

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

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

**ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL
SHEFFIELD**

School URN	107157
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mrs G Brown
Name of Headteacher	Mr M Cassidy
Date of Inspection	13 th March 2008
Section 48 Inspector	Mr S R Owen

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

INTRODUCTION

The inspection of St. Patrick'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

Type of School	Primary Voluntary Aided
Age Profile	3 – 11
Number on roll	342
Number of children on SEN Register	51
Number of Catholic children on roll	136
Number of other Christian denominations	45
Number of other faiths	8
School Address	Barnsley Road Sheffield S5 0QF
Telephone Number	0114 2456183

DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St. Patrick's Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is part of the Diocese of Hallam. It is situated in the outskirts of northern Sheffield, within the Shiregreen District, which is classified as an area of deprivation. The majority of children are from mixed council and private housing. The percentage of ethnic minority children in the school has risen to twenty-seven per cent, which is a ten per cent increase since 2004, as has the number of children who speak English as a second language. The surrounding area of the school has a low percentage of children achieving 6+ Early Learning Goals (45%), in comparison to National standards (69%). Currently, forty per cent of the pupils are baptised Catholics. The number of children who are entitled to free school meals is twenty five. There are ten classes and a nursery in the school. Seven of these classes are mixed age. In 2007/08 the school's admission number was lowered to thirty, as a result of diocesan strategy and consequently two small classrooms were converted and upgraded to create a

Foundation Stage area, capable of providing continuous provision for thirty children. The staffing profile is mixed, consisting of fifteen teachers, nine of whom are Catholic. There are nineteen support staff, of which eight are Catholic.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

The effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of all learners within the school is good, with some outstanding features. The school affords a calm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere to all and its distinctive nature as a Catholic school is palpable. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. St. Patrick's is a caring, supportive community, where the unique individuality of all within that community, is valued and given the opportunity to grow spiritually, morally and intellectually.

The Governing Body appreciate the sterling work undertaken by the comparatively recently appointed Headteacher and the Management Team, in facilitating an open and utterly collegial approach to the development and improvement of all aspects of the school's life. They acknowledge explicitly the "open-house" atmosphere of the school and value the role of the headteacher who openly shares his vision for the entire community, whilst positively encouraging the active and creative participation of all.

All staff are committed to the Mission of the school. They are very good role models for the children and provide an atmosphere where children of all abilities and denominations are given the opportunity to develop their skills and attitudes, which in turn has a positive impact on their spiritual and moral development. This is a strength of the school and an outstanding feature.

The school's self evaluation process, as recorded in the Self Evaluation Form (SEF), clearly identifies aspects of the school's provision which are being developed and those which are in need of development.

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

The last Religious Education Inspection took place in March 2003 and the following areas for development were identified:

- Continue to develop the good work on assessment already in place.
- Ensure that for children in mixed age or parallel age classes their work is assessed with that of children of the same age to prevent disparity

- Review the Religious Education policy as stated in its Self Evaluation Document and incorporate sections on spiritual and moral development.
- Further develop the already good practice of children writing their own prayers as identified in the Self Evaluation document.

Each of these areas for development has been dealt with effectively.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education.

The school is very well placed in terms of having the capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education. Under the able direction of the headteacher, all members of the school community have a very accurate view of the school's strengths and developmental needs and through joint discussion and reflection are continually looking for ways to develop and improve the Catholic education provided. A stronger focus now exists on children's achievement and their attitudes to learning and working with other Catholic primary schools, allowing the sharing and dissemination of good practice to unfold. The high status and profile given to the Catholic life of the school is plainly apparent in the comprehensive communication process provided by the school to governors, parents and the parishioners of St. Patrick's. There is a sense of style and sensitivity given to this aspect of the school's life, showing care and reflection, to ensure the process is both effective and efficient.

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 with many outstanding features. Governors play an active role and are committed to the mission and vision of the school. They appreciate not only the amount of work done by the headteacher and the Management Team to ensure and secure their involvement, but also the way the head has guided the school in his fairly short time there. There is an explicit and shared sense of mission that comes from that collegiate style of leadership and management, which is beginning to become embedded in the school's developmental process. The school promulgates an utterly inclusive culture and all children are welcomed and recognised for their unique worth and are given that sense of respect that enables them to grow as moral and responsible individuals. They are well cared for in a happy, safe and caring environment and they in turn reciprocate this respect to the adults working with them. The school has made a serious financial commitment in terms of resources to ensure the development of the Catholic life of the school. Staff morale is very high and the much loved and highly respected parish priest is always at hand to lend advice and support, as and when it is sought.

