

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

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

**ST JOSEPH'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
ROSSINGTON**

School URN	106775
Name of Chairman of Governors	Father John McNamee
Name of Headteacher	Miss Jane Barker
Date of Inspection	22nd April 2008
Section 48 Inspector	Gillian Foster

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

Introduction

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 established in the early 1970s. Due to increasing numbers, the original school building was significantly enlarged in 1991; it has recently undergone considerable re-furbishment. The school serves the parishes of Christ The King, Rossington and Holy Family Finningley. The school serves a mixed community drawing from the village of Rossington that consists of former colliery housing with privately owned housing - in the past five years a large privately owned housing estate has been built to the south of the village and St Joseph's draws children from this estate. The majority of children come from the local area but some children attend from outlying villages and are transported to school by bus. The school had its last Religious Education inspection, (then Section 23) in April 2002 and its last OFSTED inspection in December 2007. This is an average sized primary school and most of its pupils are of White British heritage. 58% of the children are baptised Catholics. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. However an above average number of these pupils has a statement of special educational need. There are nine full time and four part time teachers of whom seven are Catholic, three hold the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies or its equivalent and three are currently working towards this award.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities which take place before school, at lunch time and after school. These activities are managed within school by staff and others are provided by local agencies, in particular, the Sports England Foundation. There are very good links and relationships between the school, parents and the members of the parish communities. Almost all parents support the school actively and are very satisfied with the education their children receive at St Joseph's. The school is held in very high regard within the community. The school has recently been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark for the second time and the Healthy Schools Award.

Information about the school

Type of School	Voluntary Aided
Age profile of Students	3 - 11
Number on roll	264
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	153
Number of Other Christian Denominations	110
Number of other Faiths	1
School address	Bevan Avenue Rossington Doncaster DN11 0NB
Telephone Number	01302 868098
Fax Number	01302 863931
Email	jba@st-josephs.doncaster.sch.uk

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 **outstanding**. The Governing Body is well informed, hard working and committed to promoting and deepening the quality of Catholic education. The parish priest, who is also Chair of Governors, acts as a focal point to ensure that school is an integral part of the worshipping, parish community. The Headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, the parish priest and governors work closely together with enthusiasm and vision to improve the provision of Catholic education by identifying priorities for development and ensuring their implementation. All staff share the values and beliefs of Catholic education and the Gospel values enshrined in the school's Mission Statement; they are supportive of each other and provide very good role models for the children. The school

has a very calm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere, children feel safe, respected and valued and they flourish in this affirmative, nurturing and stimulating environment. The Religious Education curriculum based on the 'Here I Am' programme together with teachers' additional material, is well delivered. This allows the children to acquire appropriate religious knowledge, skills and concepts which have a positive impact on their attitudes and contribute to their spiritual and moral development. Excellent relationships exist between school, parents and the parish communities. Parents and parishioners are frequently invited and accept invitations into school to share Masses, liturgies and celebrations prepared and presented by the children. This sharing of high quality Collective Worship with families and parishioners, is an outstanding and successful feature of the school.

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

The last Religious Education inspection took place in April 2002 and the following areas for development were identified:

- to review arrangements for sacramental preparation to strengthen even further the good links with the parishes
- to ensure that the allocation of teaching time for Religious Education in all classes meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference
- to build on parental support by providing parents with more Religious Education curriculum information
- to consider devoting an INSET day for the school community to use the Diocesan Self-Evaluation document to audit provision and to consider in particular the monitoring of teaching and learning and assessment procedures.

Each issue has been dealt with very effectively and this has contributed to the school's outstanding effectiveness. Sacramental preparation is now shared between parents, school and parish and all parties are very satisfied with current arrangements which have contributed to strengthening links with the parish. All classes now devote a minimum of ten percent of teaching time to Religious Education, this has further strengthened the effectiveness of the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum. Parents now receive a termly bulletin on what their children are learning in Religious Education, in addition, items in the parents weekly newsletter suggest ways that parents can support their children in their learning in Religious Education and inform them of when assemblies, Masses, liturgies and celebrations are taking place. Parents value and appreciate the additional information they now receive. An INSET day was held to consider provision and as a result, it was decided to supplement the 'Here I Am' programme with discrete lessons on other aspects of the Catholic faith such as Saints, Miracles and Parables. In addition, it was decided to introduce a booklet for children so that they could follow the Mass more easily, this was done using photographs of the parish priest and the Church of Christ The King. These initiatives have greatly enriched the curriculum and worship opportunities presented to the children. As a result of the audit, a more rigorous assessment system was put in place which is now used consistently across the school, and monitoring of teaching and learning was developed.

