

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

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

**OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL
HELP CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

School URN	106770
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr George Turton
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Finnuala Nelis
Date of Inspection	17th March 2009
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Gillian Foster

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

Introduction

The Inspection of Our Lady of Perpetual Help 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

Type of School	Primary, Voluntary Aided
Age profile of Students	3 - 11
Number on roll	164
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	29
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	3
Number of Catholics on roll	65
Number of Other Christian Denominations	60
Number of other Faiths	2
School address	Finkle Street, Bentley, Doncaster DN5 0RP
Telephone Number	01302 874291
Fax Number	01302 876751
Email	admin@ourlady's.doncaster.sch.uk
Website	www.ourladys.doncaster.sch.uk

Description of the school

Our Lady's is a smaller than average primary school situated in the north of Doncaster, it serves the parishes of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Bentley; Blessed English Martyrs, Askern and Saint Helen's chapel Burghwallis. The school's last Religious Education inspection took place in February 2006 and its last OFSTED inspection was in November 2008. The school is part of a Catholic Federation of two primary schools led by one headteacher; the other Federation school is St Joseph and St Teresa's in Woodlands and is approximately three miles away. The school serves an area well below average social and economic circumstances. Most pupils are of white British heritage. Numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups are below what is typical nationally, but rising. Presently, travellers of Irish heritage account for nine percent and Polish pupils six percent of the school population. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is rising and is now close to the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than the national average. Children enter Foundation Stage with skills and understanding mostly well below those typical for their age in most areas of learning; standards at the end of Key Stage One and Two as judged by national tests, have fluctuated over recent years but evidence suggests that standards are now rising and satisfactory progress is being made in English, Maths and Science by most pupils. Of the 164 pupils on roll, 65(40%) are baptised Catholics. There are six full time and one part-time teachers of whom half are Catholic; two teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including many sporting activities, a cookery club, a reading club and a board game club; most of these activities are led by school staff, an outside agency organises some of the sporting activities. There are excellent links between the school, parents, carers, members of the parish communities, the wider community of the Federation and the local community. Almost all parents are very well satisfied with the standards of education and personal care their children receive. The school is held in very high regard within the community.

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 Our Lady's is **good** with many outstanding features. The school has a very calm, friendly, welcoming and up-lifting atmosphere and its distinctive nature as a Catholic school is clearly apparent. The governors, headteacher and senior leaders have worked tirelessly and effectively in recent years to establish the Federation. Secure foundations have been laid for the Federation which are now impacting positively on the very good provision of Catholic education and will ensure growth and development in the future. The governors, headteacher, Religious Education Co-ordinator, senior managers and all members of staff are deeply committed to the Catholic life of

the school, they recognise each child as being a unique individual created and loved by God and as such, deserving of the very best education and care. The children are very well cared for, their individual needs and circumstances are recognised and well catered for. There is an evident culture of love and respect where achievement is celebrated and weakness supported. The school is fully inclusive, children with special needs are very well supported and differences of heritage and backgrounds are recognised, respected and celebrated. This is a school where all feel welcome, included and respected. School has a Rainbows programme to support children suffering loss and/or bereavement which is appreciated by children and their parents. Children participate in a wide range of acts of Collective Worship which they share with families and parishioners. Woven into the daily life of the school are many opportunities for prayer and reflection and these make a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children. The headteacher and all staff are committed to delivering high quality Religious Education, in recent years rigorous strategies focusing on raising attainment have been implemented which are becoming embedded in practice and should contribute to improving standards. Community cohesion lies at the heart of the school and the pupils are given a wide variety of opportunities to engage with the local and wider communities. One such initiative is the link which has been developed between school and Bentley Lodge, a centre for dementia patients; Year Five children visit the Lodge on a two weekly basis and interact and share joint activities with the patients; patients are often invited to assemblies and special celebrations. Children welcome and enjoy these opportunities, it helps them to recognise and respect the different circumstances and needs of others and to realise that they can make a valuable contribution to the lives of others thus living out the Gospel values that underpin the work of the school.