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. The recently updated Worship and Prayer Policy Statement, states quite clearly that: ***“Celebration of our faith in Holy Mass and assembling together to praise God and pray for our needs and those of others are fundamental to our structure and Catholic School.”*** Detailed guidelines exist to ensure that a wide range of opportunities are available for all children and other members of the school community to participate in the liturgical and worshipping life of the school. All such occasions are inclusive. Children observed during the inspection, responded with reverence and respect to all aspects of Collective Worship. During a class mass, in which the children took a very proactive part and to which parents and other members of the community were invited, there was a reverend and prayerful atmosphere and the children sang with enthusiasm. Collective Worship is always carefully planned in line with the varying seasons of the Church’s liturgical year, and many of the adults who are welcome to attend, speak of the impact these celebrations have on their own lives and faith. Collective Worship impacts positively on the spiritual and moral development of the children.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Learners’ achievement in Religious Education is good overall. All children observed showed positive attitudes to the work they were undertaking and expressed their thoughts and ideas confidently, in an inclusive teaching atmosphere. Written work observed in Key Stage Two during the inspection was good and in line with other subjects, including English. Effective use is made of the Here I Am religious education programme and the work is clearly differentiated according to the needs and abilities of the children. The Religious Education Co-ordinator has established a system that evaluates teachers’ planning and children’s work, in a constructive and developmental way. The “feedback” forms allow for discussion and reflection between teacher and co-ordinator. This is good practice and typical of the shared systems for school improvement and the development of learners’ achievement.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching and learning throughout the school is good. Teachers have a thorough subject knowledge and show a positive commitment to the work they plan and present to their pupils, with the help and support of the Religious Education Co-ordinator. Children are interested and well motivated. When asked, a great many

of them said they enjoyed the work they undertook in their Religious Education lessons. Prayer and reflection play an important part in the learning and teaching process and time is given to ensure these elements are not neglected. Teachers actively encourage the skills and confidence that children need to develop on their learning journey and the children in turn respond well to this positive and creative atmosphere. ICT was used effectively in a number of lessons observed in developing children's visual literacy about the life and times of Jesus and the children responded well to this particular strategy.

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

The school's clear endeavour to ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the needs and interests of all learners is good. The curriculum time devoted to Religious Education, fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The school makes effective use of the 'Here I Am' programme and the children are given frequent opportunities for discussion and reflection and express their views competently and confidently. The recently appointed PSHCE Co-ordinator works in tandem with the Religious Education Co-ordinator, and both are sensitive to the needs and circumstances of all learners. The school's inclusive culture is exemplary and social cohesion is a lived reality, embedded in the school's welcoming attitude to all. Governors and parents value the role they play as part of the school community and greatly appreciate the quality of welcome and the quantity of communication facilitated by the school. Saint Patrick's is effective at providing opportunities for learners to gain knowledge, understanding and respect for those of other or no particular faith tradition. Pupils are constantly being reminded to think about, care and pray for others less fortunate than themselves. Fund-raising endeavours to support others, are many and varied and all within the community give generously of their time and money.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education is good. There is clear evidence to show that all aspects of leadership in this area are strongly focussed on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and promoting the faith development of all learners. In a characteristically collegiate approach, the Religious Education Co-ordinator has worked closely with the recently appointed PSHCE Co-ordinator. They ensure that the faith journey of the learners is holistic and integrated with other aspects of the schools moral, cultural and spiritual development process. Very good work has also been undertaken in developing links with the parents and parish to promote the common understanding of how each can help the other to work in a creative and effective partnership.

The Religious Education Co-ordinator gives help and support to all members of staff. There has been a significant and substantial investment in the resourcing of Religious Education within the school and these resources are effectively managed and enhance the learners' learning and development. There has been a proactive and robust attempt by the headteacher and co-ordinator to ensure all have the opportunity for involvement in, and benefit from, this process.

The school leadership team has done much to ensure the school environment is safe, welcoming and a place to be proud of. The new Peace Garden is still underway, but already there is a sense of pride and achievement about this venture, which permeates the entire community. All Religious Education displays are of a high standard, showing a commitment and sensitivity in proclaiming the Catholic ethos of the school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Overall Effectiveness	Good
The Catholic Life of the School	Good
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	Good
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 St. Patrick'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