

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

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

**ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

School URN	107112
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mrs Yvonne Pine
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Rigby
Date of Inspection	15th June 2009
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Gillian Foster

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

Introduction

The Inspection of St Catherine'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 Catherine's Catholic Primary School is an inner city school situated in Burngreave and serves the parish of St Catherine's although many of the Catholic pupils and their families worship at the neighbouring parish of St Patrick's. The school has responded to community needs for more school places caused by rising birth rate and an increased population in the Burngreave area of new comers to Britain. A temporary expansion began in September 2006 to accommodate a larger intake of pupils and the new expansion will open in September 2009. Currently there are four Key Stage Two one form entry classes and two form entry classes from Reception to Year Two, (60 per year group). In addition the school has a 52 place nursery. St Catherine's is now larger than the average sized primary school. Burngreave is a vibrant multi-cultural and multi-faith part of the city: it is also a New Deal Area and many of the pupils come from socially and economically deprived homes. Of the 354 pupils on roll, 33% are baptised Catholics, 39% belong to other Christian denominations and 20% belong to other World Faiths. Just over half the pupils are from minority ethnic families, 20% of whom need support to learn English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. Pupils' attainment on entry to Foundation Stage is significantly below national age-related expectations but as they move through the school they become closer to national expectations and by the end of Key Stage Two, attainment is in line or above. There are 14 full time and 2 part-time teachers just over half of the teaching staff are Catholic and one holds the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. In recent years many additional staff have been employed to support pupils and the expansion of the school, there are currently 55 members of staff, three of whom belong to the Muslim faith, they act as very good role models for the pupils.

The school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities for pupils and facilitates many adult and family learning opportunities. There are excellent links with parents and carers and they overwhelmingly support the school and appreciate the high quality care and education their children receive. The school has worked tirelessly to develop good relationships with the parish and local community and has gained the trust of the local community and is held in very high regard by them. The school has received many awards including the International School Award.

Information about the school

Type of School	Primary, Voluntary Aided
Age profile of Students	3 - 11
Number on roll	354
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	123
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	6
Number of Catholics on roll	115
Number of Other Christian Denominations	138
Number of other Faiths	73
School address	Firshill Crescent Sheffield S4 7BX
Telephone Number	0114 2421177
Fax Number	0114 2446141
Email	enquiries@st-catherines.sheffield.sch.uk
Website	www.stcatherinesprimary.org.uk

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 St Catherine's School is **outstanding**. It is a school where everyone is welcome and where the Mission Statement inspired by the words of Jesus that "I have set you an example, that you learn that you are all equal, the master is no more important than the servant, and that you should behave kindly and humbly to each other", is clearly evident in all aspects of school life at all times. Governors and staff showed great generosity of spirit and made a brave and significant decision in responding to the needs of the community by expanding school and taking in

many pupils from diverse ethnic and faith backgrounds. The governors, headteacher, members of the leadership team and all staff share a strong sense of mission both within the school and in outreach to the wider community. As a result of the multi-faith and truly diverse pupil population, the school is committed to and successful in achieving spiritual development, religious tolerance and community cohesion. The distinctive Catholic ethos so visible in school, and the Gospel values underpinning the work of the school, is strengthened by the school's commitment to embrace difference and celebrate similarity and to accept all children irrespective of their barriers to learning. To achieve the challenging aims of ensuring excellence for all pupils in their education and personal development, the school has rigorous procedures of self-evaluation leading to the identification of priorities for development. The Religious Education curriculum is firmly rooted in the Catholic Faith and is well suited to meeting the needs of all pupils, it is enriched by a wealth of visits to places of worship and visits from members of other faiths, it is at the cutting edge of curriculum innovation. Staff formation, training and Continuous Professional Development are given a high priority to ensure that staff are confident and well equipped to deliver the broad, creative curriculum effectively. All pupils make very good progress and standards of attainment in Religious Education are high. Pastoral care is a strength of the school, the specific pastoral needs of individual children are addressed in effective and sensitive ways and school works with many outside agencies to provide additional support for pupils. A Rainbows programme operates to offer children suffering loss or trauma support. School should now consider the feasibility of establishing chaplaincy provision, possibly in partnership with other diocesan schools, to add to the existing excellent pastoral provision. Collective Worship is of a very high quality, it engages the children and allows for the spiritual development of all. Through high quality provision of Catholic education and the outstanding work done in promoting inclusion and community cohesion, pupils of St Catherine's are very well prepared to take their places as positive citizens in a multi-cultural, multi-faith Britain.

