

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'  
DEPARTMENT**



**SECTION 48 INSPECTION  
REPORT**

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

**ST. JOSEPH'S  
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
RAWMARSH**

School URN	106944
Name of Chairman of Governors	Fr Kieran O'Connell
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Carmel Battersby
Date of Inspection	June 25 <sup>th</sup> 2009
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Shauna Hilton

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

The Inspection of 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**

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School was opened in 1936 and stands in the same grounds as St Joseph's Church and Presbytery. The school is in Rawmarsh, an urban location of Rotherham. St Joseph's school serves an area of significant economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) is well above average. Most pupils are White British backgrounds with a small percentage from African and Asian families. Approximately 25% of pupils are on the Special Educational Needs register, this is above national average.

There is a large hall which was opened in 1998 and the school has had recent refurbishment to the Key Stage 1 area. The closure of a local primary school two years ago increased the pupil number to 203. There are 7 full time and 3 part-time teachers, of whom 5 are Catholic teachers, 3 of these hold the Catholic Teachers Certificate in Religious Studies. The senior leadership team is fairly new to the school. The school is well supported by 13 teaching assistants and a Learning Mentor. The school's last Religious Education Inspection took place in 2007.

The school has very good links with the parents, parish priest, parish community and the wider community. Many of the parents are ex-pupils and are actively involved in the life of the school. The school is held in very high regard by the local community.

A wide range of extra-curricular activities, including Performing Arts, Sport and Dancing are offered to pupils. These activities are managed, organised and run by members of the school community.

## Information about the school

Type of School	Voluntary Aided
Age profile of Students	4-11
Number on roll	203
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	51
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	4
Number of Catholics on roll	57
Number of Other Christian Denominations	87
Number of other Faiths	3
School address	Green Lane, Rawmarsh, Rotherham. S62 6JY
Telephone Number	01709710270
Fax Number	01709719272
Email	sjpr@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 at St Joseph's is **good**. The school has a calm, welcoming atmosphere and is exceptionally well led by the headteacher. The vision for the school is shared by all and governors express that it is a privilege to be part of this school community. They are very effective in their role of support, challenge and affirmation. The needs of all learners are held at the centre of the school through its Vision and Mission statement and belief in teaching through Gospel values. The governors, headteacher, members of the leadership team, the Religious Education Co-ordinator and all members of staff work as a team and are strongly supported by the Parish Priest and parish family. Excellent relationships exist within the school community, promoting and strengthening the Catholic ethos. This team approach and family atmosphere are strengths of the school. Community cohesion is promoted well. The inclusive nature of

the school, enabled the pupils from a local primary school that closed, to be quickly integrated into the life of the school and part of the community.

The Developing Excellence Plan and Religious Education Action Plan have the school Mission and Vision Statements central, with 'Christ central to everything and every member of the community'. The school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF) clearly identifies strengths and areas for developments. The recent development of circle time and the use of the Statements of Belief, have helped to develop and deepen the spiritual knowledge of the children. Mass and Liturgy are structured; parts of the Mass are sung, this has led pupils to a deeper understanding of the celebration of Mass. The development of the pupil's prayer life is nurtured and this has deepened pupil's relationship with God. Morning and afternoon worship takes place, as well as special services during Advent and Lent. The Religious Education curriculum, together with Collective Worship has a significant impact on the outstanding spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

The subject knowledge of the staff is a great strength in the delivery of Religious Education lessons. Regular lesson observations by the leadership team have identified good practice. The school follows the 'Here I Am' Programme, and planning is rigorous. Religious Education is monitored and evaluated with the same rigour as other subjects. Positive relationships between all members of the school community lead to good attitudes towards learning and positive behaviour within lessons. The school has developed a cross-curricular approach enabling all pupils to be actively involved. New approaches to assessment of Religious Education are in their infancy, but staff are feeling more confident.

The school works closely with the parish in preparing children for the Sacraments. Two members of the non teaching staff and one teacher, assist in the preparation for Holy Communion.

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

The last Religious Education Inspection took place in January 2007. Key Issues identified included:

- Improvement in written Religious Education work.
- Developing the understanding of world faiths.
- An allocated budget for Religious Education.
- Assessment procedures.

All of the issues raised at the last Religious Inspection have been fully addressed.

## **The capacity to further develop the quality of Catholic education.**

The capacity to deepen the quality of Catholic Education is **outstanding**. The staff are committed and enthusiastic and live by their mission statement, 'Love one another as I have loved you'. This is clearly evident throughout the school. Excellent links have been established with the parish and parents. The school recognises that for many of the children, "They are the Church" and in recognising this they seek to offer inspiration for the children in their faith. The Religious Education co-ordinator and all members of staff, are actively involved in the mission of the Church in education. The Self Evaluation Form is an accurate document and gives a clear insight into the work of the school. Parents are well supported by the school in developing their children's Religious Education, through termly leaflets and invitations to weekly Masses and assemblies. Many of the parents are ex-pupils, they have a real sense of pride about the school and spoke warmly of the family atmosphere and the way new children soon became part of the community. The Learning Mentor is very effective in supporting parents and encouraging family learning.

