

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

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

**OUR LADY AND ST JOSEPH'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

School URN	106942
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr M Janvier
Name of Headteacher	Mrs A Heald
Date of Inspection	6th November 2008
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Gillian Foster

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

Introduction

The Inspection of Our Lady's and St Joseph's 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

Our Lady's and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School is situated in the ex-mining community of Wath-upon-Dearne. The school's last Religious Education Inspection took place in October 2001 and its last OFSTED Inspection was in February 2007. The children attending the school are mainly from the parish of St Joseph's Wath and include a number of families from the local area seeking a Christian education for their children. Overall, pupils come from areas of average social and economic advantage although a significant minority of them live within areas of high social deprivation. Pupils' attainment on entry to Foundation Stage is generally average to below average as indicated by Baseline Assessment and compared with national expectations. Almost all pupils speak English as their first language. Of the 185 pupils on roll, 86 (46%) are baptised Catholics. There are 7 full time teachers, including the headteacher, 2 of whom are Catholic and 1 holds the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. The current headteacher took up post after Easter 2008. At the end of that academic year a senior member of staff who held the post of assistant headteacher retired as did several other senior members of staff. Currently there is no deputy headteacher although an appointment has been made and the post will be filled in January 2009. A new parish priest has recently been appointed to the parish.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including a variety of sporting activities, a maths and a homework club. Most of these activities are managed by school staff others are provided by local agencies. There are very good links between the school, parents, carers and members of the parish community. Most parents support the school and are well satisfied with the standard of education and care their children receive. The school is held in very high regard within the local community.

Information about the school

Type of School	Voluntary Aided
Age profile of Students	3 -11
Number on roll	185
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	27
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	2
Number of Catholics on roll	86
Number of Other Christian Denominations	94
Number of other Faiths	5
School address	Fitzwilliam Street, Wath-upon Dearne, Rotherham. S63 7HG
Telephone Number	01709 760084
Fax Number	01709 879767
Email	olasj@rotherham.gov.uk
Website	n/a

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

The overall effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of Catholic education is **good**. The school has a very calm, 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 to providing the best possible education and care for their pupils. All staff, teachers and teaching assistants 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 well cared for, they feel valued and respected and flourish in this nurturing environment. The quality of care and guidance they receive impacts on their personal development. High quality Collective Worship is an integral part of school life, children participate with enthusiasm and

reverence and enjoy sharing their celebrations with parents, carers and members of the parish community. Through lessons based on the 'Here I Am' programme and the teachers own work, the children acquire appropriate religious knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes. Currently attainment in oral work is higher than that in written/recorded work but this issue is being addressed. The Religious Education curriculum together with Collective Worship has a significant impact on the good spiritual and moral development of the children. Since taking up post, the new headteacher has correctly identified strengths and areas for further development and these are detailed in the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and the Developing Excellence Plan (DEP). She is working in partnership with governors and staff with vigour and enthusiasm to implement strategies to raise standards for all learners. Governors are effective in monitoring policy and practice and offer support and appropriate challenge to the headteacher. School values the partnership with parents and offers them many ways of supporting their children's learning and well being.

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

The Key issues taken from the last inspection report included: to review the Mission Statement; to continue to develop work already started on assessment procedures; to continue the systematic purchase of educational resources, including the building up of a multi-faith resource bank and to ensure consistency throughout the school in all aspects of teaching and learning in Religious Education. All of the issues identified above were addressed but since the last inspection, the impact of some of the strategies has diminished. However, one which has had a lasting positive impact on school life was the review of the Mission Statement in 2005. This review was undertaken by a working party of parents, children, staff and governors, the Mission Statement was rewritten and it continues to be reviewed annually. The Mission statement is clearly central to everything the school does and impacts on all areas of school life. The newly appointed headteacher continues to maintain and develop the three other priorities that were identified.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The capacity to further deepen the quality of the Catholic life of the school is **good**. The Governing Body, the new headteacher, all members of staff and the new parish priest are actively involved in the school's mission to value the special identity that God's love has created in each member of the school community and create an environment where Gospel values are at the heart of everything. Governors are well informed and hard working, they monitor policies and practice with rigour and provide support and challenge to the headteacher, they are pro-active in shaping the future development of the school. The school has a strong induction programme and procedures for on-going support for those members of staff who are new to the school or are not Catholic. The impact of this support is already apparent in the confidence and effectiveness in teaching in Religious Education. Parents are well supported by the school in developing their children's Religious Education through a variety of leaflets, newsletters and regular invitations to attend liturgies and celebrations. The SEF gives a comprehensive and realistic analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development; these priorities, largely related to raising standards of attainment and achievement, are clearly defined in the Developing Excellence Plane (DEP) together with detailed action plans to support

their implementation. Currently there is no specific section in the DEP for the development of the Catholic life of the school, the inclusion of such a section would enable the priorities for action identified in the SEF to be brought together with timeframes and success criteria to support implementation, assist monitoring and ensure quality control in this crucial area of school life. The inspector agrees with the development priorities identified and detailed in the DEP and would add the following areas for development to further deepen the quality of Catholic education:

- Include a section in the Developing Excellence Plan for celebrating, deepening and developing the Catholic life of the school.
- Establish assessment procedures to enable staff to have a good understanding of standards of attainment and achievement and progress made by pupils.
- Continue to develop the role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator to include lesson observations in order to monitor and promote consistency of standards and share and disseminate existing good practice.