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

The last Religious Education inspection took place in November 2006 and the following areas for development were identified:

- Extending experiences of multi-faith and multi-cultural education
- To establish robust assessment systems
- To improve the use of ICT in Religious Education teaching.

All the above areas have been addressed effectively and will be commented on in detail later in this report. In addition to these recommended developments, since the last inspection the school has:

- Actively promoted community cohesion with pupils, parents and the wider community
- Secured, designed and developed a new expanded school site with community provision which will open in September 2009
- Appointed an Advanced Skills teacher to develop learning and teaching across the

school

- Expanded and developed the Senior Leadership Team
- Appointed a School Manager who is central to the continuing development of the school as a learning community, ensuring teachers have the time and resources to be effective in their core role
- Continued to champion the school in the parish community
- Further developed creativity in the Religious Education curriculum
- Achieved International School Award and now leads Global Citizenship developments with the Sheffield Family of Catholic Schools.

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, all 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 for deepening the Catholic life of the school are then included in the School Improvement and Development Plan (SIDP), together with detailed action plans for implementation together with realistic timeframes, success criteria and carefully calculated cost implications. The SIDP is closely linked to the Every Child Matters agenda. The SIDP is regularly and rigorously monitored and evaluated by staff and governors and is an effective working document which drives improvement. An energetic and dynamic leadership team led by the inspirational headteacher inspire staff to share the vision to provide excellence for the children. Staff morale is high, they are hard working, committed, skilled and enthusiastic and support initiatives and development priorities.

The inspector fully agrees with the development priorities identified by the school and in order to maintain the high quality of Catholic education would add the following areas for development for consideration by staff and governors:

- As a matter of urgency and in order to strengthen the Governing Body, appoint two Foundation Governors to fill the existing vacancies
- Explore the feasibility of establishing chaplaincy provision, possibly in partnership with other diocesan schools
- Continue to develop the role of Religious Education Co-ordinator to include monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and develop procedures for sharing and disseminating good practice.

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**. Everyone in school is aware of and committed to the Mission Statement and the drive to develop and promote inclusion and community cohesion. Governors ensure that all policies and documentation reflect and support the school's Catholic identity and they are rigorous and pro-active in monitoring and evaluating practice. Currently, there are two vacancies on the Governing Body for Foundation Governors, and in order to strengthen the Governing Body and enable them to maintain and develop the Catholic life of the school, two new Foundation Governors need to be appointed. The SIDP contains specific sections for the development of the Catholic life of the school where aims are clearly set out, within realistic timeframes, success criteria, carefully calculated cost implications and detailed action plans to support implementation. The school has effective quality control procedures in place through well established cycles of monitoring, evaluation, review and implementation. Generous budget allocation over the years has ensured high quality resources. The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher and an expanded, strong leadership team, provides inspirational leadership which dynamically promotes the pupils education, spiritual and moral development and well being. The Religious Education Co-ordinator leads the subject well and offers high quality support to colleagues. Performance Management strategies and Continuing Professional Development are used effectively to produce capable and committed leaders at all levels. Inclusion and the development and promotion of community cohesion is at the heart of the school and the outstanding work done in these areas has been recognised by the diocese and Local Authority as models of good practice. The teaching of other World Faiths and the provision for the spiritual development of pupils of those faiths is a significant strength of the school. Excellent relationships exist within the whole school community and promote the Catholic ethos and bear witness to the reality of the Mission Statement. All adults in school act as excellent role models for the children. Pastoral care offered to pupils and their families is very good and In order to strengthen this care further, consideration should be given to the establishment of chaplaincy provision, possibly in partnership with other diocesan schools. Parents overwhelmingly support school and are well satisfied with the education and personal care their children receive and the opportunities offered to themselves. Parents are given many opportunities both formal and informally to make their views known.