### **Current identified priorities for development are:**

- To further develop Liturgy.
- To continue to foster links with Wath Our Lady and St Joseph's Parish, Wath.
- Develop the relationship with other Christian Churches within the local area.
- To continue to implement a creative curriculum, ensuring that Religious Education is central to the curriculum.

The Inspector endorses these areas for development and would add the following:

- To ensure high achievers begin to take responsibility for their own learning.
- To work in partnership with other local Catholic schools to pursue the possibility of a Catholic Inset day.
- To further develop the spiritual life of the pupils with a planned retreat for Year 6 pupils.

## **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 effectiveness of leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is **outstanding**. The Governing Body fulfils its roles and responsibilities well in relation to the schools Catholic Foundation: they are well informed of all developments and actively challenge, as well as support. The Headteacher, Religious Education Co-ordinator and other senior leaders

develop the Catholic life of the school well and set a clear vision and direction for the school; this is shared with all members of the school community. The children are at the centre of everything they do. The impact of the parish priest's involvement in the work of the school is to be celebrated. He is a charismatic Priest who brings "the Church" to each individual child. The quality of relationships with parents and the parish is good. Parents are welcome into school and are involved in many areas of school life, for example in helping with after school clubs and in helping around school within classes. They are invited to all Masses and Liturgies both in school and Church. The parents of the Y3 children are actively involved in the Preparation of their children for the Sacrament of Holy Communion. There are several parents involved with the 'Friends of St Joseph's', and they work together with the staff, to provide the best for their children. Staff lead by example and with a positive enthusiasm for the things they do. The headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator meet regularly with the local cluster of Catholic schools, planning and organising activities involving the Y6 children and those pupils who have received their First Holy Communion. There are strong links with the local community and other local schools: this was very evident when the school accepted and quickly integrated a number of pupils from a local school that closed. The Catholic life of the school is monitored as rigorously as any other area of school life; this is evident in the detailed monitoring evaluations.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: Collective Worship**

### **How good is the quality of Collective Worship?**

The quality of collective Worship is **outstanding**. The school community joins together every Monday for Collective Worship; this is linked with the readings from the Sunday Mass and Liturgical cycle. Worship is an integral part of the life of the school and its Catholic traditions and is having a very positive impact on the children's spiritual and moral development. There is a range of formal and informal opportunities for pupils and staff to engage in prayer and Acts of Collective Worship. Pupils are learning to pray quietly and reflectively. Appropriate focal points are evident in all classrooms and areas of the school and these enhance the prayerful environment. There is a planned cycle of Masses and Liturgies for the year. The school community attends Mass on a weekly basis and the pupils have a significant input into the preparation. During the Mass the children were reverent and prayerful. The youngest of learners attend when they are ready and sometimes take part in liturgical activities within school.

Collective Worship focuses on the Ethos Statement for that week; this is then followed up in classes. All classes gather in prayer at least twice during the day, usually at the beginning and the end of the day. Parents commented that prayer was central to the life of the school and pupils were always enthusiastic about making up their own prayers, for the class prayer books. Pupil interviews carried out by the school provided evidence that the children are engaging with prayer and responding appropriately to it.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENTS AND STANDARDS

### How well do learners achieve?

Learner's achievement in Religious Education is **good**. The children enter Foundation 2 with skills well below those of similar children of this age, communication; language and numeracy are below national averages. Learners make good progress in Religious Education in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and good overall in Key Stage 2. Pupils leave Year 6 with average standards. Pupils with Special Needs make very good progress and are ably supported by excellent Teaching Assistants. Pupils are offered differentiated work/activities which are matched to their abilities. The children show a real maturity in relating the knowledge gained in Religious Education lessons, to its impact on their lives: this was seen in a lesson when the pupils were discussing neighbours. Scrutiny of pupils work shows good progression and is mainly consistent with Literacy standards. Since the last inspection a more rigorous approach has been adopted in monitoring and evaluating children's work. There is an excellent marking policy adhered to by all staff and this is making a significant impact on raising standards. The senior leadership team have a clear view of the learning and teaching through lesson observations, scrutiny of planning and pupils work. The school is continuing to ensure appropriate differentiation across all age groups; this is clearly evident in the detailed planning.

ICT is now used more effectively to support learning and teaching, such as using Espresso to explore Religious festivals in Y2 and the use of the internet to research the news on the topic about neighbours. Key Stage 2 pupils use the ICT suite at the Comprehensive school as well as the use of computer lap tops in the classroom. The behaviour of pupils is very good and is managed in a positive way. A cross curricular approach is being developed throughout the school, to engage the children in their learning. During the lessons observed the pupils were highly motivated and in all classes children worked well in individual and group situations. The PSHCE curriculum and the Religious Education curriculum together, leads to very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children show empathy and respect for each other. The impact of circle time has contributed greatly to this, with all teachers having a commitment towards raising standards within this area.

