

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

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

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

School URN	107158
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mrs Sandra Caesar
Name of Headteacher	Mr Patrick Nelis
Date of Inspection	6th February 2009
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Gillian Foster

☩ an enthusiasm for the things of God.+

Introduction

The Inspection of St Theresa'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	Voluntary Aided
Age profile of Students	3 - 11
Number on roll	244
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	56
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	2
Number of Catholics on roll	95
Number of Other Christian Denominations	68
Number of other Faiths	81
School address	Prince of Wales Road Sheffield S2 1EY
Telephone Number	0114 239 7251
Fax Number	0114 239 7251
Email	manager@st-theresas.sheffield.sch.uk
Website	www.st-theresas.sheffield.sch.uk

Description of the school

St Theresa's is an average sized Catholic primary school, it is situated in the residential area of the Manor estate and serves the parish of St Theresa's and the surrounding area which includes council and private housing and families from a

wide range of social backgrounds. The school is situated in an area of high unemployment and significant social deprivation. Pupils attainment on entry to Foundation Stage is well below that expected nationally, by the time pupils reach the end of Key Stages One and Two, attainment is broadly in line or better than national expectations. Pupils are predominantly of White British heritage although there is a significant minority of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties/disabilities is well above average. Of the 244 pupils on roll, 95(39%) are baptised Catholics. There are 9 full time and 3 part time teachers of whom 7 are Catholic, 4 of these teachers hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. The school's last Religious Education inspection took place in October 2004 and its last full OFSTED inspection was in May 2008. In recent years there has been considerable instability in staffing, this has now been resolved and the school is benefiting from a stable staffing structure.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sporting clubs, art, choir and ICT. Most of these activities are managed by school staff, a local football club offers football training. There are excellent links between school and parish, both providing effective support for each other. Many of the current parents are ex-pupils and feel a real loyalty to the school, they are supportive and appreciative of what school offers their children and themselves. The school is held in very high regard by the parish and has a good reputation within the local community.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

The effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of Catholic education is **good** with some outstanding features. The Governing Body is well informed, hard working and committed to promoting and deepening the quality of Catholic education. The headteacher, senior leadership team and the parish priest work together with enthusiasm and vision to improve the provision of Catholic education. All staff share the values and beliefs of Catholic education and are committed to the Catholic life of the school, they are supportive of each other and act as very good role models for the children. Excellent relationships exist within the school and this promotes the strong Catholic ethos. Pupils are valued as unique individuals created by God and are helped to develop self-esteem and respect for self and others. High quality Collective Worship is shared with families and parishioners thus deepening the strong bonds between families and parishioners. The Religious Education curriculum is treated with rigour and well delivered allowing the children to make good progress and achieve good standards in knowledge and understanding: they are given many opportunities to relate this knowledge to their own lives and this clearly has a positive impact on their spiritual and moral development which is very good. School offers excellent PSHCE and pastoral support to its pupils including a Rainbows programme for children suffering loss or bereavement. Another strength of the school is the effective work it carries out with parents in supporting them to take an active role in their children's education; this often motivates parents to

develop their own knowledge and skills in a variety of ways.

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

The last Religious Education inspection took place in October 2004 and the following areas for development were identified:

- to consolidate the excellent work the school does in supporting each child and their family
- to consolidate the excellent relationship between the school and the parish
- continue to improve written skills in Religious Education in line with developments throughout the wider curriculum
- arrange an annual staff retreat.

All the above areas have been successfully addressed. The school works tirelessly and effectively to support each pupil and their family and offers outstanding pastoral support. A reward driven strategy to improve attendance, the many opportunities offered to parents to become involved in school life and acquire new skills themselves, are all part of this strategy. Links with the parish continue to be developed through the close involvement of the parish priest in the daily life of the school. Support the school offers to Church includes providing altar servers and on occasions, a choir for Mass, inviting parishioners to attend liturgies in school, supporting parish based Sacramental Preparation, sharing annual events such as Spring and Christmas Fairs and offering the school site for some parish events. The improvement of writing has been and remains a focus for the school and written work in Religious Education is a part of this initiative. Standards of written/recorded work in Religious Education are now commensurate with those achieved in Literacy. The school now holds an annual retreat/reflection day for all staff and governors, this is greatly valued by all and has helped to deepen the sense of shared mission within the school community.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education is **good**. The Governing Body, parish priest, headteacher, Religious Education Co-ordinator and all members of staff are actively involved in the school's mission; they are hard working and committed to providing the best possible Catholic education for the pupils. Recent staffing stability has enabled the strategies put in place for development and improvement to be effectively implemented. The school provides a good learning environment for the children. Parents are very well supported by the school in contributing to their children's Religious Education. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) gives a clear and realistic analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development which are fed into the School Development Plan (SDP). Detailed action plans are then developed with the practical actions required to achieve the stated aims. Current identified priorities for development are:

- To develop links with other schools in the area.
- To continue to work to improve standards of writing in Religious Education.
- To refine assessment within Religious Education.
- To continue to develop resources and develop other Faith teaching.
- To continue to develop cross-curricular links between Religious Education and

other curriculum subjects.

