

DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HOLY ROOD CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL, BARNSELY

School URN	106632
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr Derek Skitt
Name of Headteacher	Mr John Gregson
Date of Inspection	20 th November 2007
Section 48 Inspector	Mr John Greenwood

“... an enthusiasm for the things of God.”

Introduction

The Inspection of Holy Rood Catholic Primary School has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocese of Hallam Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections as approved by the Bishop of Hallam.

The process of inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in further deepening the quality of Catholic education provided.

Description of the school

Holy Rood School was founded in 1832 and moved to its current site in 1977 following the closure of the old school building to aid road development. The school occupies a site between two other schools and shares a kitchen with the neighbouring primary school although Holy Rood School has its own dining room.

The school serves the parishes of Holy Rood and Our Lady's and Saint James Worsborough. Holy Rood church and the school are in close proximity. The school draws from a catchment area with a wide socio-economic mix.

This is an average sized school. It serves families from a variety of social and economic backgrounds across the town of Barnsley. Almost all pupils are of White British or European heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found nationally, though the proportion with statements of special educational need is above average. More pupils than usual currently join the school midway through their education, many with little or no spoken English. The school holds the Football Association (FA) Charter Mark, the Silver Healthy Schools Award and the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (BECTA) Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Quality Mark.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners?

The provision of Catholic education at Holy Rood School is outstanding. The school has a very calm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere and its distinctive nature as a Catholic school is clearly apparent. The Governors, Headteacher, Religious Education Co-ordinator, and staff, are deeply committed to the Catholic life of the school and Holy Rood parish. The children are well cared for and participate in excellent liturgies. Through lessons based on the Here I Am programme and the teachers own work, the children acquire appropriate religious knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes. There are excellent relationships with the school and parishes which give the children and their families many opportunities to take an active part in Sunday Masses. Similarly parents and parishioners visit the school regularly to participate in Collective Worship and many other school events. This is a very successful and outstanding feature of the school. Children of other denominations are nurtured and supported in their faith journeys.

The school's very detailed Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and the Religious Education and Holy Rood Parish Action Plans within the school's Improvement Plan clearly identifies aspects of the school's provision which are being developed. This report recognises the importance of continuing with these developments, i.e. producing a child friendly version of the mission statement, extending the use of prayer boxes, reviewing assessment policy and procedures to investigate the children's knowledge of key facts of the Catholic Faith. Also continue to make use of ICT and other cross-curricular opportunities in Religious Education lessons and review the Sex and Relationships Programme in school.

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

Areas for improvement identified in the last inspection in November 2003 were to:

1. Celebrate and consolidate the excellent partnership which exists between school, parents and parishes, the very good spiritual and moral development of the children and the good standards achieved in religious education by the children.
2. Share the very good practice developed to strengthen and maintain links between school and parish with other schools and parishes in the diocese.
3. Consider giving the Governors the opportunity to make an input into the School Development Plan at its initial stage to allow them to have a greater influence on the future strategic development of the school.
4. Come to an agreement about the amount of written work expected from each age group, in particular in Key Stage Two.
5. Build on the current Marking Policy already in place, to include targets for children to aim at to improve and develop their work.

Each issue has been dealt with very effectively. The headteacher has addressed Diocesan meetings, including contributing to a Catholic Certificate in Religious studies. (CCRS) module, to describe the model practice that exists with Holy Rood School and Parish. A prayer book, compiled by the headteacher was given to every school in Hallam in 2006. The school and church web sites contain a running record of events in pictures that other parishes and schools can access. Many articles are sent and published in the Hallam News.

Governors now have a direct input into the strategic development of the school through their own SEF and by co-ordinators contributing their ideas at the start of the School Development process before approving the plan at a full governors' meeting.

The children's Religious Education work is now audited annually to monitor the amount of written work expected from each year group. The timetable was reorganised to give the children a longer period of time for extended pieces of work.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The detailed SEF correctly recognises how the whole school community provides a caring, safe environment with a very strong Catholic ethos. The school leadership team gives very clear direction and the staff work closely together. The high status given to the Catholic life of the school is plainly apparent in newsletters, reports to Governors, school development planning, website, sacramental preparation programmes, displays and the imaginative, inspirational, prayerful liturgies for the children and whole community. Areas for further development are also clearly identified and with the support of the Governors, Parish Priest, Religious Sister, and parents the capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic Education is outstanding. The proposed interpretation of the mission statement by the children will give further opportunity to reflect on the vision of Catholic education at Holy Rood School.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in the development of the Catholic life of the school?

The leadership and management team of the school is strongly focussed on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and promoting the spiritual and moral development of the children. The dedicated headteacher strives for excellence in all aspects of provision at Holy Rood School. The staff participate in Inset days for Religious Education and attend appropriate courses. The majority hold the CCRS qualification. The development of RE is reported to the Governors as part of the headteacher's termly report and through the Governors direct involvement in the life of the school. The Religious Education action plan forms an important part of the overall School Development Plan and gives clear direction. The very committed, hard-working Religious Education Co-ordinator makes an outstanding contribution to the school's development of Religious Education teaching, collective worship and links with the parish. She is well supported by all the staff.

The excellent links with the parishes make a significant contribution to the children's spiritual development and faith formation. Governors take an active part in the life of the school and have overseen the developments since the last inspection. All pupils are well cared for in a happy, safe environment where the Mission Statement, which puts Christ at the heart of the school community, can be seen clearly in practice. The school should consider investing in a sabbatical experience for the headteacher to further enhance the leadership of the Catholic life of Holy Rood School.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship at Holy Rood School is outstanding. Acts of worship are held in some form every day. Parents and parishioners are invited to the regular whole school and key stage liturgies and attend in large numbers. These are led by the children. Prayerful circle times take place in all classes. Bible quotations, which are regularly updated and displayed around the school, provide a focus for discussion, prayer and worship. Special liturgies are held at the beginning and end of the year when

the Reception and Year 6 pupils are given special prayer cards/bookmarks to welcome the Reception children into school and to say farewell and to thank the Year 6 children as they move onto secondary school.