The pupils contribute to the school, parish and broader community in a successful way. Many of the Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 children are altar servers at Church. They are involved in a wide variety of clubs both in school and the local community and have achieved many successes. One such club is 'The Performing Arts Club' which the pupils thoroughly enjoy. The pupils work is celebrated in high quality displays around the school.

The children appreciate that they are listened to and the School Council now work together to make suggestions and improvements to school life. Teachers encourage children to take responsibility for themselves and where appropriate, others. This is exemplified by the older children, who take responsibility for many areas of school life and help with the day-to-day running of the school, such as road safety officers, library assistants and playground pals. Playground pals are a great asset to the school and play an important role in the induction of the youngest learners and in helping with positive behaviour at playtimes.

## QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching is **good** overall with some outstanding features. All teachers use the 'Here I Am' Programme of work. They have a secure understanding of the teaching of Religious Education and are committed to teaching the Catholic Faith. Teachers attend Diocesan training such as the planning meetings which has enabled staff to have a deeper understanding of the 'Here I Am' Programme. The Religious Education Co-ordinator is having an impact upon the quality of teaching and learning that takes place in Religious Education lessons. Planning is rigorous and new assessment procedures and marking are having a significant impact on standards. Cross-curricular planning is enriching the Religious Education curriculum. Teachers show good questioning skills and allow the children to reflect and give responses enabling them to grow in their knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are thorough and give staff a good understanding of what the pupils have learned. Marking gives positive encouragement to the children and is helping to raise standards. Children with additional learning needs make very good progress and work is well matched to their abilities.

Parents are informed of the Religious Education topics at the beginning of each term and are invited into assemblies and other school events. The school has developed ways of working with parents and carers, which successfully supports pupils learning and development.

The school Key Stage 1 area has recently been refurbished and now provides a high quality learning environment for the pupils.

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

The efforts of the school in meeting the needs and interests of all learners are **good**. The Religious Education curriculum matches the learners' aspirations and builds on the pupils prior learning. Teachers in all classes have high expectations of their children and now need to focus on high achievers taking responsibility for their own learning. The school devotes 10% of its curriculum time to Religious Education, fulfilling the requirements of the Bishop's Conference. The Religious Education curriculum is closely linked with Circle Time and PSHCE. The school has an excellent PSHCE policy which supports the Religious Education programme very well. The resource 'All that I Am' is implemented in Year 5 and Year 6 with assistance from the School Nurse. Circle Time and Religious Education activities contribute very well to the spiritual and moral development of the learner, which is outstanding. The pupils are provided with many opportunities for reflection and self awareness to enrich their experiences. The rich curriculum offers opportunities for children to debate, discuss and develop skills of empathy. The parish joins in Harvest festivals and other celebrations.

The school works hard to engage all parents and provides a wide range of workshops. Family Learning Workshops include Literacy and the Rowdy Robots Programme, which encourages dads to participate. The 'Stay and Play' Programme for the Foundation Stage children and The Dance Showcase events and presentations within school, encourage hard to reach groups and attract a wider audience. The school has identified, through questionnaires, parents are willing to engage in activities such as gardening and crafts. Drop in sessions held by the Learning Mentor are another vehicle for encouraging parents to become involved. Refreshments are offered following class celebrations as a further way of encouraging engagement from all members of the school community. Open Evenings are usually well attended.

The Rainbows team are very effective; parents are given detailed information about the sessions with the children.

The Schools contribution to Community Cohesion is outstanding. St. Joseph's endeavours to develop a range of attitudes and activities that promote and support the dignity and worth of everyone. Collaboration with other schools across the community, is having a positive effect on the pupils. There is a strong sense of the rights and responsibilities within school. This is evident in the relationships children have with each other and between all members of the school community. The school strives to develop an awareness of other communities, through their many fundraising efforts. Regular visitors talk to the learners about the work of these agencies to give them a view of their contribution both at a local, diocesan and international level. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools status.

## **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 standards and supporting all learners in Religious Education, is **outstanding**. The SEF and Religious Education Development Plan are detailed documents, which reflect the schools mission in developing the Catholic life of the school. The Performance Management of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher is linked to further developing Religious Education. The Religious Education Governor is involved in all areas of school life and works closely with the Religious Education Co-ordinator and Head teacher. He is a regular visitor to the school, challenging as well as affirming the work of the teachers. Governors receive regular and accurate information from the headteacher on school issues.

The Religious Education Co-ordinator is committed to deepening the Catholic Life of the school, by promoting the development of faith for all children. She has a clear understanding of the needs of the school and how to raise standards. Guidance and support is given by the Co-ordinator on all Religious Education topics. Religious Education is rigorously monitored and evaluated. However, the Co-ordinator recognises the need for a more consistent and coherent approach to assessment within Religious Education. The headteacher ensures that all staff are supported, through Inset opportunities.

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

Further copies of this report are obtainable from 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