

Diocese of Hallam

INSPECTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(Section 23 of the 1996 School Inspections Act)

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
Ripley Street
Hillsborough
Sheffield
S6 2NU

Inspection Date: 11th & 12th December 2003

Diocesan Inspector: Mr Trevor Horton

The inspection of the denominational character of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School was carried out under the direction of the Governors of the school in fulfilment of their obligations under the requirements of Canon Law (ref.804,806), Section 23 of the 1996 Inspection Act, Section 13 of the Education (Schools) Act 1992 and Sections 241 and 259 of the Education Act, 1993. This inspection was conducted according to the Handbook for the Inspection of Religious Education in the Diocese of Hallam

The process of Inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed to support and encourage each school community. It is hoped that this report will celebrate all that is positive and praiseworthy in Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and help promote sound development for the future.

A copy of this report may be obtained from the Governors of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Ripley Street, Hillsborough, Sheffield S6 2NU or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU

INTRODUCTION

Basic information about the school

NAME OF SCHOOL	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
TYPE	Primary
STATUS	Voluntary Aided
NUMBER ON ROLL	206
AGE RANGE	4 – 11 years
GENDER OF PUPILS	Mixed
CHAIRMAN OF GOVERNORS	Mr M McCreesh
HEADTEACHER	Mrs Sue Pilkiw
ADDRESS OF SCHOOL	Ripley St Hillsborough Sheffield S6 2NU
TELEPHONE NUMBER	0114 2344362
DATE OF INSPECTION	11 th and 12 th December 2003
DIOCESAN INSPECTOR	Mr Trevor Horton

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School was founded in 1903 and celebrated its centenary earlier this year. There was an extensive remodelling in 1978 and since the last inspection, a new hall, reception classroom and computer suite have been added to enhance the school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post since September 2002 and have plans to further improve the physical environment of the school.

The school is on the same site as the church near the busy shopping centre of Hillsborough Barracks in the north of Sheffield three miles from the city centre. It is closely surrounded by housing and playground space is very limited. The school management work hard to overcome the problems generated by the lack of space and not having a sports field.

The school is organised into 7 Classes. The intake is mixed with the majority of children coming from private and rented accommodation. There are very few pupils from an ethnic minority background.

The headteacher has been in post since 2002, commencing at the same time as the deputy head. There are eight full-time teachers including the headteacher and four educational support staff.

There are currently 206 pupils on roll organised into classes as follows

Reception	30
Year 1	30
Year 2	29
Year 3	27
Year 4	28
Year 5	32
Year 6	30

76% of pupils are baptised Catholics.

75% that is six, of the eight permanent teaching staff are Catholics

PART ONE

ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

1. THE MISSION OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 Sacred Heart is a very good school fulfilling an important role in the local community. Its Mission Statement is clear in its intent to provide a community where all *“feel valued, confident and secure”*. It roots this intent firmly in the Gospel values it promotes, in an environment of *“trust, openness and respect”*. A reflection of Jesus’ commandment; *“Love one another as I have loved you”*
- 1.2 In the school prospectus a detailed statement outlining the school’s vision follows this Mission Statement. In this it sets out its aim of realising the full potential of every child.
- 1.3 The Mission Statement can be witnessed daily in the life of the school. The relationships between children, children and adults, and between staff bear testimony to this. It is a lived reality.
- 1.4 The Mission Statement was written some time ago, but is still relevant to the school today and is to be reviewed in the coming year.
- 1.5 In the current School Improvement Plan the improvement of religious education is the first priority. However this is focussed mostly on resources. The school has now completed the Diocesan Self Evaluation Document and should use this to drive the religious education section of next year’s School Improvement Plan.
- 1.6 The school’s self-review document was completed by the senior management team and then shared with the staff and governors giving them the opportunity to contribute. It is now a good tool with which to take the school further in its desire to improve.
- 1.7 Parents are welcome into school and state that they are invited to assemblies and liturgies and feel welcome. This aspect of parental involvement is much appreciated.
- 1.8 Thirty-seven questionnaires were returned and these, together with comments made by parents during the inspection, show the appreciation of the care their children receive and the warmth of relationships in the school. As one parent put it, they chose this school for its *“Caring, happy environment where children are encouraged to help each other and respect each other.”*
- 1.9 A small number of parents express dissatisfaction that they do not receive the information about the religious education topics, although this is not borne out by the large majority of questionnaires and comments made personally to the inspector.
- 1.10 Parents praise the high standards of religious education in the school. One parent said they are *“excellent”*.
- 1.11 The most praise from parents is for the spiritual and moral development of their children. Many parents made comments that the school should be proud of and these are a testament to its determination to hold on to its distinctive nature as a Catholic school.

