

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**IMMACULATE CONCEPTION
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
SPINKHILL
SHEFFIELD
S21 3YB**

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| School URN | 112899 |
| Name of Chairman of Governors | Father Peter McGuire |
| Name of Headteacher | Mr Stephen Owen |
| Date of inspection | 4th July 2006 |
| Section 48 Inspector | Mrs Gillian Foster |

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

Introduction

The Inspection of Immaculate Conception 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.

Information about the school

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| Type of School | Primary, voluntary Aided |
| Age profile of Students | 4 - 11 |
| Number on roll | 215 |
| Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register | 22 |
| Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs | 2 |
| Number of Catholics on roll | 171 |
| Number of Other Christian Denominations | 36 |
| Number of other Faiths | 1 |
| School address | College Road, Spinkhill, Sheffield. S21 3YB |
| Telephone Number | 01246 432 916 |
| Fax Number | 01246 433 085 |
| Email | headteacher@immaculate.derbyshire.sch.uk |

Description of the school

Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School serves the parishes of Immaculate Conception, Spinkhill and Our Lady of Sorrows, Clowne. It is located in Spinkhill village, North East Derbyshire and occupies a split site. Pupils come from a wide geographical area and many of them are brought to school in buses.

The children are educated in seven classes, each containing a discrete year group. There are seven full time teachers and one part time teacher. Five of the teachers are Catholic. At the time of the Inspection, the Religious Education Co-ordinator was on maternity leave and the deputy headteacher, who was previously the Religious Education Co-ordinator, was fulfilling the role.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

The effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of Catholic education is good. The Governing Body is well informed, hard working and committed to promoting and deepening the quality of Catholic education. The Leadership Team and the parish priest are dynamic and enthusiastic in constantly striving to improve the provision of Catholic education. All staff share the values and beliefs of Catholic education and are committed to the Catholic life of the school, they are supportive of each other and provide very good role models for the children. The excellent relationships which exist within the school community promote and strengthen the Catholic ethos. Pupils are respected and well cared for and they flourish in a happy, affirming, secure environment. Throughout their time in school, pupils acquire knowledge and skills in Religious Education which have a positive impact on their attitudes and contribute to their spiritual and moral development.

The areas for development identified in the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) are: to further develop the spirituality of the children; to continue to improve and develop the childrens' knowledge and use of Scripture at both an academic and personal level and to integrate Religious Education effectively into the development of the 'Excellence and Enjoyment' initiative. This report identifies three further areas for development: the inclusion of specific sections in the School Development Plan (SDP) relating to the development of the Catholic life of the school and the development of Religious Education; the introduction of rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in Religious Education and to review assessment procedures in light of recent recommendations and guidance from the diocese.

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

The last Religious Education Inspection took place in October 2000 and the following areas for development were identified: to review the time given to Religious Education teaching to ensure the ten percent statutory requirement is met; to develop effective procedures for assessment; to share practice in effective planning for Religious Education on a whole school basis; to ensure that reports to parents on their childrens' progress in Religious Education gives them the best balance of information and to review the programme of Sacramental preparation currently in operation. All the above areas have been addressed. All classes now receive a minimum of ten percent teaching time in Religious Education. Assessment policy was reviewed and procedures were put into place although the need for more rigorous and effective assessment remains an issue. All teachers have received training in planning Religious Education lessons using the 'Here I Am' programme and planning is now effective and consistent throughout the school. Annual reports to parents now contain details of what the children have learnt in Religious Education and the progress they have made, parents express satisfaction with the quality of the reports. Sacramental preparation, which was previously carried out by the school, is now family based within the parish, parents and parishioners express satisfaction with these arrangements.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education is good. The Governing Body, parish priest, headteacher and all members of staff are actively involved in the school's mission, they are hard working and committed to providing the best possible Catholic education for the children. Parents are supported by the school in developing their childrens' Religious Education through information leaflets and regular informative newsletters. The SEF gives a clear and realistic analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development. There are however, currently, no specific sections in the SDP relating to the development of the Catholic life of the school or the development of Religious Education. The inclusion of such sections in the SDP would formalise the priorities which have been correctly identified and provide a rigorous tool for governors and staff to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and impact of those priorities.

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?

Leadership and management in the development of the Catholic life of the school is good. Governors are well informed and committed to the Catholic mission of the school. The parish priest is very involved in the life of the school and has a positive impact on many aspects of school life. The leadership of the school is strongly focused on the school's Catholic mission and has been successful in creating a sense of shared mission amongst the staff. The leadership team and the parish priest are constantly

