

DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST DOMINIC'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL

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| School URN | 106633 |
| Name of Chairman of Governors | Mr Brian Smith |
| Name of Headteacher | Mrs Catherine Flood |
| Date of Inspection | 20 th January 2009 |
| Section 48 Inspector | Mrs Barbara Jarrett |
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“... an enthusiasm for the things of God.”

Introduction

The Inspection of St Dominic'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.

Information about the school

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| Type of School | Primary Voluntary Aided |
| Age profile of Students | 3-11 |
| Number on roll | 235 |
| Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register | 24 |
| Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs | 5 |
| Number of Catholics on roll | 73 |
| Number of Other Christian Denominations | 116 |
| Number of other Faiths | 45 |
| School address | Carlton Road, Barnsley, S71 2BE |
| Telephone Number | 01226 282085 |
| Fax Number | 01226 241287 |
| Email | c.flood@barnsley.org |
| Website | |

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St Dominic's Catholic Primary School is situated in Carlton, Barnsley. It was opened in 1963.

There are 255 pupils on roll. The children attending the school are drawn from five parishes over a 25 mile radius. This is a large area and approximately one-tenth of the children make the daily journey on a school bus. The parents of the children represent the full range of socio/economic backgrounds with many pupils being drawn from an area of social and economic deprivation.

The Foundation Class accommodates 50 children who attend either morning or afternoon. Children are admitted into the Foundation Stage in the term after their third birthday. Overall, initial teacher assessment against the Foundation Stage Profile applied to children on entry to Foundation 1 shows the children are working below age related expectations.

The basic characteristics of the school indicate that:

- The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (11.2%) is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of full-time pupils as identified as having special educational needs. (10.2%) is below national average; of which (2.4%) have a Statement of Special Educational Needs, which is slightly above the national average.
- Attendance is currently 95.4% (December 2008)

The school serves 5 parishes: Blessed Sacrament, Athersley, St Paul's, Grimethorpe, St Mary Magdalene's, Cudworth, St Teresa's, Darton and St Joseph's, Royston. These parishes are served by 2 priests. Upon leaving St Dominic's, the majority of pupils transfer to St Michael's Catholic and C of E High School in Carlton.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

The overall effectiveness of the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners is satisfactory because the standards in teaching and learning and achievement are satisfactory. The school has many strengths and is on a journey towards excellence. Through the vision and commitment of the governors and headteacher it has made good progress on this journey. All visitors are impressed with the warm and welcoming atmosphere and its distinctive nature is apparent in the commitment of all who work there. It is oversubscribed and parents choose the school for the experience of Church and

its mission, which it offers to their children.

St Dominic's is a very inclusive school and its provision for children with Special Educational Needs is a strength. The very good collective worship, prayer life and pastoral care ensure that the spiritual and moral development of the children is also good. The behaviour of the children is outstanding.

The headteacher and governors know the school well and the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) clearly identifies the strengths and areas for development. Achievement in Religious Education is satisfactory and the school acknowledges that it does not yet reflect the abilities and attitudes of the learners. Despite effective In service Training (INSET) and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) teaching and learning remains satisfactory. There are plans in place to address this issue.

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

The last inspection was in 2004 and identified the following areas for development:

- Celebrate and consolidate Religious Education improvements since the last inspection, the caring Catholic/Christian ethos of the school and the good, developing links with the community.

Evidence suggests that this area has been addressed

- Consider and address the matter of a declining baptised Catholic population in school.

Although the baptised Catholic population of the school has continued to decline, reflecting the numbers of practising Catholics in the feeder parishes, the school maintains its distinctive Catholic ethos. The school works in partnership with the diocese to ensure that this continues.

- Improve standards in the teaching of the Religious Education Curriculum at KS2 and standards of religious work throughout the school.

Steps have been taken to improve standards of learning and teaching throughout the school. The school recognises that there is still work to do to ensure consistency of practice throughout the school and has plans in place to ensure this happens.

- Build on existing good work of profiling and promoting Religious Education by re-establishing the role of the co-ordinator on her return to work.

This has been addressed in full.

- Develop multi-faith and multi-cultural education in relation to Religious

Education

The school follows Diocesan and Here I Am recommendations. Resources have been purchased to support this area of the curriculum.

- Promote high-quality religious display throughout the school, especially in the main hall.

This has been fully addressed.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education is good. The very detailed SEF clearly shows that the leadership team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The headteacher is passionate in her determination to provide the best for the school and its community. The school is held in high regard by parents who clearly recognise the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school. They praise the warmth of welcome. Much work has been done to improve standards of teaching and learning and this is beginning to have an impact on achievement in Religious Education. New appointments have been made to strengthen the leadership team in carrying out this work.

Although the Catholic population in the area continues to decline, the headteacher and governors are determined to secure the future of the school. It provides the only experience of Church and the gospel message for many children at the school. The headteacher and governors are working in partnership with the Diocese and the school community to secure the future of the 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?

Leadership and management in the development of the Catholic life of the school are good. Governors fulfil their role effectively; they are well informed and proactive in school improvement. The governors and the headteacher share a deep commitment to promoting the school's Catholic mission. The school accurately identifies areas for improvement and appropriate action to address these. The headteacher's enthusiasm, resolve and energy set an excellent example of leadership for the rest of the staff. She is committed to building up distributive leadership and this work is starting to bear fruit. An example of this is the development of the PSHCE programme by the co-ordinator, including the work she has done in setting up the School Council.

