

# DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

## CANON LAW 806 FINAL INSPECTION REPORT INCORPORATING SECTION 48

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST FRANCIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

School URN

3833362

Date of S48 inspection and  
OE grade

24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
Outstanding (1)

E-mail address

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Chair of Governors

Mrs. A Walker

Headteacher

Mrs. R Harrison

RE Subject Leader

Mrs. E Fedzin

Date and grade of last S48  
Inspection

11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015  
Outstanding

Section 48 Inspector/s

Mrs. D Todd (Mrs. C Utting Shadow)

# 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 is the school in providing Catholic Education.

1

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

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

1

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

1

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

1

## Summary of key findings:

### **This is an Outstanding Catholic School**

- The headteacher and senior leaders are passionate about the responsibility they have to promote the Catholic Life of the school. Commitment to the pupils' well-being and faith life of the school is a priority. Their work is complemented by the passionate Religious Education (RE) leader who has led RE and Collective Worship (CW) for four years.
- Governors, including the parish priest and Chair of Governors, are regular visitors to school. They monitor and promote the provision of Catholic Life on a very regular basis.
- St Francis school has made good progress against the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection.
- There are now clear expectations for feedback and marking within RE. All staff comply with expectations and procedures. However, feedback both verbal and written is not always astute and does not always deepen pupils' understanding or inform them of how well they are doing and what they could do to improve.
- There is now a clear guide for pupils at different ages in terms of the participation in planning and leading CW. However, this could be more ambitious for Upper Key Stage 2. Opportunities for prayerful silence, allowing pupils to reflect, are present in most CW. On occasion these periods need to be extended, so that pupils can reflect more deeply with greater independence of thought.
- Praying together is part of the daily experience for all pupils and staff. Staff are excellent role models and pupils are very reverent and respectful.
- Pupil voice is a real strength of the school. Numerous groups are available for pupils to join, including the school council, Mini-Vinnies and the Chaplaincy Team.
- Parents and pupils value the 'family' feel of the school. The school mission statement 'Together in truth and faith we learn and grow as God's family' is central to St Francis school.

- The school's RE curriculum meets Bishops' Conference requirements. All canonical and statutory requirements and statutory duties are fulfilled.

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

Improve the quality of teaching and assessment in RE lessons by:

- Giving more opportunities for peer and self-assessment during RE lessons to allow pupils to have a better understanding of how well they are achieving against learning objectives and detailed assessment criteria.
- Improving teacher feedback within a lesson to reshape tasks and explanations, ensuring all pupils' learning is maximised. In addition, improve feedback after the lesson, ensuring that comments, where needed, are more personalised and any improvement work given helps pupils to understand their achievement and where they can improve further.
- Allowing pupils to develop deeper understanding and greater independence by moving away from an overreliance on graphic organisers and worksheets. Ensure tasks are open ended and challenging.

### **Information about this inspection**

The Inspection of St Francis 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. 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 2017). While following the inspection schedule as published, the inspector acknowledged the significant impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on schools over a sustained period, and took this into consideration when reaching judgements.

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- The extent to which the key issues for action identified 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.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one and a half days: The inspector examined the school website prior to the inspection. The inspector observed four acts of Collective Worship, one involving the whole school, one key stage and two classroom based. The inspector observed six classes during RE lessons. Discussions were held with the headteacher, RE subject leader, parish priest, chair of governors, parents, representatives from the school council and Mini-Vinnies. Year 6 were away on residential at the time of the inspection so the inspector viewed a video of pupil representatives. A comprehensive sample of evidence covering RE and the Catholic Life of the school was made available. The school's tracking to show pupil progress and attainment data was analysed. Samples of pupils' work, examples of marking, minutes from Governors' meetings and newsletters were scrutinised. Collective Worship planning and RE action plans and evidence forms from previous monitoring were scrutinised. Displays in classrooms and around the school and photographic evidence of current activities and those from previous years were noted. The inspection was shadowed by a trainee inspector.