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

The last Religious Education inspection took place in February 2006, Key areas identified for development included:

- the need to include plans for the development of the Catholic life of the school in the School Development Plan with governors taking a more active role in monitoring and evaluating it;
- to come to an understanding about the quantity of recorded work expected from each age group;
- the creation and implementation of a policy for sex, relationships and citizenship
- to ensure that ten percent of teaching time is devoted to Religious Education.

All of the above issues have been addressed although the area relating to the quantity of recorded work now needs revisiting. The Governing Body now have a Catholic Nature sub-committee which not only effectively monitors and evaluates Religious Education Action Plans included in the School Development Plan (SDP), but actively contributes to its development. A policy for sex, relationships and citizenship is now in place across the Federation. A minimum of ten percent of teaching time is now devoted to teaching Religious Education. In addition to

the above improvements since the last inspection, the leadership and management of Religious Education has been broadened to include the headteacher, school leader and other members of staff; in time this will also include members of staff across the Federation. There is now a delegated budget for Religious Education, this enables resources to be reviewed and extended to support delivery of the curriculum more effectively. Governors now receive regular reports regarding the development of Religious Education to assist them in their efforts to support staff and pupils in raising attainment. Planned children's Sunday Masses are forging stronger links with the parish. Improved displays and prayer corners in all classrooms have enhanced and deepened the distinctive Catholic nature of the school.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education is **outstanding**. The Self Evaluation Form (SEF) is an excellent tool for development, staff and governors have the opportunity to contribute to it, it provides a clear, realistic audit of strengths and areas for development. The identified priorities are then included in the SDP which is regularly reviewed and monitored by staff and governors. Areas for development are being tackled rigorously and effectively. Work across the Federation by governors, the headteacher and staff is making an increasingly effective contribution to the development of provision. Staff are hardworking, committed and skilled, they share the vision of the leadership to provide excellence for the children and fully support initiatives and development priorities. The inspector agrees with the priorities for development identified in the SEF and SDP and would add the following for consideration for development:

- To continue to develop the role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator, especially from September 2009 when she becomes Co-ordinator across the Federation, to include the regular monitoring of planning and to conduct lesson observations.
- For staff to come to a shared agreement about the quantity of recorded work expected from each age group.

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 of the Catholic life of the school is **outstanding**. All leaders share a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and the role of the school in expressing it. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors provide very clear direction and focus for the Catholic life of the school and this has been strengthened by the processes of establishing and developing the Federation. Governors, particularly through the Catholic Nature sub-committee and the role of the Religious Education link governor, ensure that all policies and documentation reflect and support the school's Catholic identity. They are rigorous and pro-active in monitoring and evaluating practice. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors

communicate a strong sense of spiritual purpose, the inspirational leadership of the headteacher ensures that this purpose is shared by all staff. A very high priority is placed on promoting the spiritual and moral development of the children and the success of this is clear to see in the attitudes and behaviour of the children. The SDP contains areas for the development of the Catholic life of the school which are closely linked to the 'Every Child Matters' and 'Excellence and Enjoyment' agendas. Generous budget allocation over recent years has been wisely spent and ensures high quality resources to enhance delivery of the curriculum and other areas of the Catholic life of the school. Excellent links exist between the school, parents, carers and parishioners. Parents feel confident in the school and greatly appreciate the standards of education and care their children receive, they feel valued and welcome and respond to the invitations school offers them to support their children's learning. Staff are supportive of each other and act as excellent role models for the children. Community cohesion is at the heart of the school, it is within the curriculum and in the many links with the local and wider community. Through their involvement with many different communities, the children are given the opportunity to develop respect and understanding of the different circumstances and needs of people and appreciate that they can make a beneficial impact on the lives of others.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship is **outstanding**. There is an excellent policy for Collective Worship common to both Federation schools, which sets out the rationale and practical ways of implementation. The policy is regularly monitored by the Collective Worship Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the whole school staff and governors every two years; foundation governors play an important role in monitoring through their frequent attendance at acts of Collective Worship. The parish priest plays an important role in developing and maintaining the high quality of Collective Worship. Eucharist and prayer are central to the life of the school. Acts of worship are held in school every day and are appropriate to the ages of the children. Class liturgies and assemblies are planned around the Church's liturgical year and held in school and Church, members of the whole community are invited. Families, parishioners and members of other communities respond to these invitations and warmly express their appreciation of them. Children are encouraged to assist in the preparation of these assemblies and liturgies and they participate in them with enthusiasm and thoughtfulness. A wide variety of liturgical styles are used, including dance, which helps to engage and stimulate spiritual growth. Children are given many opportunities for reflection both in acts of worship and in classroom situations which help them to appreciate and develop an awareness of God in their own lives and of the beauty of creation. Parents are encouraged and supported in praying with their children at home in very practical and effective ways; during Advent children have the opportunity to take home a travelling crib and during Lent a 'Lenten Bag' is available as a focus for family prayer. Parents and children speak of the rewarding and often powerful effect this focused family