striving to raise standards and promote the personal development of the children. Pupils feel respected and in turn they show respect for others; they are well cared for and nurtured in a happy, caring, forgiving environment where Gospel values prevail. The school's belief that all are created in the image of God underpins the practice of inclusion. Pupils of all needs and abilities are welcome and well catered for. Very good links exist with both parish communities and the school feels itself to be an integral part of parish life. As stated earlier in this report the inclusion of a specific section in the SDP relating to the development of the Catholic life of the school, would enable governors to monitor more effectively, this important aspect of school life.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship meets statutory requirements and is outstanding. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship which is regularly reviewed by governors. Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and the whole school community. Collective Worship is always planned within a liturgical framework and follows the Church's liturgical year. The children develop a sense of their own important place in the Church and of being part of a worshipping, Eucharistic community. Parishioners and parents share the weekly Masses in school and the children contribute to Masses in Church on a monthly basis through reading and leading prayers of intercession. Acts of Worship include a variety of prayer styles and activities within the liturgical framework, they are age appropriate and relevant to the faith backgrounds of the children. The children prepare and lead acts of worship and they are eager to participate in them. The children are reverent and prayerful during these gatherings and sing with great enthusiasm and joy. Children are encouraged and given many opportunities for spontaneous prayer. The parish priest makes a powerful contribution to Collective Worship. Collective Worship impacts positively on the childrens' spiritual and moral development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Learner achievement in Religious Education is largely good and in line with achievement in English. Staff have high and realistic expectations of standards of behaviour and attainment. Pupils respond well to these expectations. Pupil behaviour is very good, their enthusiasm for and enjoyment of Religious Education lessons contribute to good standards of attainment. Written work is generally good and from the earliest years children are nurtured, respected and encouraged to express their views and listen to and respect the views of others. Children develop knowledge and understanding appropriate to their ages and abilities and almost all make good progress. Pupils with special needs are well catered for and make good progress.

Most of the children are good independent learners, they also work well in partner/group activities. Children enjoy their Religious Education lessons which have a positive impact on their spiritual and moral development. The school now needs to develop more rigorous, whole school assessment procedures to enable all staff to have an accurate knowledge of precisely what levels children are working at and what is needed to allow the children to make the maximum progress in knowledge and understanding. The school plans to use diocesan guidance in introducing new assessment procedures.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching and learning throughout the school is mainly good with some outstanding teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are committed to teaching high quality Religious Education. All teachers are confident to teach the 'Here I Am' programme and plan lessons thoroughly. All teachers offer differentiated activities to the children and in the best lessons, the level of challenge enables pupils to reach high levels of knowledge and understanding. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for, they are presented with work and the necessary support that allows them to make good progress. The quality of written work in almost all classes is good but the quantity of work produced varies from class to class. There needs to be some agreement on the amount of written work appropriate for each age group. In many classes, excellent cross-curricular links are planned for and the appropriate use of ICT enhances teaching and learning in Religious Education. All Religious Education lessons contain elements of reflection and often prayer, this has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children and of their understanding and appreciation of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. The well established programme of monitoring and evaluating in other core subjects now needs to be extended to include Religious Education. Such monitoring and evaluation through lesson observations and the scrutiny of planning and pupils' work would ensure consistency of expectations in standards and provide the opportunity for sharing the very good practice that already exists.

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

The efforts of the school in meeting the needs and interests of the learners is good. The Religious Education curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference by devoting ten percent of teaching time to Religious Education. Children acquire a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith and through the 'Here I Am' programme, develop an understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures. The teachings of Jesus and the Church underpin all the school's efforts to meet the needs of its pupils. Teachers plan many opportunities for the children to respond to God's call in everyday life and

encourage the children to take responsibility for themselves and others when appropriate. The School Council is a very good example of this. The school has an excellent PSHCE policy which supports the Religious Education curriculum very well and adds to the childrens' understanding of global issues and how they as Christians can impact on God's world. The school is socially inclusive offering equal access of opportunity for all pupils to make progress. The partnership with parents is valued, parents are regarded as partners in their childrens' education and they are kept well informed of what their children are learning and how they can support them. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and promote the strong, caring Christian ethos.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Leadership and management are good in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education. The Religious Education Co-ordinator has a strong commitment to the Catholic faith, her role is clearly defined in an explicit job-description and she works hard to fulfil her responsibilities. The leadership team, parish priest and governors are totally committed to the school's Mission Statement, its ideals and aims, and in raising achievement for all learners. Staff are given appropriate training opportunities to give them the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver the best possible curriculum to the learners. Religious Education is given a very high profile in school and this is deepened by the regular involvement of the parish priest in school life. Resources for Religious Education are good and effectively used by staff to enhance the childrens' learning. The school is housed mainly in an old building, there is a mobile unit on the same site and a school hall across the main road in and out of the village. Staff work hard to overcome the difficulties presented by these circumstances and the school runs smoothly and efficiently. The whole school community is looking forward to the building of a new school on one site, in the near future. As stated earlier in this report, although priorities for developing Religious Education have been correctly identified, there is no specific section in the SDP relating to this. This needs to be addressed to ensure that effective monitoring and evaluation can be carried out by governors and staff and that staff training needs and resources can be linked to identified priorities within a planned timescale.

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| Summary of Inspection Judgements: | |
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| Overall Effectiveness | Good |
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| The Catholic Life of the School | |
| How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school? | Good |
| How good is the quality of Collective Worship? | Outstanding |
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| 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? | Good |
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education? | Good |

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