- 1.12 Parents are highly satisfied with the behaviour of their children and the role model of the staff in setting the standards in relationships. A significant number of parents cite the ethos of the school as their reason for choosing it.
- 1.13 The foundation governors are all new to the post (the chairman is in his first year). It is an enthusiastic body, keen to see the school progress both in its Christian ethos and academic achievement
- 1.14 The governors are attached to year groups to increase their understanding of standards and to focus their thinking in the school. They give generously of their time and with the headteacher and deputy are working together to improve further their involvement in the school.
- 1.15 Sacramental preparation is fully parish based in accordance with diocesan guidance and the school supports the children in the parish and school celebrations and liturgies. This is very good practice.
- 1.16 Links between school and parish are very good. Sharing the same site facilitates these links. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor who strongly supports the school. The school is involved in parish celebrations and the parish joins with the school in its celebrations. There is evidence to show that a perfect example of this was the centenary celebrations that took place this year for school and parish.
- 1.17 As part of the centenary celebrations, all took part in making tiles that reflect different aspects of school, home and parish life. These were then made into a beautiful cross that enhances the school/parish hall and is a focal point for assemblies and acts of collective worship.
- 1.18 The school's links with its local family of Catholic schools are good. This year they held a joint INSET day and this is very good practice.
- 1.19 The school makes very good provision for cultural development, providing a wide range of visits to support the curriculum. Parents are informed of these visits so that they can be planned for financially. There are also residential experiences for the children and this is very good practice.
- 1.20 Children with special educational needs are well integrated into the school. The provision for them is good and this is due not only to the teachers who prepare carefully for their needs, differentiating their work, but also to the excellent teaching assistants who clearly know the children and relate well to them. There is a comprehensive up to date Special Needs Policy that sets out the procedures for the school and this fulfils government legislation.
- 1.21 The school has a strong commitment to the wider community and to those less fortunate than themselves through prayer and generous giving. Causes supported include CAFOD, SVP and the Mwegne tractor appeal.

2. THE SCHOOL AS A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

- 2.1 Collective worship meets statutory requirements, being celebrated daily either as a whole school, key stage or class.
- 2.2 During the inspection two very good end of day class Advent services were observed. The Advent wreaths seen in every classroom had clearly been used on a daily basis throughout Advent. Parents were present at these services and it was good to see them joining with the children celebrating Advent. The

headteacher joined a different class each evening and the children looked forward to her joining them. This is very good practice.

- 2.3 Two of the lessons observed had a prayerful reflective time built into the planning. In the best of these the structure of the lesson allowed opportunity for reflection and application of Scripture to their lives, thereby developing a deeper understanding. This is good practice and all classes could usefully adopt this.
- 2.4 Prayer is something that is familiar to the children and staff of Sacred Heart School and this prayerfulness is rooted in the Mission to reflect Jesus' commandment "*Love one another as I have loved you*".
- 2.5 The Collective Worship Policy forms part of the Religious Education Policy. This sets out in detail the formal prayers taught to the children and the age at which they are taught. It emphasises the need for prayer, reflection and celebration. Its aim to bring the children to a sense of awe and wonder at God's creation is lived out in the life of the school. The Religious Education Policy is reviewed annually in the summer term by the whole staff at a special staff meeting. This is good practice.
- 2.6 Two Key Stage assemblies led by the headteacher were observed. Both assemblies began with appropriate music, had a clear message and an opportunity for quiet reflection. In the Key Stage Two assembly, a group of children led the prayers. In both assemblies the children came in quietly but without formality and were at ease. In both assemblies the children were able to experience the sense of community and mutual support. Throughout this inspection the children constantly impressed the inspector with their bearing and behaviour.
- 2.7 The school plans its year with a schedule of liturgies, assemblies and celebrations so that everything takes place in order. This schedule is based on the Church's liturgical year and the "Here I Am" programme. These schedules are displayed in the school and parents are kept well informed through the weekly newsletter of events taking place. This is very good practice.
- 2.8 Though the school does not have room for a separate prayer room, every classroom has a prayer area. These focused on the theme of Advent during the inspection and are clearly well used. Each included an Advent Wreath, a book or Bible and a cross or statue. Each class usually then added something special to them as part of the display.
- 2.9 Prayer and the Mass are very important to the staff too and during November at noon each Wednesday there is a voluntary Mass for each of the Key Stage Two classes at which staff are able to attend.

3. SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Spiritual Development

- 3.1a The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is very good. This is a strength of the school. The atmosphere on entering the school is one of a happy, friendly cheerfulness.
- 3.1b All classrooms have a good quality focal area for prayer.