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 setting out the rationale and practical ways of implementation. Policy and practice is regularly monitored by staff and governors, foundation governors acknowledge their specific role in this and fulfil their role effectively. Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school for staff and pupils alike. Staff are confident in planning and delivering Collective Worship which is structured around the liturgical year; each gathering follows liturgical ritual enabling pupils to respond in ways unique and meaningful to them. Collective Worship is always creative, engaging and age appropriate; children are reverent, alert and responsive, they sing with enthusiasm and joy in celebrations and liturgies. All acts of worship contain reflective elements and allow children to relate the Gospel messages they are hearing to their faiths and traditions and to appreciate the commitment of their religious beliefs to their everyday lives. Children demonstrate real understanding, respect and appreciation of faiths other than their own. Regular school/parish Masses are held in Church or school and shared with parishioners. Parishioners welcome and appreciate the opportunity to visit school for these Masses and the older children enjoy and take a pride in showing parishioners around the school. Children are given many opportunities for spontaneous prayer, they pray naturally and without inhibition or self-consciousness. Pupils are frequently involved in planning, participating in and leading liturgies and celebrations and they do so with enthusiasm. Very high quality displays of children's work, religious symbols, texts and artefacts in classrooms, the entrance foyer and around the school promote and enhance the distinctive Catholic/Christian ethos of the school and promote respect and appreciation of other World Faiths. The overall excellence of provision has a significant impact on the very good 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 **outstanding**. Pupils enter school with attainment judged to be significantly below national age-related expectations, as they progress through school they move closer to expected levels and by the end of Key Stage Two are in line or above expected levels of attainment. Written/recorded work is of the same standard or above that in Literacy. Staff need to come to an agreement about the amount of written/recorded work, especially in the older classes, to ensure that it reflects the topics covered. All pupils make very good progress in Religious Education including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language. Pupils are encouraged to express their views and opinions which they do with increasing confidence. There is an excellent School Council whose members represent their classes and bring forward ideas, the members speak confidently and persuasively and many of their suggestions have been adopted by the

school. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of Catholic/Christian beliefs and traditions together with knowledge and respect for faiths other than their own; this is a significant strength. All teachers have high expectations, they provide rich, stimulating learning environments in classrooms and around the school and offer a creative curriculum which engages the pupils and contributes to their high achievement. Pupils are challenged to think morally and ethically and consider issues affecting their own and the wider, global community. Pupils show real maturity and demonstrate an understanding of the commitment of their religious beliefs in everyday life. This was well demonstrated in an outstanding Year Six lesson observed where the Choices topic from the 'Here I Am' programme was being studied. The class took part in a Fair Trade game in the first session and then related the outcomes of this game to the impact certain choices had on disadvantaged groups of people. A link was also made with the class's history topic 'The Second World War' and the persecution of the Jews. This lesson had a powerful effect in demonstrating to the children the consequences of making choices and the consequences resulting from them. From the earliest years in Nursery, children are supported in developing independence skills. Pupils of all ages work very well together in partner or group situations and the introduction of 'Learning Partners', a peer review/support strategy has impacted positively on standards. Children are encouraged to express their views and opinions and do so confidently. The impact of the high quality moral, spiritual and cultural education is seen in the excellent behaviour of the children and the respect they show to each other and to all adults. Children have many opportunities to engage with exciting local and global initiatives. They learn to nurture themselves and others through specific projects, a most engaging example being the 'Chicken Run Project'. The school rescued several battery hens and has created an environment for them in an inner courtyard in school. Teams of children named 'Eco Warriors' look after the hens and sell the eggs they lay. This initiative is exciting and engaging for the children and helps them to appreciate economic well being.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching and learning is **outstanding**. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and those new to the school or not familiar with the 'Here I Am' programme, the basis of the Religious Education curriculum, are given very good support by the Religious Education Co-ordinator to develop confidence in delivering the curriculum. Lessons are well planned and well structured and meet the full range of pupils' needs through differentiated activities and additional support. Learning objectives are made clear and shared with pupils, work builds on prior knowledge to ensure progression. The pace of lessons is good and stimulates and focuses pupils on tasks and activities. Teaching assistants are skilled and effective in supporting pupils, especially those with special educational needs, they make a significant contribution to pupil achievement. The enthusiasm and commitment of staff in teaching Religious Education is clear to see and is transmitted to the children who obviously enjoy and benefit from it. Rigorous assessment and tracking systems enable teachers to have a

very clear understanding of pupils' levels of attainment and this informs their planning; levels of challenge offered are appropriate and allow all pupils to reach their full potential. All teachers demonstrate very good classroom management skills and foster skills of independence and co-operative working. Staff have high expectations of pupils both in terms of attainment and behaviour, pupils respond to these aspirations and behaviour is excellent and attainment high. All teachers demonstrate very good questioning skills, they allow children time to reflect before answering questions and through appropriate prompting help them to deepen their understanding. Children are increasingly involved in their own learning through Assessment for Learning strategies and the peer review/support initiative 'Learning Partners'. Very good marking procedures, used consistently throughout the school also contribute to the pupils ability to self-evaluate their work. Excellent relationships exist throughout the school, teachers affirm and show respect to children who reflect this in their attitudes to others. The use of Circle Time and work on Nurturing Human Wholeness together with the broad, relevant curriculum offered and the high quality of teaching create a rich learning environment where children flourish achieving high standards of attainment and personal and spiritual growth. Parents are kept well informed of what their children are learning and are actively encouraged and supported in taking an active part in their children's education.