The children's behaviour is outstanding. They are confident and articulate, responding well to questions in class and able to express their views about their

school. They said that teachers listened to them and respected them. All staff interviewed spoke of their commitment to the school and its community. The school effectively contributes to social cohesion through its work in supporting charities both locally and internationally. The curriculum includes work on other faiths and cultures and the children show respect for the beliefs and lifestyles of others. It is working to achieve ECO Schools Green Award. Inclusion is central to the school's vision and all children are welcomed and respected. Systems for supporting special needs are excellent and children's progress is monitored effectively. Good links exist with outside agencies to support this work.

The distance from the school of some of the parishes and the low numbers of children from each parish means the school has to work hard to build up links. When the children are able to visit a church for liturgies they are well supported by both parents and parishioners. Members of all parishes are invited the school masses and are kept informed about what is happening in school through regular newsletters. The school's contribution to the Mission of the church was spoken of warmly by one parish priest "What they do is brilliant". Communication between the school and parents is good and parents say they appreciate the work the school does for their children. One parent commented that the school "encourages the children to be the best they can be".

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship is good. Acts of worship are held every day either as a whole school or in individual classes. Children are given opportunities to prepare and lead collective worship and enjoy these experiences. Parents and parishioners are invited and praise the quality and contribution these make to the spiritual development of their children. There is a calendar of collective worship planned for the year based on the Church's liturgical calendar. The Eucharist is celebrated in school to highlight special occasions and feasts of the Church. The school has a good policy for Collective Worship and this is reviewed regularly. Acts of worship are well planned and there are systems for evaluating their appropriateness to the age and family backgrounds of the children. The school is creative in the way it reaches out to all members of the community in the celebration of the seasons of the Church. For example during Advent a "Walking Crib" is sent home during advent to enable parents and children to share in prayer and reflection in preparation for Christmas. Parents are invited to respond to this experience in a special book and the comments reflect their appreciation of this activity. A similar arrangement is planned for Lent when "Lenten Bags" will be sent home.

The standard of display in classrooms and in the shared areas of the school is very high and makes a good contribution to the spiritual development of the children.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Overall standards of achievement in Religious Education are satisfactory. Lessons are based on the “Here I Am” programme and planned effectively to engage the children in their lessons. The children enjoy their work and are motivated to do well. There is evidence from the verbal responses of the children that their thinking and oracy skills develop well as they progress through the school. This shows that they are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a satisfactory rate at all key stages. Children are given a range of activities to record work, some of which work well and include differentiation. However, there is a lack of consistency in the quality of written work, particularly at Key Stage 2. In some cases this is because the activities which the children are asked to complete lack challenge, particularly for the more able. The school follows the Diocesan guidelines for assessment and records are kept to show children’s progress.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

The effectiveness of teaching and learning in Religious Education is satisfactory. Children are very polite and welcoming and are enthusiastic learners. Their behaviour is excellent and they are attentive in class and respond well to questions. The school deploys staff effectively to ensure children are taught by teachers who have secure subject knowledge of the Religious Education curriculum. In the best lessons teaching was well planned and the activities the children were given were well matched to their abilities. In some lessons teachers adapted the Here I Am programme creatively to meet the needs and interests of the children and engage them in their learning. However, this was not consistent across the school. Children with special needs were well supported in all lessons with appropriate differentiation. There is some evidence that children are beginning to evaluate their own learning through the use of “What I Can Do” statements. While there was differentiation to meet the needs of less able children, in some lessons activities given to more able children lacked challenge and left little scope for children to make decisions about the way in which work could be presented. Marking gives positive encouragement to the children but more thought should be given to incorporating feedback on how to improve their work. Staff should also consider incorporating more cross curricular work and the use of ICT by the children.

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 10% of its curriculum time to Religious Education, fulfilling the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. It has policies for Religious Education, Collective Worship. There is a policy for Sex and Relationships and the Diocesan programme Nurturing Human Wholeness is used to support this work. The school follows the Here I Am programme for teaching World Faiths and global issues and has plans to further improve the already good work in this area. The school has good resources to support the teaching of Religious Education. The curriculum enables the children to improve their understanding, skills and knowledge as they move through the school and contributes well to their spiritual and moral development.

The school has staff trained to deliver the Rainbows programme for children affected by bereavement and loss and plans are in place to implement the programme in the near future.

Relationships between staff and children are a strength of the school. The children clearly trust the staff and appreciate the support they receive for both their learning and pastoral care. Circle time activities, linked to the Diocesan Statements To Live by, are effective in enabling the children to understand the effect their actions have on themselves and others. There is a successful school council which gives children a voice in decision making within the school

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education is satisfactory. Some elements are good e.g. the leadership of Religious Education by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

The headteacher has also carried out lesson observations and scrutiny of work to support colleagues in raising standards of achievement.

The Religious Education Co-ordinator, in the time the school makes available, should now ensure that her enthusiasm and expertise have a greater impact on Religious Education.

Learners are well supported through the effective systems of pastoral care, the PSHE curriculum and an ethos which ensures all pupils feel included and valued.

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| Summary of Inspection Judgements: | |
| Overall Effectiveness | Satisfactory |
| 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? | Satisfactory |
| 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? | Satisfactory |

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St Dominic'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