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

- To continue the good work done in offering differentiated work/activities to pupils and ensure that levels of challenge offered to pupils of higher ability is sufficient to allow them to develop their full potential.

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**. Governors are well informed and committed to the Catholic life of the school. Through an effective structure of sub-committees governors are becoming increasingly involved in contributing to the development of the SDP; they monitor all aspects of the SDP and school life in detail through formal means and especially through their frequent visits to school. Governors operate well as **critical friends** through the support and appropriate challenge they offer. The parish priest plays a very active role in the life of the school, teaching some classes, offering training and support to staff and generally inter-acting at a personal level and on a regular basis with members of the school community. The headteacher, well supported by an able deputy head, senior leaders and the Religious Education Co-ordinator, offers very strong leadership focused on developing the Catholic life of the school through the provision of many opportunities for the pupils' spiritual and moral development, raising standards of achievement and promoting the well being and personal development of all pupils. Relationships within the school community are excellent, staff are supportive of each other, they share the school's mission and feel valued for the contributions they make. The school is fully inclusive; all children are welcomed and recognised as being children of God. All pupils are well cared for and nurtured in a happy, safe and purposeful environment underpinned by Gospel values and driven by the desire to achieve the highest possible standards for all. The school works constantly to strengthen the already very good links that exist with parents, carers, the parish and the many outside agencies which enrich the life of the school. As an identified priority in the SDP, the school is continuing to develop links with local schools and in the wider community, thus contributing effectively to the development of community cohesion.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship is **outstanding** and meets all statutory requirements. There is a clear policy which is reviewed regularly by governors, the foundation governors taking a leading role in this. Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and is an integral part of the daily life of the school. A wide range of age appropriate Collective Worship opportunities are planned reflecting

work done in ~~Here I Am~~ and the Church's liturgical calendar. There is a weekly school Mass in Church, pupils in the Key Stage Two classes take it in turns to plan and participate in them; these Masses are shared with families and parishioners. Each year the school presents a Nativity and Passion play to which families and parishioners are invited. Visitors to these events speak of their appreciation of the quality of these presentations and how the children's sincerity and moving portrayal of the Gospel events, helps to enrich their own faith. Through these many shared, liturgical events, the children are helped to develop a sense of their own important place in the church and of being part of a worshipping, liturgical community. Acts of worship include a variety of prayer styles and activities within the liturgical framework. Children learn the formal prayers of the Church and they are encouraged and offered many opportunities for spontaneous prayer. From the earliest years in Foundation Stage One, children enjoy and are comfortable with prayer; older children show reverence and thoughtfulness during prayer sessions and all acts of worship are enlivened by enthusiastic singing. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the quality of Collective Worship. The high quality provision of Collective Worship impacts positively on the children's spiritual and moral development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Learners achievement in Religious Education is **good**. Standards in written/recorded work is good overall and commensurate with standards achieved in Literacy. These good outcomes have been achieved through a strong focus on improving written standards in all curriculum areas; this remains a focus for the school and the continuation of strategies should ensure even higher attainment in the future. Good progress is made by almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs who are very well supported. Children are offered differentiated work/activities and almost all of this is well matched to their abilities although the level of challenge offered is not always sufficient to allow pupils of higher ability to reach their full potential; this issue now needs to be addressed. Children are confident and become increasingly more articulate as they move up the school, again this is an endorsement of the effectiveness of strategies in place to help pupils develop their language and communication skills which are generally well below national expectations on entry to Foundation Stage. By the time children are in the higher Key Stage Two classes, they show real maturity in expressing their views and feelings. Pupils' behaviour is good, they show enthusiasm and enjoyment in Religious Education lessons, they respond well to interesting, exciting and motivating activities and work offered to them. Pupils show a respect for each other by listening to the views of their classmates and working very well in partner or group situations. Role play is used to good effect to deepen children's understanding of the Gospels and to help them to appreciate the relevance these stories have for their own lives. The Religious Education curriculum, together with Collective Worship, PSHCE and other pastoral activities, have a positive and significant impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching and learning throughout the school is **good** with some outstanding teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are committed to teaching high quality Religious Education. All staff, especially new and non-Catholic staff, are very well supported by the parish priest and the most able Religious Education Co-ordinator. Planning of **Here I Am** is thorough and well supplemented by additional material. All teachers plan differentiated work/activities which are generally well matched to pupils abilities although as noted earlier in this report, the level of challenge for more able pupils is not always sufficient. Currently teachers use a variety of formats for short-term planning, they may like to consider using a common format for such planning based on excellent practice already existing in school. Teachers are committed and enthusiastic in teaching Religious Education and this is reflected in the children's own enthusiasm and enjoyment of their lessons which contributes to their achievement. Teachers employ a good variety of teaching styles and present activities which motivate and engage the pupils. Occasionally, work presented to the older children is not always age-appropriate and does not allow them to develop independence skills, this issue needs to be addressed. Teachers employ very good questioning skills which help to develop and deepen the children's knowledge and understanding. Current assessment procedures are thorough and give staff a good, general picture of what children have learned and their levels of understanding, this assessment informs planning. School is working to refine assessment, to give a more exact picture of the levels of understanding of the pupils, this work will support the identified area for development, to ensure the more able pupils are sufficiently challenged to allow them to maximise their potential. In many lessons, cross-curricular links are planned for which enhance the Religious Education curriculum, this is particularly so in Literacy and ICT; school is planning to develop cross-curricular work further and this will benefit the curriculum. Most Religious Education lessons contain elements of reflection and often prayer and this has a powerful impact on the spiritual and moral development of 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 the learners is **outstanding**. The Religious Education curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory and meets requirements of the Bishops' Conference by devoting ten percent of teaching time to Religious Education. The teachings of Jesus underpin all the school's efforts to meet the needs of its pupils. All lessons are well planned and delivered and children acquire a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith and a respect for other faiths and cultures. School plans to further develop multi-faith and multi-cultural education by inviting an increasing number of visitors of other faiths and cultures to visit school and talk to the children about their beliefs and by taking children to visit other Christian churches and places of worship. 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 very well exemplified by the Year Six children who take responsibility for many areas of school life and contribute to the day-to-day