The lesson observation element of monitoring now needs to be further developed following a considerable change in staff personnel in recent times.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) correctly recognises how the whole school community is focused on providing a caring, safe and nurturing environment with a very strong Catholic ethos and high quality Religious Education. The Headteacher provides strong leadership and together with the senior leadership team, gives very clear direction. All staff feel part of the mission of the school and work closely together to provide the best possible outcomes for the children. The school recognises the need to constantly strive for improvement and this is illustrated by the way the areas for development identified in the last Religious Education inspection have been vigorously and effectively addressed and implemented to bring about and sustain improvements. Many areas for development have been identified in the SEF and fed into the current School Improvement Plan (SIP), some, but not all of these priorities are supported by detailed action plans set within realistic time frames. The inspector agrees with the school's assessment of areas to be addressed and developed and suggests the following areas become the focus following this inspection:

- Ensure that all priorities identified in the SIP are supported by detailed action plans.
- Come to an agreement about the amount of written/recorded work expected from each age group and to ensure that the more able pupils in particular are presented with an appropriate level of challenge.
- Develop the lesson observation element of monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- Develop procedures to share the existing good practice so that all teaching is as good as the best.

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**. Leaders at all levels have a very clear understanding of the educational mission of the Church and of the school's role in this; they are focused on raising standards and promoting the spiritual and moral development of the children. The parish priest, who is also Chair of Governors, plays a very important part in this and has a significant impact on developing and sustaining the very strong Catholic ethos of the school. The dedicated Headteacher strives for excellence in all aspects of provision at St Joseph's; her clear vision is understood and shared by all staff and they feel part of this mission. The staff participate in Religious Education INSET days, often shared with other Catholic schools, and they attend appropriate courses. Personal and professional

development is encouraged, two members of the teaching staff are currently working towards the CCRS award and two of the learning support assistants are studying for a foundation degree. The development of Religious Education is reported to the governors as part of the Headteacher's termly report and through the governors direct involvement in the life of the school. The hard working, committed Religious Education Co-ordinator, who has held the post for two years, is well supported in her role by the Headteacher; she, in her turn, provides very good support for colleagues and monitors planning and pupils' work effectively. The excellent links with the parishes, especially through shared worship and celebration, make a significant contribution to the childrens' spiritual development and faith formation. 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, caring, safe environment where the Gospel values of the Mission Statement are lived out daily. The broad and varied Religious Education curriculum together with a wealth of extra-curricula activities ensure that all children are given many opportunities to develop their unique skills, talents and interests. The childrens' involvement within the parish, wider communities and outreach activities, in particular the Chernobyl project, impacts greatly on their spiritual and moral development and contributes effectively to developing social cohesion. All the teaching staff and learning support assistants have been trained as Rainbows facilitators, they support groups of children as the need arises; their work in supporting children who have suffered loss or bereavement is much appreciated by the families. Priorities for developing the Catholic life of the school are accurately identified in the SIP and regularly monitored by governors. The inclusion of detailed action plans for all priorities will facilitate effective monitoring by governors.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship at St Joseph's is **outstanding**. Acts of worship are held in some form each day. Parents and parishioners are regularly invited to Masses and liturgies and attend in large numbers. Many of these celebrations are prepared and led by the children. Children are enthusiastic to take part in these acts of worship and they act with confidence and reverence. It is a tradition of the school to perform the Easter Story during three days of Holy Week. Parents and parishioners who attend, both in school and in church, speak of the deep sense of spirituality that is conveyed by the sincere and moving presentations by the children. Prayer is an integral part of the life of the school, children learn formal prayers appropriate to their ages and spontaneous prayer is encouraged and supported. Sacramental preparation is carried out by the school and parish working in close partnership with the parents; parents speak of their satisfaction with the arrangements. For many of the children, school is church and in recognition of this, the school seeks to ensure that all Collective Worship is of the highest standard and appropriate to the age of the children in order to engage them and impact on their spiritual development and faith formation. High quality Religious Education display are prominent in the entrance hall, in corridors and around the school, these displays proclaim the Catholic ethos of the school and engage the