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 of the Catholic life of the school is **good**. Governance is good. Governors, led by an able Chair, are committed and enthusiastic, they receive regular and accurate information from the headteacher on school issues; they are active in monitoring policies and practice through regular visits they make to school. The nominated Religious Education governor is a member of the Parish Council and provides a strong and effective link between school and the parish community. The new headteacher has quickly and accurately identified strengths of the school and areas for further development; she is working with staff, governors and the new parish priest to further deepen the Catholic life of the school and raise standards for all pupils. The impact of the new strategies is already apparent in many areas of school life. Currently the DEP does not include a specific section for deepening and developing the Catholic life of the school, the inclusion of such a section would assist the implementation and monitoring of already identified priorities. The Religious Education Co-ordinator is experienced and skilled; she is effective in supporting new and non-Catholic colleagues in deepening their understanding of Catholic education and delivering a high quality curriculum. The quality of relationships with parents is good and school is investigating ways to develop this further through family learning experiences and greater involvement in school/parish liturgies. Effective monitoring of pupil and parental views is carried out by questionnaires. The quality of relationships throughout the school community is very good and contributes to the strong sense of shared mission and belonging to a community existing to promote Gospel values. School is very strong in providing care and guidance to all its pupils and offers high quality support to children suffering loss or bereavement through a Rainbows programme. The school has an action plan for the promotion of social cohesion which offers the children engagement and interaction with a wide variety of local, national and global initiatives, the children are enthusiastic participants in these activities. The school celebrates and affirms its Catholic ethos through high quality displays of pupils' work in Religious Education throughout the school. The Catholic ethos, vigorously

promoted by the school and the effective provision has a positive impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship is **good** and meets statutory requirements. A detailed audit of provision was carried out recently and a new policy, contributed to by staff and the Religious Education governor, was approved by governors in July 2008. The new parish priest is now closely involved with planning, guiding and presenting acts of Collective Worship. Staff have received inset training on Collective Worship. The impact of the above strategies can be clearly seen in the quality of provision. A wide variety of Collective Worship opportunities are planned based on the 'Here I Am' programme and the Church's liturgical cycle, these include Masses, Gospel liturgies, Key Stage and class assemblies, whole school celebrations and retreats. Collective Worship is an integral part of daily school life, it is enriched by pupil participation in reading, music, drama and dance. Children are given many opportunities for spontaneous prayer and reflection. Children behave with reverence and respect during prayer times, they are confident to share their prayers with others and are comfortable with prayer. Many liturgies and celebrations are shared with parents and parishioners, thus helping the children to appreciate their important role as part of a worshipping, liturgical community. Parents and parishioners speak highly of the Catholic life of the school and enjoy the opportunity to participate in the spiritual life of the school. Sacramental preparation is carried out by parish catechists supported by the school. The quality of Collective Worship is monitored and evaluated by the Religious Education Co-ordinator and the Religious Education governor. The good quality of provision of Collective Worship has a significant impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

The achievement of learners in Religious Education is **satisfactory** overall with some good elements. Standards of written/recorded work is generally satisfactory, not all such work is at present in line with standards in Literacy. The quantity, quality and presentation of written/recorded work is inconsistent. Staff now need to come to an understanding of expectations from each age group in the above areas. The development of more focused monitoring and evaluation of pupils work will contribute to raising standards and achieving consistency, it will also enable pupil progress to be monitored more closely and assist governors in their task of monitoring standards. The marking policy is now embedded in practice and is used effectively and consistently to affirm pupils' work and give personal targets for improvement. Children's oral work throughout the school is good. From the earliest years children are nurtured, respected, and encouraged to express their views and listen to and respect the views of others. Pupils enjoy sharing their learning with each other, they enjoy their Religious Education lessons and have high levels of engagement. They show a good understanding of what they are learning about the Catholic faith and traditions and of other World Faiths, almost all pupils make progress appropriate to their ages and abilities. Many children,

