard to improve staff confidence in assessing sub levels of attainment in RE. A comprehensive RE pupil tracking system is in place, however this is currently heavily dependent on input and analysis by the RE Subject Leader. Further training in this area would benefit class teachers and ease the workload for the RE Subject Leader.

"I have a child with a statement of special education needs who is never made to feel different because the school always includes them in everything. We appreciate all the extra help the school provides."

"Older pupils are good role models for younger pupils."

"Pupils learn to respect each other."

(Parents' comments)

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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- Since the last S48 inspection the governing body have been very successful in appointing a new headteacher. A new chair of governors has recently been appointed. Both are firmly committed to fulfilling the Church's mission in education.
- The School Leadership Team (SLT) recently organised a leadership day at a local historic Catholic House (Markenfield Hall) to review, reaffirm and prioritise their commitment to the school's mission and to consider further approaches towards enriching and deepening the RE/Catholic Life of the school.
- A detailed School improvement Plan (SIP), incorporating RE/ Catholic Life aspects, has been drawn up and is acted upon. The SIP is kept under review by the SLT and governors. Monitoring visits and progress reports are undertaken at timely intervals.
- The governors fulfil their role as 'critical friend' and hold the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to account.
- The parish clergy and RE governor are actively involved in the RE/Catholic Life of the school.
- Governors regularly avail themselves of opportunities to visit the school within the school day. Over 70% of such visits have included attendance at an act of worship.
- All canonical and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.
- The school Performance Management System always includes RE/ Catholic Life aspects.
- The school's RE/Catholic Life evaluation systems are comprehensive and accurate.
- School leaders, governors and managers are outward looking. They are quick to make partnership links with others who can bring additional benefit to the RE/Catholic Life of the school, for example, the school offers placements to student teachers from Leeds Trinity and York St. John Universities.
- RE is well resourced in terms of staffing, physical resources, capitation and curriculum time. Additional funding has been set aside this year for curriculum training and development on more creative approaches to the teaching of RE.
- The school's provision, leadership and management make an excellent contribution to pupils' good and often outstanding achievement and well-being.
- The governing body have a wide spread of professional expertise and many have long term involvement with the school and its 2 parishes.
- School leaders 'live out' the gospel values in their day to day leadership and management of the school. They ensure that major events in the church's liturgical year are recognised, planned for and appropriately celebrated in ways which promote and enrich the RE/Catholic Life of the whole school community.
- The school supports the parishes in First Sacraments preparation. Staff from the school always attend the First Communion Masses in both parishes.
- There is a very strong sense of 'belonging' at St. Robert's. All governor and staff meetings begin with an appropriate prayer for the school. Every term ends with an invitation to all staff to join together after school for a period of quiet reflection led by one of the parish clergy, followed by light refreshments.
- When prospective new parents visit the school, they are given a tour of the school by Year 6 pupils and have the opportunity to meet the head or deputy head. The importance given to RE/Catholic Life of the school is always promoted.

- The Parent Teacher Association is very well organised, tireless in its support of the school, highly successful in fund raising efforts and greatly appreciated by the governors, staff and pupils.
- Home, school, parish links are promoted through social functions to welcome families new to the school/parish. Parents say how appreciative they are of these opportunities.
- External and internal signs, symbols and Icons of the Catholic faith are prominently displayed throughout the school premises.
- The school has identified the creation of an outdoor prayer garden to enhance the spiritual life of the school as an appropriate way of marking the school's recent 50th anniversary of its existence on the current site. The pupils have already drawn up some extremely attractive designs.
- Christ truly is at the centre of all that St. Robert's Primary School Harrogate seeks to achieve.

"Jesus you are very special to me."

"Thank you Jesus for always being with me."

(Year 2 Pupils' prayers)