interest of children and visitors to school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Learners achievement in Religious Education is **outstanding**. Religious Education is given a very high profile and is considered to be at least as important as other core subjects. Written/recorded work is always well presented and is at least in line with standards in Literacy and often better. There are some inconsistencies in the quantity of work expected and produced by each age group; this issue needs to be addressed. From the earliest years children are nurtured, respected and encouraged to express their views and listen to and respect the views and opinions of others. Children develop knowledge and understanding appropriate to their ages and abilities and almost all make very good progress. The children demonstrate a sound knowledge of Scripture and of the traditions of the Catholic Church. Pupils with special needs are well catered for; they are very well supported by able and dedicated learning support assistants. Many of the older children show a real maturity in relating knowledge gained to its impact on their lives and the world in general; they are able to articulate their views with confidence and clarity. Staff have high and realistic expectations of attainment and behaviour. Pupils respond well to these expectations. Pupils' behaviour is very good, they show enthusiasm and enjoyment of Religious Education lessons and this contributes to their outstanding standards of attainment. Most of the children are good independent workers; they work well in group/partner activities. The Religious Education curriculum together with the PSHCE curriculum and Circle Time contribute to the very good spiritual, moral and social 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 features. All lessons observed during the inspection were at least good with some examples of outstanding practice. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are committed to teaching high quality Religious Education. All staff are well supported by a committed and enthusiastic Religious Education Co-ordinator. All teachers are confident to teach the 'Here I Am' programme and additional material devised by the staff. Lessons are thoroughly planned, prior assessment is used to inform planning and all teachers include differentiated work/activities in their planning. In the best lessons, the level of challenge enables pupils to reach higher levels of knowledge and understanding; such levels of challenge were not apparent in all lessons and this issue now needs to be considered for further development. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for, they are presented with work at an appropriate level and sufficiently stimulating to allow them to achieve well and make good progress. Detailed consideration is also given to the material environment of the classrooms to allow children with learning difficulties/disabilities to maximise their learning potential. This is

excellent practice and reflects in practice, the aims of the Mission Statement. In many classes, good cross-curricular links are planned for and the appropriate use of ICT enhances delivery of the Religious Education curriculum. Religious Education lessons often include elements of reflection and prayer; this has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children and of their understanding and appreciation of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Monitoring of planning and scrutiny of pupils work is effectively carried out by the Religious Education Co-ordinator and feedback given to staff. The school plans to re-introduce lesson observations, which previously took place on a regular basis. These procedures will ensure that outstanding practice is identified. Procedures now need to be developed to enable the evident good practice to be shared with colleagues so that all teaching in Religious Education will be as good as the best.

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

The efforts of the school in meeting the needs and interest of all learners is **outstanding**. The Religious Education curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference by devoting at least ten percent of teaching time to Religious Education. The Religious Education curriculum developed over recent years, supplements the 'Here I Am' programme with additional teaching material, devised by staff on specific elements of the Catholic Faith; this material is appropriate to the ages and circumstances of the children. This broad curriculum ensures that the children receive a variety of religious teaching and experiences which match their needs and allow them to develop their potential to become actively involved in the Catholic and local communities. In almost all Religious Education lessons and acts of worship, the children are given the opportunity to reflect and think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. The impact of this is well illustrated in the efforts and enthusiasm children of all ages have brought to the Chernobyl Project currently underway. The older children have the opportunity to participate in residential retreat experiences. Multi faith and multi cultural education is well taught. Visitors of different World Faiths are invited into school to talk to the children and children are taken on visits to other places of worship. Children gain a knowledge and respect for other faiths, beliefs and customs. Parents are welcome visitors to the school and there are very positive relationships within the whole school community. Circle time activities and the School Council underline how the views of the children are valued and acted upon. The older children act as 'buddies' to the younger children at playtimes and strive to involve and care for any children feeling isolated or unhappy. The care and respect the children show for each other, for adults and for their environment is apparent to all who enter the school and those who encounter children on out-of-school activities. St Joseph's is a happy, safe and welcoming place to be.

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 **outstanding**. The Headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator give very strong, leadership clearly focused on raising achievement and supporting all learners. The SEF and Religious Education Development Plans accurately reflect current practice and identify areas where practice can be developed and improved. Rigorous assessment procedures are in place which are used consistently across the school and impact on teachers' planning. Planning and childrens' work is scrutinised on a regular basis and feedback given to staff, some of the generic issues identified in this process are discussed within staff meetings and the outcomes reflected in future planning. As mentioned earlier in this report and already identified as a priority by the school, the re-introduction of regular lesson observations will further strengthen the monitoring and evaluation procedures and ensure that the very good practice evident in many classes, is shared and disseminated. A high priority is placed on staff training and support. School is fully inclusive and welcomes and makes excellent provision for pupils of all abilities and needs. Religious Education is given a very high profile which is deepened by the regular involvement of the parish priest. Religious Education receives an annual budget which has been wisely spent in the past. Resources are of a high quality and enhance the delivery of the subject. The recent re-furbishment of many parts of the school has created a most pleasant, high quality environment which is appreciated by all members of the school community. The classroom displays and prayer areas together with the entrance hall and corridor displays all make a positive contribution to the childrens' achievement in Religious Education by reflecting the importance the school leadership team place on valuing the childrens' work and developing the Catholic ethos. St Joseph's is a safe, caring, happy place for children to be where they flourish in their learning, faith formation and personal development.

Summary of Inspection Judgements:	
Overall Effectiveness	Outstanding
The Catholic Life of the School	
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?	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?	Outstanding

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