smooth running of the school. Children appreciate that they are listened to and that their views and suggestions are respected and often acted upon. Staff use incentives to promote good behaviour, they encourage the children to develop self esteem and respect for themselves and others within a culture of forgiveness, this has a positive impact on the learning environment and allows all pupils to access the Religious Education curriculum. Attendance has been an issue for the school over the past years and school has excellent strategies in place to support children (and their parents), in achieving good attendance. These strategies are successful and attendance levels have risen considerably allowing children full access to the curriculum. The school has an excellent PSHCE policy which supports the Religious Education curriculum very well and adds to the children's understanding of school and wider issues and how they, as Christians can impact on God's world. A good example of this occurred when several children responded independently to the question 'what makes this school special?' with the answer that at St Theresa's they learnt about God and that helped them to know how to behave. The school is fully inclusive offering equal opportunities for all pupils to make progress academically and personally. The partnership with parents/carers is valued and nurtured, parents are kept well informed of what their children are learning in Religious Education and are given every support and encouragement to help them to contribute to their children's learning.

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 and Religious Education Co-ordinator give very strong leadership clearly focused on the Catholic mission of the school and in raising achievement and supporting all learners. Religious Education is given a high priority and is regarded as a core subject which influences all areas of the curriculum. A clear Religious Education policy, which is regularly monitored and evaluated, provides direction. Governors are aware of and monitor standards of achievement in Religious Education and actively support strategies for improvement. The Religious Education Co-ordinator is hard working and effective in managing the subject; she introduces all the topics and supports staff in the delivery of them. Staff development and formation is given a high priority and all staff in turn, attend courses at the Pastoral Centre in addition to receiving support from the parish priest and other training and retreat opportunities. When appropriate, staff are given Religious Education targets as part of performance management. Teaching assistants are committed, well trained and enthusiastic, they are deployed to good effect to support pupils. There are rigorous procedures in place for monitoring teaching and learning in Religious Education through a cycle of planning scrutiny, lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work; identified areas of good practice are shared and any weaknesses supported, this support is greatly appreciated by staff. Due to high budget allocation for Religious Education over the past years, on a par with Literacy and Numeracy, resources for delivering the Religious Education curriculum are good and are constantly being added to. As a development priority, school is planning to increase multi-faith and multi-cultural

resources. High quality Religious Education displays in classrooms and in the hall promote and proclaim the distinctive Catholic ethos of the school and bear witness to the Gospel values lived out in school on a daily basis.

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?	Outstanding
Religious Education	
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?	Outstanding
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 Theresa'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