

DIOCESE OF LEEDS DBI



SECTION 48 REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School
Ripon

School URN	121638
Chair of Governors	Mr. James Spencer
Headteacher	Mr. Peter Burdekin
RE Subject Leader	Mr. Peter Burdekin
Date of Inspection	11 th & 12 th June 2009
Section 48 Inspector	Dorothy Hamer

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St Wilfrid'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 Wilfrid's is a small Catholic primary school which serves the parish of St Wilfrid's Ripon and the outlying area. The school maintains good links with the parish and also with the local and wider Ripon community. The school accommodates Catholic and non-Catholic pupils and serves a mixed social and economic area combining rural and urban backgrounds. Whilst the school is located in the Ripon Spa Ward, 52% of pupils live in Ripon Minster and Moorside Wards which have more homes with a higher index of deprivation. The school has learners from service backgrounds and increasing numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language (Polish and Spanish families). At present there are 17 pupils (9.5%) with EAL. Mobility is high in some year groups.

The school has established good links with the three High schools and as a result benefited from extended curriculum provision and well supported transition from Year 6 to Year 7. Specialist teaching has impacted positively on pupils' experience of and confidence in the Arts, Technology and Engineering.

The majority of pupils enter the Foundation Unit, with a small minority joining mid-year in all year groups. The Foundation Unit is on a split site situated 8 minutes away from the main building. Apart from Year 5 and Year 6, pupils work in mixed age classes; the percentage of pupils with statements, and also those on the SEN register, is below the national average. Tracking systems indicate pupils' attainment on entry to be above national average, reflecting the nature of the catchment area and parental aspirations. Thorough assessment is started immediately on entry and analysis of FSP data at the end of pupils' first year demonstrates achievement and attainment to be above LEA and national average. Attendance is very good. There is a history of no exclusions. There is a total of 7.4 full time equivalent teachers of whom 3 hold the CCRS certificate. During the inspection all teachers were observed delivering lessons.

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.

The provision for Catholic education at St Wilfrid's is consistently good. The continued successful growth and development of the school community, with a strong commitment to creating an environment where young people can grow: 'in love, in knowledge and wisdom, in faith, in respect, in dignity and self worth', is testimony to the imperative of the school's Catholic Mission in raising standards and promoting the personal development of its pupils by those who hold leadership positions. This living Mission is built on the solid foundations of effective, secure and lasting relationships shared among governors, staff, parents, pupils and parishioners. Each and every member of the school staff is highly valued and all actively engage in the vision for the school's future.

The overall response of the pupils is positive and affirming. All pupils fully understand, subscribe to and actively promote the mission of the school. Their Mission Trees, displayed in every classroom, are important to them and provides a strong visual aid to personal and spiritual development. Pupils thrive as a result of the good to outstanding teaching of Religious Education (RE), enjoy their lessons, and make good progress. The highly effective teaching in RE together with the provision of the broader curriculum including PSHCE and Family Life Education, and a

wide range of extra curricula activities, contributes enormously to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils; this is a significant strength of the school.

Parents and parishioners are truly regarded as 'partners in education', they are consulted on all major matters and their views are given serious consideration by the school. The school actively invites stakeholders to various public occasions to make a reality of home~school~parish links e.g. assemblies, liturgical performances and Lenten alms giving activities. The introduction of an RE/Ethos committee reflects the inclusivity of a school who values contributions from beyond the teaching staff. A vibrant and close co-operation exists between school and parish with joint projects taking place e.g. welcoming services for new families, sacramental programmes and Father Paul leading RE lessons and celebrating the Eucharist with pupils.

School leaders are reflective and evaluative and are accurate in their judgements regarding future development needs as to the Catholic Life and the RE curriculum of the school.

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

Aspects identified for improvement in the previous inspection have been addressed through the implementation of a series of RE Action Plans. The Mission statement has been evaluated and re-written; a Vision statement has been put in place ensuring God is at the centre of all the school's undertakings. Policies and practices supporting Religious Education have been reviewed. Monitoring and evaluation of RE teaching and learning are well established. The headteacher and staff continue to develop effective systems for assessment and levels of attainment are a focus of RE development.

The capacity to make further improvements

The school clearly has good capacity to improve. Excellent leadership ensures all stakeholders are totally committed as they strive towards further improving what is an already good school. The governors are very effective in pursuing this by not allowing themselves to become complacent; they are proactive, hard working and truly appreciate the commitment of all staff. They have an effective committee structure which enables them to closely monitor standards, quality assure and plan strategically. Each governor is assigned a class responsibility and is welcomed into the life of the school; this ensures opportunities for informal data gathering which is referenced back to the full governing body. Effective self-evaluation systems are in place allowing governors to be fully aware of the strengths and needed development in aspects of teaching and learning. The RE governor plays an active role in the life of the school, being a 'critical friend' and enthusiastic catechist. Governor involvement in staff training is a strength of the school as it promotes understanding and a sense of joint purpose. The pursuit of excellence, with openness to reflection and new ideas, is an aspiration of leadership at all levels.