### **Information about this school**

- St Francis Catholic School is a one form entry primary school with a nursery. There are 233 pupils on roll. The school has increased in size since the last inspection. The standard admission number is now 30. The school has a nursery with children attending both full time and part-time. St Francis is extremely popular and subsequently oversubscribed.
- The school is in the parish of St William of York, with 64% of pupils on roll who are baptised Catholics.
- The majority of the pupils are White British, 18% of children have English as an additional language (EAL), 12% are eligible for the Pupil Premium and 10% have additional needs and are on the SEND register.
- The school undertakes partnership working including work with the Morley community cluster and family of schools, the Catholic Teaching Alliance and the Leeds Diocese Catholic Compass group. These provide a range of joint training days, continuing professional development (CPD), and teaching and learning activities for the pupils.
- There are 9 full time equivalent teachers, 7 full time and 4 part time, and 13 classroom assistants. 3 teachers are Catholic and 1 holds the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies
- The leadership of the school has changed since the last inspection. The longstanding deputy was appointed to headteacher in 2016 and two existing teachers were promoted to assistant headteachers in 2017. The Early Years leader, who is also the special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) was appointed from another school in 2018.
- The RE leader who has responsibility for Religious Education and Collective Worship has been in post for four years. The Headteacher takes responsibility for the Catholic Life of the school.
- The chair of governors is relatively new to the role, but has been on the governing body for 5 years.

## Full report - inspection judgements

### CATHOLIC LIFE

#### The Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

- Pupils' contribution to the Catholic life of the school is excellent. The pupils are rightly proud of their school and know that they benefit from their attendance there. 'At St Francis we grow in God's love by showing kindness and care for each other.' 'School helps me to be a better person, because we learn about God and God wants us to take care of His world'.
- There are many roles and responsibilities that older pupils can take on. The school council has pupil councillors from Year 2 upwards. The pupils take their roles seriously and strive to represent the views of the whole class. The pupils are excited to raise money and make plans to improve the school. Pupils truly believe that they can make improvements and the suggestions made are taken seriously by the school leadership team. Most recently they have improved the equipment used at playtimes and are now fundraising to improve 'the eco-friendly area outside'.
- Mini-Vinnies meet regularly and have distinct roles such as president, treasurer and 'poster guy'. They raise money for charity, collect food for the homeless and help with coffee mornings.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary. When things go wrong, they have a firm belief that teachers will 'fix things' and that they also have responsibility to stop things getting out of hand. The play leaders take their responsibilities seriously and the longstanding 'buddy' scheme is talked about fondly by both parents and pupils. Older pupils are excellent role models for the youngest children.
- Pupils understand the school's behaviour policy. They believe it keeps everyone safe. One pupil said, 'Teachers act when things go wrong, especially the headteacher, she gets things sorted'. This was echoed by the parents. They believe that the school is creating well rounded pupils who take responsibility for themselves and others. 'Staff are proactive in contacting parents and communicating well,' a parent commented. One parent with a child in EYFS spoke about the 'no blame culture, when a child struggles to conform'. 'Staff do not judge but seek to understand the child's behaviour and work with parents to improve things in a very sensitive way'.
- St Francis is an inclusive school. Respect is shown for all faiths and cultures. One pupil said, 'When things go wrong teachers deal with it, we say sorry and we forgive each other'.
- The Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum is well planned and taught. The school follows the diocesan policy guidelines 'Created for Love' and uses 'A Journey in Love' throughout the school.
- Parish links are strong with the headteacher and chair of governors and other members of staff living and worshipping in the local area. Staff, parents and pupils talk with

fondness of the parish priest's frequent visits to school. Pupils talk about going to Mass in church and how this is something they really look forward to.