prayer has had on them. In addition to provision offered by school staff and the parish priest, the Religious Education link governor who is a catechist, comes into school on a weekly basis and leads a prayer group, this group is attended by up to thirty Key Stage Two children. The variety and high quality of Collective Worship has a significant impact on the excellent spiritual and moral development of the children.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Currently attainment and achievement of learners is **satisfactory** although strategies and initiatives are in place which have the capacity to raise standards in the future. Oral work is generally of a good standard, children are encouraged to express their views and opinions, they do so confidently and increasingly fluently as they move up the school. Very good work is taking place in the Foundation Stage which seeks to develop speaking and listening skills and help the children to recognise and articulate their feelings, this good work forms a sound basis for future development. Children work very well together in pair or group situations, they are respectful and affirmative towards each other. Their behaviour is very good and they respond with enthusiasm and enjoyment to Religious Education lessons. Children demonstrate very good scriptural knowledge and through the reflective element of lessons they are able to relate the meaning of the Gospel stories and messages they learn about to their own lives. Many of the older children show a real maturity of understanding and clearly articulate how they feel a commitment to their religion impacts on their lives. There is an inconsistency in the quantity of recorded work, this is especially apparent in the older classes where on the whole, work recorded does not match work covered in 'Here I Am' and where standards are not always in line with those achieved in Literacy. Staff need to come to a shared understanding of the amount of recorded work expected from each age group and also the quality of presentation expected. Marking is used to best effect when it is both affirmative and gives children pointers to how they can improve, the good practice evident in many classes now needs to be adopted throughout the school. Almost all pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory or good progress overall. Children make a valuable contribution to the liturgical life of the parish which is appreciated by the parish priest and parishioners.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

The quality of teaching and learning is almost all **good** with some outstanding features. All teachers and teaching assistants are dedicated, enthusiastic and committed to delivering high quality Religious Education. All lessons are thoroughly planned, teachers often plan work together which contributes to ensuring continuity and progression for the children who are all in mixed age group classes. All lesson plans include the particular needs of individual children

and the role of teaching assistants in supporting them, this is very good practice. Teaching assistants are well informed and they make a valuable contribution to the progress and achievement of the children, especially those with special needs. All teachers create good, stimulating learning environments enhanced by high quality Religious Education displays and focal areas for prayer and by the appropriate use of music. Scripture is very well used, children have good Biblical knowledge and show good independent skills of research and referencing. All teachers demonstrate good questioning skills, they allow children time for thought and reflection before answering, their skilful questioning leads children to deepen their knowledge and understanding. Relationships in all classes and throughout the school are excellent. The open, personal commitment shown by staff to the Catholic/Christian values of the school help to deepen the impact of the curriculum on the children. Children are encouraged and nurtured to express their views and opinions and they do so confidently knowing that what they say will be respected. Pupils behaviour is very good, they are well motivated and engage enthusiastically with activities. Current assessment procedures do impact on planning and all teachers include differentiated activities in their planning however not all work is sufficiently challenging to extend the more able pupils. School has identified as a development priority, extending assessment procedures to allow teachers to have a more accurate picture of the attainment of each child and when this is in place, following the publication of diocesan guidance), it will ensure that all work is more accurately matched to the needs of the pupils. In the best lessons, brisk pace and clarity of purpose allow the children to achieve high standards. Parents are kept well informed of what their children are learning and are well supported in sharing and helping children with their learning.