of all ages, show real maturity in relating knowledge gained in Religious Education lessons to its impact on their lives and the world in general. Pupils are given many opportunities to become independent learners, they work well and co-operatively in partner and group situations. There is a strong behaviour policy embedded in affirmation, respect, and high expectations, as a result, children's behaviour and attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils' personal development is good due to the high quality care, guidance and support offered to them. What children learn in their Religious Education lessons and the way they are valued and respected supports them effectively in their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Almost all teaching and learning throughout the school is **good** with some outstanding features. The support and training given to all staff has impacted positively on the quality of teaching and learning. All teachers are confident and enthusiastic in teaching Religious Education. Teachers share the 'Before You Begin' section of the 'Here I Am' programme before planning work for the topics together. Through this shared approach, they develop and deepen their own knowledge and understanding and gain confidence; this is especially valued by those members of staff who are new to the school or who are not Catholic. Planning is thorough and differentiated and often offers appropriate levels of challenge although not all tasks are accurately matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils with additional learning needs are well catered for, work is well matched to their abilities and they are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants and they make good progress. Current assessment procedures are under review. More rigorous assessment procedures now need to be considered to enable all staff to have a good understanding of levels of attainment which will inform planning more effectively and enable pupil progress to be more rigorously assessed. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles and strategies to engage all pupils in their learning. Good cross-curricular planning, especially in Literacy and ICT, enriches delivery of the curriculum. Teachers demonstrate good classroom management, this combined with teachers own enthusiasm and a willingness to share their own feelings and experiences, leads to exciting learning environments where children are motivated and stimulated. All teachers show good questioning skills, they allow children time to consider and reflect before giving responses, this technique enables children to grow in knowledge and understanding. Children are often challenged, especially in oral sessions, to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and become aware of how religious commitment impacts on their everyday lives. Procedures now need to be established/developed to share and disseminate the good practice already existing in school to enable all teaching and learning to be of the highest standard. The Mission Statement recognises the important partnership with parents in developing the children's God given talents and skills and school supports the parents in this endeavour.

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 all learners is **good**. The Religious Education curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Schools and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference by devoting ten percent of teaching time to Religious Education. The teachings of Jesus underpin all the schools' efforts to meet the individual needs of its pupils. Children acquire a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith and develop an understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures. This was evident during the inspection when each class was studying a different aspect of Judaism. Lessons were well planned, lively and engaged the children's interest to a high degree. Children were eager to learn of Jewish traditions and beliefs and developed an understanding and respect of shared traditions from the Old Testament. School regularly celebrates cultures and religions of children in school and visitors to school. Teachers plan many opportunities for children to respond to God's call in everyday life and encourage children to take responsibility for themselves and where appropriate, others. This is well exemplified in the care and support children offer each other on a daily basis. Children in Year two have a 'Kind Thoughts' book in which they record independently and informally, qualities and kind acts of other children and staff, this contributes to a positive, affirmative and celebratory ethos. The well established School Council has an impact on the daily running of the school. School Councillors speak with pride of their school and how they have been given the opportunity to put some of their ideas into practice to improve provision for children in school. The school is involved with the Global and Anti-Racist Perspectives (GARP) Project with other Rotherham schools, ensuring that the global dimension of Religious Education teaching is fulfilled. School has a detailed action plan to develop social cohesion which gives children many opportunities to engage with and interact with local, national and global communities. A well embedded and delivered PSCHE policy ensures good personal relationships teaching which includes age appropriate sex education. All adults in school provide good role models for the children, there is an evident culture of respect and forgiveness. Members of the School Council stated that school is a safe, happy and exciting place for children to be, the Inspector endorses this judgement.

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 in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education is **good**. The headteacher, along with senior staff and governors, communicate a strong vision for delivering high quality Religious Education to enable all learners to fulfil their potential. Religious Education is given a high profile and is treated with the same rigour and aspirations as other core subjects. In the relatively short time the headteacher has been in post, she has identified key areas for development in raising achievement and with staff and governors has developed strategies to address them. The impact of many of these strategies is already apparent, in particular in teaching and learning. The headteacher and governors (who fulfil their monitoring role effectively), have judged the pace of change well and have received the enthusiastic co-

operation of all staff in working to raise standards for the children. The Religious Education Co-ordinator gives strong leadership, she is effective in giving training, support and guidance to all colleagues and has contributed to their professional development and competence. The role of co-ordinator now needs to be developed to include more focused scrutiny of work and lesson observations in order to monitor consistency of standards and share and disseminate existing good practice. There has been a lack of funding for Religious Education in recent years, largely due to budgetary constraints; this has now been remedied. Religious Education has been allocated a discrete budget for the current academic year which will allow the purchase of resources to support the achievement of higher standards in Religious Education. School offers good accommodation for the children, and when the planned new entrance, Library and ICT facility is built later this academic year, the learning environment will be greatly enhanced. High quality displays of children's work in Religious Education in all areas of the school, affirms the children's' work and reflects the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school.

Summary of Inspection Judgements:	
Overall Effectiveness	Good
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?	Good
Religious Education	
How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?	Satisfactory
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 Our Lady and St Joseph's Catholic Primary School or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU Tel: 0114 2566440