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

- To embedded RE tracking systems.
- To monitor how well the RE curriculum meets the needs and interests of the learners.
- To continue to moderate assessments to ensure accurate and consistent leveling of work.
- To provide opportunities for pupils in Upper Key Stage 2 to achieve higher levels of attainment.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

Leadership and management is strongly focused on the school's Catholic Mission and has created a shared sense of Mission among all members of the community. The governors, headteacher, management team and parish priest effectively communicate a strong sense of spiritual purpose, with a focus on promoting high standards and the fullest personal development of the pupils. The school is very effectively managed in a way that ensures the best use of resources.

The inclusion of all pupils is a central goal based on its belief that all are created in the image of God. The school openly declares that '*every child matters*' and this is effectively promoted through the highest level of care and to the extent that the spiritual and moral development of the pupils is outstanding.

Very good links exist with parents, parish and external agencies to reinforce the high standard of care, guidance and support the school provides to ensure its pupils' safety and general well-being. Parents feel listened to and supported by all staff within the school. The result is that the pupils flourish and commit themselves to the school's Mission.

Development needs are accurately identified and tackled energetically. The impact of leadership and management can be seen in the good progress made by the pupils, and in their active involvement in the many and varied Acts of Worship and liturgical celebrations.

The Parish Priest is a respected and valued member of the school community. He works extremely hard to promote and maintain excellent relationships with all members of the school.

The Chair of Governors expressed clearly the vision held by governors and the importance given to the role of the 'critical friend'; governors have a full understanding of and take seriously their responsibilities. He spoke warmly of the wonderful assemblies and acts of worship experienced by the children in a variety of settings; he ably articulated the vision of inclusivity and how the school celebrates individuality. Leaders are accurate in their judgement that St Wilfrid's is, in every sense, a truly Catholic school. The School is fortunate to have a governing body and headteacher who are very protective of the Catholic ethos of the school and who strongly influence community cohesion by promoting Christian values.

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

Collective Worship at St Wilfrid's is outstanding. Pupils are very confident in preparing, leading and participating in quality acts of Collective Worship. Varied Acts of Worship engage pupils' interest and inspire deep thought and reflective responses. Staff work hard to ensure a calm, spiritual atmosphere and creatively use everyday life situations, music and scripture to successfully develop the Catholic life of the school. Pupils listen attentively and make sensitive, reflective responses to questions. The school music group enhances assemblies and is highly successful in creating a positive and up-lifting atmosphere. All the elements of worship are sensitively witnessed to, as was observed in the Key Stage 2 Collective Worship led by the headteacher which included drama, music and the centering of the gospel message in the sacramental lives of the children.

Collective Worship in the Foundation Unit was outstanding with all children purposefully engaged in prayer and singing praises to God. Big Books evidenced the quality of work being undertaken with young children; pupils could read, recall and reflect on Pentecost, Easter and other liturgical celebrations recorded in the Big Books. The children were all focused and happily engaged as

they responded with enthusiasm to the excellent RE delivery and modeling of specific RE vocabulary during Collective Worship.

Each classroom has a dedicated RE area that displays work on the 'Here I Am' theme and Mission statement. Pupils' prayer journals and class prayer books are used effectively to encourage a personal prayer life which is further developed during the Year 6 retreat. All the children took great pride in the REEP achievement award given to acknowledge the development of an environmental and spiritual garden. The school works closely with Reverend Lawrence from the neighbouring Holy Trinity Church and this added to the dimension where children are encouraged to explore and value other faith traditions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS IN RE

How well do pupils achieve in RE?

The standards reached by pupils in Religious Education are good, with all pupils showing good attitudes to their work. Cross-curricula links to literacy, ICT and drama were evident in many lessons. Good levels of planning ensured the majority of pupils needs were catered for.

The pupils are well able to express themselves orally and in so doing, give a clear indication of their good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They demonstrate a mature level of faith commitment, lived out through their everyday life. The available evidence shows that by the time children reach the end of Key Stage 2 good progress is made by all learners. Pupils of all levels of ability achieve well because of early identification, intervention and the excellent support they receive. The school maintains evidence which confirms that the standards in RE are consistently good.

In discussions pupils spoke enthusiastically about their work and the high expectations of teachers, learning support staff and ancillary staff at the school. Catholic beliefs and values are at the heart of learners' moral and spiritual development. Pupils have a good understanding of the life and teaching of Jesus and are able to apply this teaching to their own lives and experiences.