- The school strongly supports the parish in sacramental preparation and through newsletters does all it can to promote parish life and Mass attendance.
- The academic year is planned with the Catholic life of the school at its core. The school's feast day in October is celebrated, when pupils come off the timetable to learn about the school's patron saint in great detail. Pupils are in one of four houses, each with their own patron saint. These Saints are recognised and studied as good examples to live by.
- The liturgical calendar of the church is followed to the full with special services in Lent and Advent, Easter and Nativity productions and Marian and Christingle services. The children have a deep understanding of God's forgiveness and know that they should say sorry and forgive others.
- The school follows the diocesan scheme of 'Virtues to live by'. The older pupils can talk about what a virtue means and they are really proud to receive the weekly virtue award. They are also happy to celebrate the success of others.
- The school mission statement: 'Together in truth and faith we learn and grow as God's family' is clear, inspiring and central to school life. Staff are fully committed to its implementation across the whole curriculum.
- Staff pray regularly together and there is a strong community feel. Due to the pandemic events such as staff retreats and mission days have not taken place. This is something that the school usually requires as the number of practising Catholic teachers has decreased significantly since the last inspection.
- Displays around school reflect the Catholic character of the school very effectively. They celebrate every aspect of school life and promote the school's vision, pupils and outcomes. RE displays in classrooms are of the highest quality and clear structure and policy is in place to ensure consistency.
- The headteacher has served the school for many years. She leads by example and is highly regarded by governors, staff, parents and pupils. She lives and worships in the parish, supports the parish with sacramental preparation and is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education.
- The highly committed chair of governors and parish priest are frequent visitors to school. They offer continuing support to the school leadership team and all members of staff. Everyone talks about a culture of learning, where there is 'no question too silly'.
- Due to the pandemic the dedicated Catholic Life committee is not fully functioning so governors have not been able to contribute to the diocesan self-evaluation form (DSEF) in a meaningful way or challenge the school's self-evaluation. This action is included in the school development plan for implementation as soon as possible.
- Parents interviewed spoke extremely highly of the school in terms of leadership, staff at all levels and pupils. The school provides wrap-around care which enables parents to manage commitments of work or appointments flexibly. Comments such as, 'I feel genuinely lucky that my children are here', 'My children are happy to come to school, they even want to come when they are not well,' 'school was here for us when we needed support,' 'I cannot think of one thing the school could do more, its excellent,' were typical of the sentiments expressed.

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

## Religious Education is Outstanding

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	<b>1</b>
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	<b>1</b>

- Pupils talk about RE with enthusiasm: 'RE lessons are fun, I enjoy role-play and reading from the Bible. Readings from the Bible have a message for us about life.'
- Most pupils make very good progress from varying starting points and take pride in their work. RE books were excellent in their presentation. One pupil said, 'Every day we learn something new'.
- St Francis uses 'The Way The Truth and The Life' (WTL) scheme of work recommended by the Leeds Diocese, adapting medium term planning and lesson objectives. 'I Can' statements are stuck in pupils' books at the start of each unit of work. The school dedicates ten percent of curriculum time to the teaching of RE and meets the requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- Behaviour in RE lessons is very good. Pupils participate with enthusiasm, asking and answering questions. They appreciate the acquisition of knowledge and the opportunity to recap prior learning and link topics and ideas together.
- The pupils' attainment as indicated by teacher assessment is outstanding. Pupils from varying starting points make excellent progress. The quality of pupils' work, both in class and in written work is excellent, although some tasks cap pupils' learning as there is an overuse of worksheets and graphic organisers.
- Teachers consistently plan good lessons. Policies are adhered to with all teachers starting units of work with a 'cover page' and a focus on the key vocabulary required for the unit of work. 'I Can' grids are in all pupils' books and staff highlight these at the end of the units of work. However, the 'I Can' statements are not yet used to maximum effect with pupils to improve self and peer assessment.
- Language and methods used in RE lessons are consistent, using recap and review, repeating challenging vocabulary and an emphasis on understanding what words mean.
- Teachers are confident in their subject expertise; most have attended professional development courses on how to deliver RE creatively. However, in a number of lessons there was too much teacher talk and pupils were passive. Pupils' response to learning is often curtailed by the use of worksheets and graphic organisers, leading to formulaic lessons that do not allow all pupils to be challenged and show what they could do if given greater independence.
- Not all teachers listen to pupils' responses astutely and some pupils cannot explain how well they are achieving in RE and what they can do to improve. Pupils' responses can be quite short. On occasions in Key Stage 2 opportunities were not taken for more time to be given by teachers to elicit responses that would allow pupils to explore concepts in greater depth.
- Good quality resources, including other adults, are used effectively to optimise learning for most pupils. In an excellent early years foundation stage lesson pupils were actively

engaged in listening to the story of Zacchaeus. They initially used actions and then in small groups used sensory equipment to retell the story, whilst some children role-played the story outside and others made 'sorry' boxes in the construction area,