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 school devotes ten percent of teaching time to Religious Education and ensures full coverage of the Curriculum Directory thus fulfilling the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The Mission Statement is prominently displayed, it is central to the life of the school and its aims are lived out on a daily basis in school. The Religious Education curriculum is regularly reviewed and focuses on the direct needs of the children, for example developing speaking and listening skills and helping children to recognise, articulate and deal with their feelings in Key Stage One and to develop research, reflection and debate in Key Stage Two. Lessons are well planned and delivered in a variety of styles to stimulate and engage the interest of learners. In addition to work covered in the 'Here I Am' programme, 'Take a Parable' weeks are held, here all curriculum areas focus on the chosen parable thus deepening the children's understanding of the scriptures and implementing the aims of the creative curriculum. Multi-faith and multi-cultural education is well taught through similar dedicated weeks. Statements of belief are used throughout the school and Federation and are an excellent teaching and learning tool. Children are encouraged to and given many opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and where appropriate, others. This is well demonstrated by the Year Five children who act with enjoyment and

enthusiasm as Play Leaders at break times. The children are officially trained at McAuley High School, they return to school enthusiastic and confident to carry out their duties which contribute to the enjoyment and pleasant and active atmosphere in the playground. Children arriving at school for whom English is a new language are given effective and sensitive support to enable them to access the curriculum. Parents speak very warmly and with gratitude of the love and care shown to their children and to themselves; they appreciate the warm, positive ethos of the school which helps their children to be happy and enjoy their learning. An effective sex and relationships programme is in place appropriate to the needs of the children. Older children share days of reflection and discussion with pupils from the other Federation school, the children enjoy and derive real benefit from these days, as one child said, "Apart from being interesting and a fun day, It helps you to make new friends for when you go to the next school and to feel a real part of the Federation". The quality of the curriculum together with the very good pastoral care and many opportunities for experiences outside school makes a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children and prepares them very well for the next phase of their education.

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 Our Lady's is **good**. The SEF and Religious Education Action Plans give realistic and clear direction for development and are regularly reviewed and evaluated. Morale is high, staff feel valued and are very supportive of each other. The Religious Education Co-ordinator has a clearly defined role and gives strong leadership: she supports staff in developing their own knowledge and understanding of the Religious Education curriculum and assists them in the preparation of liturgies and assemblies. Currently the Co-ordinator carries out work audits and scrutinises some planning, as a result she has a clear idea of areas of strength and those needing development. One area she has identified for development is assessment and there are plans to develop this further. In September 2009 when she takes over the role of Religious Education Co-ordinator for the Federation, along with the role of Federation deputy headteacher, it would be appropriate for her to include the scrutiny of weekly planning and lesson observations in her role. These additional areas of quality control would more easily enable her to identify good practice across the Federation and share and disseminate it with colleagues thus contributing to the raising of standards. The headteacher takes an active role in the leadership and management of Religious Education and this ensures that Religious Education is given a high profile and remains integral to all the school strives to achieve. The headteacher is dedicated to and energetic in maintaining and developing links between the Federation schools and the parishes. The Governing Body are supportive and appropriately challenging, they fulfil their role as 'critical friend' effectively. The headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator provide governors with regular, clear information on Religious Education thus assisting them in their role of monitoring standards of teaching and learning. Recent generous budget

allocation for Religious Education has been spent wisely; spending is linked to identified priorities in the SDP and Action Plan and has ensured high quality resources are available to enhance delivery of the curriculum. Recent extensions and refurbishments have created a high quality, vibrant and stimulating environment for the children. The excellent Religious Education displays in the classrooms and public areas proclaim and enhance the distinctive Catholic ethos of Our Lady's Catholic Primary 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?	Outstanding
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	Outstanding
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'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