Parents and parishioners speak highly of the Catholic life of Holy Rood School and enjoy the opportunity to participate in the spiritual life of the school. On Sundays many children attend Mass in Holy Rood Church, taking an active part, well supported by school staff and parishioners. Children's liturgy sessions and sacramental preparation programmes are led by school staff, governors, parishioners and the religious sister, who also spends one day every week working in school. Good home/school worship links are made throughout the year, eg on Education Sunday and during Advent when a crib travels between school and the children's homes. Families are encouraged to pray together and add thoughts and prayers to a special book. Prayer is clearly the 'heartbeat' of Holy Rood School.

In the entrance and on the corridors there are prominent Religious Education displays and there are appropriate resources for times of worship in the classes. It is planned to extend the use of prayer boxes to give the children even greater responsibility for leading their own liturgies. The proposed peace garden could also provide a place of reflection for the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

The children achieve well in Religious Education lessons based on the Here I Am programme and other resources which incorporate challenging activities and differentiated work in most lessons observed. The Religious Education Co-ordinator closely monitors and evaluates the quantity and quality of pupils' written work by carrying out a work scrutiny with feedback at a staff meeting each term. This also checks that work is differentiated and that older children are creating more extended pieces of writing. Marking is also evaluated to see if it is informative and giving clear directions to children about how to improve their work.

The children make good use of ICT, English and art skills in their work, together with other opportunities for cross-curricular work eg. counting religious symbols in an Infant maths lesson. The school is seeking to review the assessment policy and procedures and looks forward to linking the Directory requirements with the content of Here I Am. This could form the focus for a worthwhile sabbatical experience. Achievement in RE is good.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

The children are very polite and welcoming and behaviour is good. Teaching and learning at Holy Rood School is good, with some outstanding teaching. In class the children are attentive and work purposefully on the tasks set. Staff have a good knowledge of the 'Here I Am' programme and are very well led and supported by the Religious Education Co-ordinator. Through lesson observations, work scrutiny and

feedback to all staff, she affirms the work of the school and provides positive ways forward to continually review and improve the teaching and learning of RE. Successful lessons have clear objectives and are well planned and delivered. Lessons regularly involve discussions, writing accounts and prayers, art work, drama and ICT resulting in dynamic, engaging activities for the children.

Parents are informed of the Religious Education topics to be studied at the beginning of each term, and are also sent a programme of liturgies and assemblies to which they are invited. Good use is being made of interactive whiteboards and ICT. Pupils' learning could improve further through teachers being more explicit to the children about what they are expected to achieve during some lessons.

How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of all the learners?

The school devotes 10% of its curriculum time to Religious Education, fulfilling the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. It has effective policies for Religious Education, Collective Worship and Sex and Relationships (SRE). In SRE the school is planning to review its programme next year. Very effective World Faith days are organised and incorporate visits and visitors to school. Plans are in hand to introduce a Christian Day to complement the recent, very successful Jewish Day. The Religious Education curriculum is good as it gives the children a greater knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith and makes a significant contribution to the children's spiritual and moral development.

The children are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities to support many charities. As well as raising money, these ventures have also enabled the children to appreciate the needs of others.

Parents are welcome visitors to the school and there are very positive relationships within the whole school community. Children with special needs and those with English as a second language, have their needs well met for and the curriculum support and teaching is organised appropriately to meet their needs. Circle time activities and the school council underline how the views of the children are valued and acted upon. Some children are 'buddies' at playtimes and strive to involve and care for any children feeling isolated. Holy Rood School is a happy, safe and welcoming place to be.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?

The leadership and management of Religious Education at Holy Rood School is outstanding. The SEF and Religious Education Development Plans are detailed documents which reflect the current good practice but also give clear direction for further development of the Catholic life of the school. Children's work is monitored with work scrutinies within school. The assessment procedures are well established, but the school staff would welcome the opportunity to extend this. When appropriate, Religious Education is included in individual teachers' performance management targets. Curriculum and Professional Development (CPD) needs are identified and met. The

Religious Education Co-ordinator gives support and help to all members of staff. Religious Education lessons are formally observed every 2 years. Consideration could be given to evaluating the impact these observations have. The recent audit of collective worship has provided clear direction for staff. Information from Diocesan meetings is shared within school, and staff have also contributed as providers for some Diocesan meetings and courses.

The school leadership team has worked hard to make the environment of Holy Rood School safe and fit for purpose. The proposed Peace Garden and further improvements to the Infant play area will enrich this still further. The classroom, hall and entrance displays all make a positive contribution to the children's achievement in Religious Education by reflecting the importance the school leadership places on developing a Catholic ethos.

Information about the school

Type of School	Primary, Voluntary Aided
Age profile of Students	3 – 11
Number on roll	239
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	17
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	4
Number of Catholics on roll	148
Number of Other Christian Denominations	66
Number of other Faiths	3
School address	Shaw Street Barnsley South Yorkshire S70 6JL
Telephone Number	01226 281219
Fax Number	01226 770351
Email	
Website	

Summary of Inspection Judgements:	
Overall Effectiveness	Outstanding
The Catholic Life of the School	
How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	Outstanding
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	Outstanding
Religious Education	
How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?	Good
How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?	Good
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	Outstanding
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	Outstanding

Further copies of this report are obtainable from Holy Rood Catholic Primary School or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU Tel: 0114 2566440