- 3.1c The display in the entrance to the school is devoted to the theme of the ‘Here I Am’ programme of the time including the multi-faith weeks. This display immediately sets the tone on entering the school and is a strong reminder of our common journey in faith.
- 3.1d Photographs of pupil’s achievements are also in the public areas of the school. Many of these relate to the school’s recent celebration with the parish of its centenary. The children build a sense of self worth when such public recognition through display and the constant positive comments heard are their daily experience.
- 3.1e Through the wide range of visits and the residential experiences the children are able to develop spiritually and increase their sense of awe at the world around them.
- 3.1f The school does not currently have a policy for spiritual development. In the school self-evaluation document this was identified as a priority and one now needs to be developed.
- 3.1g The use of Scripture in the lessons observed is very good, helping to develop in the children an awareness of God at work in our lives and faith history.
- 3.1h During the inspection the ‘Here I Am’ topic was Visitors. The topic was used to encourage the children to appreciate that Advent is a time of celebration and preparation in its own right whilst still allowing the children the excitement of looking forward to Christmas.
- 3.1i Sacramental preparation is firmly embedded in the parish with support from the school and is very good practice.

3.2 Moral Development

- 3.2a The moral development of the children in school is excellent.
- 3.2b The school has a strong code of moral values that underpin all the relationships and are a reflection of the excellent behaviour witnessed on the playground, in the dinner hall and the way the children move around the school and respond to visitors.
- 3.2c The very good relationships among the staff are reflected in the way the children relate to one another and to the adults around them. All this is in an atmosphere that is calm and happy.
- 3.2d The school has a system of playground friends where the Year Six children befriend the younger children caring for them if they are upset. It is well structured and they begin training for this in the Summer Term. The pupils organise themselves and ensure there are enough on duty.
- 3.2e The children are able to discuss moral issues of right and wrong and this is an important part of their moral development.
- 3.2f The “Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy” is a model of good practice. The code of good behaviour section is very positive covering all aspects of school life. It has a comprehensive and clear set of procedures to deal with bad behaviour and sets out the expectations and responsibilities of all sections of the school community.

- 3.2g The school is beginning to explore ways of creating a School Council and this would further involve the children in ensuring that their environment is a safe and happy one. Parents are included in many ways and are regularly involved in school life.
- 3.2h Parents value the moral development their children make in school many citing it as a reason for their choice of Sacred Heart School.

PART TWO

CURRICULUM – RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

4. STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

4.1 Attainment and Progress

- 4.1a The curriculum time devoted to religious education fulfils the requirements of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales.
- 4.1b The school follows the “Here I Am” religious education programme.
- 4.1c All teachers give children opportunities to talk about the focus of the lesson and teachers are skilful in their questioning.
- 4.1d The quality of the work in religious education is commensurate with the work in other areas of the curriculum and demonstrates the commitment to this subject in the school.
- 4.1e The quality and quantity of written work in all classes is at least satisfactory and good or very good in some classes. Written work shows clear progression and development.
- 4.1f In all lessons observed appropriate links to literacy were made. In one lesson excellent use of the computer suite was made.
- 4.1g All lessons observed were well differentiated and this ensures that each child is able to achieve progress according to their ability.
- 4.1h Children are encouraged to recall previous work done, enhancing and reinforcing knowledge and understanding
- 4.1i All work is appropriately marked and teachers are quick to praise and encourage the children with positive comments to affirm them.
- 4.1j The children’s work is valued and well displayed.

4.2 Attitudes to Learning

- 4.2a The children’s attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school.
- 4.2b In most lessons children are involved and engaged and enjoy their religious education.
- 4.2c In assemblies the children are appropriately reverent and prayerful. Where the pupils are asked to say prayers they do so with good clear diction and with confidence.

5. QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROVIDED

5.1 Teaching

- 5.1a The quality of teaching observed ranges from satisfactory to very good. In the majority of lessons it is good or very good.
- 5.1b All lessons have clear well structured lesson plans. Most have a clear learning objective which is shared with the children. This is then revisited during the plenary session allowing the teacher to check knowledge and understanding. This is very good practice and should be adopted by all staff.
- 5.1c Successful lessons are characterised by good pace particularly in the early part of the lesson.
- 5.1d Good use of Scripture is evident in all the lessons, acts of collective worship and assemblies observed.
- 5.1e The very good acts of collective worship and assemblies are well planned, meaningful experiences for the children and a number of parents joined their children for the end of day Advent services.
- 5.1f All lessons demonstrate very good cross-curricular links. One particular religious education lesson took place in the IT Suite using paintings, from old masters to modern to ethnic paintings, broadening the children's horizons and making them think. These links enhance the religious education curriculum.
- 5.1g The differentiation built into each lesson is very good. This ensures that all children's needs are being met.
- 5.1h A Key Issue in the last inspection was to develop multi-cultural and multi-faith education. The school provides well for this now and an excellent display on this greets the visitor on entering the school.
- 5.1i The use of teaching assistants enhances the provision to the pupils. They are valued and valuable members of the teaching team. They have a good knowledge of the children, the work planned and their role in the delivery of that work.
- 5.1j All teachers use the diocesan planning sheets and the quality of planning is very good overall.