The school assesses attainment against the National Levels of Attainment in RE. To achieve the high standard pupils meet challenging targets and are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a very good rate across all key stages. The school acknowledges the involvement of parents as critical to the development of RE work in school. Parents and pupils acknowledge they are consulted about aspects of school life and endorse the fact that their views are listened to and acted upon.

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION IN RE

How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?

The quality of teaching and learning in RE at St. Wilfrid's is consistently good with many outstanding aspects in evidence. This is confirmed through effective monitoring procedures and was clearly evidenced during the inspection particularly with reference to the progress made by the pupils. Where teaching was personalised and interactive e.g. a Year 6 power point, a modern dramatisation of the 'Our Father' and use of puppets to deliver the concept of Reconciliation then the teaching was excellent and fully engaged the learners. All pupils are extremely articulate, are highly motivated and obviously clearly enjoy their lessons. Work is carefully differentiated to suit the needs of all pupils and lessons incorporate a wide range of teaching and learning styles, specific work is tailored to the needs of EAL learners. Support staff are effectively utilised to encourage and ensure pupils achieve their learning objectives.

Through their work on other faith traditions pupils are made aware of the lifestyle, culture and needs of others. Visits to the Harrogate synagogue and a Gurdwara in Bradford widened the experience of the children. Much work is done by the school to include and provide for the recently arrived Polish families e.g. translation services, interpreter services, English speaking classes after school and a series of Art and Craft/computer classes to encourage learning of English.

The New Levels of Attainment have been implemented in the assessment and tracking system for R.E. It is evident that R.E. is the core subject in this school e.g. in the Foundation Unit the 'Here I Am' topic is the central theme for each term's teaching and learning. A comprehensive portfolio of moderated pupils work is in place, supporting the assessment process.

Marking of pupils work was most successful and informative when teachers marked to the learning objective or success criteria. When comments were too general then pupils did not receive the needed guidance to move to higher achievement.

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

R.E. curricular provision is good with a balanced delivery of the Diocesan R.E. programme with pupils learning about other faiths through quality teaching experiences enhanced through visits and visitors to school. Opportunities are provided in R.E. for reflection and prayer and for children to compose and record their own prayers. Observed teaching highlights the importance which all teachers attach to developing reading, writing, speaking and ICT skills in their R.E. teaching.

Family Life and Sex Education is appropriately planned and provided for, with Ethos Statements and Circle Time being used to enrich spiritual and moral development. These helped pupils focus on relationships with their peers, communities to which they belong and the global community. Children are provided with many opportunities to empathise with people less fortunate in the wider society. Pupils take part in a wide range of fund-raising activities throughout the school year, making them aware of their role as global citizens e.g. support for Barnardos, LEPR and Cafod. Observations and discussions with all parties in school supports the view that inclusion is a shared vision, where dialogue and collaboration are encouraged, respect for all is engendered and all show concern for the well-being of others, locally, nationally and internationally e.g. e-twinning with schools in France, Belgium and Germany is a successful outreach initiative. The number of extra-curricular activities available for children to access is impressive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RE

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

The leadership and management of R.E. is outstanding and is a significant strength of the school. The subject leader, who is also the headteacher, has a strong sense of mission which drives the school to constantly improve and move forward. There is a detailed R.E. development plan, which links to the integrated school development plan. Resources are purchased carefully and utilised effectively to enhance the provision in R.E.

The headteacher, governors, and all staff have a shared vision and sense of mission which is evident in all aspects of school life. Leaders and managers at all levels share a cohesive evangelical vision based on the teaching of the Gospel and through their own example, tireless undertaking and commitment, set a clear direction for the whole community, promoting the highest quality care and education.

St Wilfrid's is an inclusive school where an individual's self worth and dignity is recognised and realised. Pupils are inspired to 'be the best they can be' in all aspects of school life. They are

encouraged to develop to their full potential as fully rounded human beings with lives centred on Gospel values.

Excellent links are in place with parents and the wider community. Parental questionnaires evidence that parents cannot speak highly enough of the school and the support it gives them to be effective partners in their children's RE education and faith journeys.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY

ASPECT	GRADE	DESCRIPTOR
OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS	2	<i>Good</i>
THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL		
<i>How effective are Leadership and Management in developing the Catholic life of the school?</i>	1	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>How good is the quality of Collective Worship?</i>	1	<i>Outstanding</i>
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION		
<i>How well do pupils achieve in RE?</i>	2	<i>Good</i>
<i>How effective are Teaching and learning in RE?</i>	2	<i>Good</i>
<i>How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of pupils?</i>	2	<i>Good</i>
<i>How effective are Leadership and Management in raising achievement and supporting all pupils in RE?</i>	1	<i>Outstanding</i>