- Teachers instil a pride in the pupils by encouraging them to see the RE books as special. All teachers and support staff praise the pupils well. They celebrate achievement and effort, and pupils are motivated.
- There is a warm nurturing atmosphere in classrooms where pupils with special needs are supported in small groups or one to one,
- The highly motivated, inspirational RE leader ensures policies and procedures are adhered to. She is supportive of staff both early in their career and those whose knowledge of the Catholic RE curriculum requires support. Staff talk about 'no silly questions' - this means that there is a supportive collaborative atmosphere in school.
- Leaders and governors have committed resources to ensure that staff have training in RE and all staff have attended courses on Creative RE at the diocese. Further CPD is now required to upskill staff after a hiatus in development.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### Collective Worship is Outstanding

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	<b>2</b>
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	<b>1</b>
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	<b>1</b>

- Pupils appreciate living and working in a faithful, praying community. The very youngest pupils are confident in making the sign of the cross. In one act of worship, the inspector observed Reception children putting a pebble in a bowl whilst thinking about someone they may have upset. They concluded a short time of prayerful silence with the sign of the cross.
- Older pupils are keen to plan and lead worship for their class or the whole school. Upper Key Stage 2 need be more independent as they build on the scaffolding that is provided to Lower Key Stage 2.
- The pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year. They enjoy learning about and from the lives of the saints in worship time. One child said, 'I like praying in the prayer garden, I think we will do it more now the summer is coming'.
- The quality of communal singing and prayer in the whole school Collective Worship is good. Children join in during traditional prayers such as the Our Father and Hail Mary. They take pride when chosen to read from the Bible and respond to bidding prayers.
- Parents spoke very fondly about attending 'Praise' assemblies on a Friday. The school hopes to get back to this level of parental participation as soon as current restrictions allow. Parents and pupils enjoy getting to know more staff as a variety of staff and pupil groups lead whole school worship on a regular basis.
- At the time of inspection Year 1 led a Mother's Day worship which was extremely well attended by Year 1 parents and governors. All staff are excellent role models to the children and expectations are high, Pupils enter the hall with their hands joined and there is instantly an atmosphere of prayerful calm.

- Different forms of worship are planned, and the liturgical year followed at an appropriate level for all pupils. Pupils enjoy attending Mass in church and parishioners are invited to attend services in school.
- Liturgical acts of worship reflect elements of the Mass: for example, the Gospel is greeted in a formal manner and a child holds the bible aloft walking to the lectern. The children are encouraged to pray for themselves and their families, their neighbourhood and the wider world.
- The children are given a 'mission' for the week; at the time of inspection, Lent, this was related to almsgiving and the diocesan collection for the Good Shepherd.
- St Francis School follows the virtues programme produced by the Diocese of Leeds. Pupils and parents talk about the importance of learning about virtues and how this helps them. 'The children understand the virtue awards given each Friday. They can articulate why they have been given an award and are pleased to celebrate the success of others,' said one parent.
- Mini-Vinnies talked proudly about the Ash Wednesday service they led for the whole school and were pleased that the parish priest could attend. The parish priest is proud of the school and the pupils. He shared comments that he has received from parents regarding the 'values that are embedded in the pupils as they grow through school,' and 'The children bring the worship home; they evangelise at home'.
- The headteacher is very visible. She leads hymn practice and is present at key stage and whole school acts of worship even when she is not leading. She is part of the parish and provides strong links, acting as a catechist, preparing pupils for first sacraments.
- When governors visit school for CW, they produce evaluation forms that feed into the school's self-evaluation of CW and the Catholic Life of the school. This will have even greater impact once the Catholic Life Committee is fully up and running.