5.2 Religious Education Curriculum and Assessment

- 5.2a Religious education has a high profile in the school. It permeates the daily life in a way that enhances the school life. It is the first objective in the School Improvement Plan.
- 5.2b The school follows the "Here I Am" programme.
- 5.2c The school follows the diocesan guidelines with regard to assessment. The children have assessment books and there are portfolios of children's work. The pupils complete a review at the end of each topic. This was a Key Issue in the last inspection and has been resolved.
- 5.2d Teachers complete the diocesan proforma for reporting to parents at the end of the school year and most parents express themselves happy with this format.
- 5.2e The school has a good policy for religious education, which is regularly reviewed.

6 THE MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

6.1 Leadership and Management

- 6.1a Sacred Heart benefits from good leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Although both have only been in post for one year they are building on the good reputation of their predecessors and are committed to taking the school further through a process of review and identification of priorities.
- 6.1b The religious education co-ordinator is hard working and committed. Her faith underpins her work and is evident to all. Currently, the co-ordinator and headteacher monitor planning together and ensure work samples are in place. However her role now needs to be extended to monitoring teaching and learning in order to give her an overview of strengths and weaknesses of the religious education curriculum.
- 6.1c The co-ordinator is not allocated a specific budget but does know that if there is a need for a particular resource this will be accommodated.
- 6.1d As mentioned earlier in this report, the School Improvement Plan places religious education as the first priority. However the objectives are all resource based and the school now needs to use the self-evaluation document to drive the next School Improvement Plan.
- 6.1e One of the INSET days was dedicated to religious education this year with the Sheffield family of schools. This is good practice helping to maintain high standards and improve staff formation.
- 6.1f The foundation governors are all new to the post (the chairman is in his first year). They are an enthusiastic body, keen to see the school progress both in its Christian ethos and academic achievement. The governors have a clear vision for the school's future.
- 6.1g The governors are attached to year groups to increase their understanding of standards and to focus their thinking in the school. They give generously of their time and with the headteacher and deputy headteacher are working together to improve further their involvement in the school.
- 6.1h The parish priest is a regular and valued visitor to the school. He is committed to the welfare of the school, its pupils and staff and is a real source of support.

6.2 Staffing Accommodation and Resources

- 6.2a The school buildings have real limitations that the staff and governors work hard to overcome. The children have no field for sports and years 5 and 6 walk through a busy shopping centre each Friday to appropriate facilities at a sports centre. There are plans to use the facilities of a new all-weather pitch at a nearby school when it is complete. The playground is limited in size and the children have Key Stage playtimes to overcome this.
- 6.2b Two of the classrooms are terrapins in need of replacement. There are plans for replacement of these and alteration to the structure of the main building. There is a fairly new school/parish hall and reception classroom and a room has been fitted out as a computer suite all benefiting the children. The staff work extremely hard to compensate for the problems with the building.

PART THREE

7. MAIN FINDINGS

- 7.1 Sacred Heart is a very good school with a clear and distinctive Catholic ethos, explicit in its Mission Statement and lived out in its daily life.
- 7.2 The school has a hard working and dedicated staff.
- 7.3 The school benefits from good leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have a clear vision of the developments necessary for the school.
- 7.4 The religious education co-ordinator is hard working and committed. Her faith underpins her work and is evident to all. Currently, the co-ordinator and headteacher monitor planning together and ensure work samples are in place. However her role now needs to be extended to monitoring teaching and learning in order to give her an overview of strengths and weaknesses of the religious education curriculum.
- 7.5 The governors are an enthusiastic body, keen to see the school progress both in its Christian ethos and academic achievement. They give generously of their time and with the headteacher and deputy are working together to improve further their involvement in the school.
- 7.6 The chairman of governors is very supportive of the school. The parish priest is a regular and valued visitor to the school. He is committed to the welfare of the school, its pupils and staff and is a real source of support.
- 7.7 The school provides very good opportunities for collective worship. As part of the centenary celebrations, all took part in making tiles that reflect different aspects of school, home and parish life. These were then made into a beautiful cross that enhances the school/parish hall and is a focal point for assemblies and acts of collective worship.
- 7.8 The spiritual development of the children is very good. This is a strength of the school. The atmosphere on entering the school is one of a happy, friendly cheerfulness.
- 7.9 The school does not currently have a policy for spiritual development. In the school self-evaluation document this is identified as a priority and now needs to be developed.
- 7.10 Moral development is excellent and a strength of the school.
- 7.11 All children make at least satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding of religious education with many making good or very good progress. The quality and quantity of written work in all classes is at least satisfactory and good or very good in some classes.
- 7.12 The children's attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school; they listen attentively and respond appropriately.
- 7.13 The quality of teaching observed ranges from satisfactory to very good. In the majority of lessons it is good or very good.