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 **outstanding**. 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 curriculum has been reviewed and modified in response to the nature of pupil intake and now better suits the needs of all pupils, it is creative and engaging. The teaching of other faiths is relevant to all and enables the spiritual needs of all pupils to be met. Rigorous and effective assessment and tracking systems allow teachers to build on pupils' prior knowledge to ensure their progress and development. The use of ICT by both teachers and children is now a significant strength of the school. Religious Education lessons are planned and delivered through the use of ICT. An excellent example of this was observed in a Year Three class where the children were given the task of reproducing a Gospel story illustrating the consequences of choices, working in partner groups using laptops. The children were excited and engaged by the task, their computer skills enabled them to focus completely on the task and they produced work of high quality. The school has responded in a significant and brave way to the changing needs of the local community, they have demonstrated generosity of spirit and a commitment to the Mission Statement in agreeing to expand the school and take in many pupils from other faiths and minority ethnic groups. Through open, honest dialogue about such things as racism, the school has built up trust and developed good relationships with the community and considerably enhanced and developed community cohesion. The outstanding work the school does on inclusion and community cohesion has been recognised as a model of

good practice by the diocese and Local Authority. Members of staff appointed from other faith communities and cultural backgrounds act as good role models and help staff and pupils to a deeper understanding and appreciation of these faiths. A very high priority is placed on personal, social, health and citizenship education and can be seen in every facet of school life. The formal means of delivering this aspect of the curriculum include the use of Ethos Statements, Circle Time, the Seal programme and Nurturing Human Wholeness. Family life and sex education is delivered at age-appropriate levels through these and other programmes, parents are fully informed of what their children are going to learn and are invited to discuss and express their views on this. The high quality of the Religious Education curriculum together with the extensive range of extra-curricular experiences offered to the children contributes in a significant way to their very good spiritual and moral development.

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 St Catherine's is **outstanding**. All leaders have very high expectations for continued development, they achieve this through rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring. The SEF and Religious Education Improvement Plans are good documents reflecting good practice but also giving clear direction for further development. The governors, headteacher, deputy headteacher and leadership team ensure that Religious Education is given a very high priority and underpins all the school strives to achieve; all leaders are totally committed to delivering excellence and take responsibility for it. The Religious Education Co-ordinator offers good quality leadership and support to colleagues, she is very well supported in this by the deputy head teacher. Succession planning for this role ensures consistency and the maintenance of high quality, this is very good practice. As the current Religious Education Co-ordinator will relinquish the role at the end of the school year, consideration could be given to developing the role to include monitoring of teaching and learning in Religious Education (which is currently undertaken by members of the leadership team), and developing procedures for sharing and disseminating identified good practice. The Gospel Mission Statement is a real focus for all that adults and children do in school. Morale is high, staff feel valued and are very supportive of each other and all share and strive for the aspirational vision for the school. The continued development and refurbishment of the school offers an excellent learning environment which children enjoy and respect, they also show great respect to each other. Staff and resources are extremely well deployed to achieve the best outcomes for pupils. The Governing Body, under the chairmanship of a long standing, excellent member, are supportive and appropriately challenging, they fulfil their role as 'critical friend' through well established monitoring and evaluation procedures; they receive excellent, comprehensive information and data from school staff to enable them to have an accurate picture of every aspect of school life. Several governors, one in particular who generously provides musical support for the school, visits school several

times a week and observes practice directly. St Catherine's school is a good place to be where children enjoy their learning, they feel happy, valued, respected and affirmed and are helped to flourish in a Christ centred environment.

Summary of Inspection Judgements:	
Overall Effectiveness	Outstanding
The Catholic Life of the School	Outstanding
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?	Outstanding
How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?	Outstanding
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?	Outstanding

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St Catherine'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