- 7.14 The use of teaching assistants enhances the provision to the pupils. They are valued and valuable members of the teaching team.
- 7.15 The school follows the diocesan guidelines with regard to assessment. The children have assessment books and there are portfolios of children's work.
- 7.16 Teachers complete the diocesan proforma for reporting to parents at the end of the school year and most parents express themselves happy with this format
- 7.17 Since the last inspection a new reception classroom and a new hall have been built, also a new computer suite added. Further building developments are planned.
- 7.18 The provision for children with special educational needs is good. The children are well supported by very good teaching assistants.
- 7.19 In the current School Improvement Plan the improvement of religious education is the first priority. However this is focussed mostly on resources. The school has now completed the Diocesan Self Evaluation Document and should use this to drive the religious education section of next year's School Improvement Plan.
- 7.20 All Key Issues identified in the last religious education inspection have been addressed.

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The governors and staff of Sacred Heart School should now;

- 1 Celebrate and consolidate the very good Catholic ethos, the spiritual and moral development of the children and the happy and calm atmosphere experienced in Sacred Heart School.
- 2 Build upon the self-review in which they recognise the need to formulate a policy for spiritual and moral development. This can only further the very good level that already exists.
- 3 As recognised in the school's self-review, the religious education co-ordinator now needs to build upon the good quality of teaching and learning through a systematic programme of lesson observations.
- 4 Use the Diocesan Self-Evaluation Document to drive the religious education section of the School Improvement Plan, moving the focus away from resources to actions.

CONCLUSION

The inspector would like to place on record his personal thanks and appreciation for the kind co-operation received from the headteacher, staff, governors, priests, parents and children of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

APPENDIX: EVIDENCE BASE

- The programme of inspection included a pre inspection visit to the school and two full days of inspection.
- Seven religious education lessons were observed. Two Key Stage assemblies were observed also two end of day class Advent collective worship sessions.

- Interviews were held with the headteacher, the religious education co-ordinator, the parish priest and the chair of governors.
- Discussions were held with children, parents, teaching and support staff and dinner staff.
- An excellent comprehensive range of documentation was provided by the headteacher including a recently completed Diocesan Self-Evaluation Document.
- The religious education co-ordinator and headteacher provided, a schedule of liturgies and assemblies that have taken place or are planned to take place, a schedule of prayers taught to each year group and a comprehensive list of resources.

SUMMARY REPORT

The major strengths in religious education, collective worship and the spiritual and moral development of the children in school.

- The standards of work in religious education range from satisfactory to very good. These standards are commensurate with the standards in other areas of the curriculum.
- All children make at least satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding of Religious Education with many making good or very good progress.
- The school makes good provision for children with special educational needs.
- The school benefits from good leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. They have a clear vision of the developments necessary for the school.
- The school has a hard working and dedicated staff.
- The spiritual development of the children is very good, the moral development is excellent.
- The use of teaching assistants enhances the provision to the pupils. They are valued and valuable members of the teaching team.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

- All the key issues from the last inspection have now been addressed. The high standards in Spiritual and Moral development continue to be maintained and improved upon. The quality of the accommodation has been improved and further improvement is planned.

How parents view the religious education, collective worship and spiritual and moral development of their children.

- Parents show great appreciation of the care their children receive and the warmth of relationships in the school.
- Parents praise the good standards of religious education in school.
- Parents express themselves as very satisfied with the spiritual and moral development of their children.
- Parents appreciate the support the staff give their children and themselves. They believe the staff are very good role models for their children.

Areas for development following the inspection

- Celebrate and consolidate the very good Catholic ethos, the spiritual and moral development of the children and the happy and calm atmosphere experienced in Sacred Heart School.
- Build upon the self-review in which they recognise the need to formulate a policy for spiritual and moral development. This can only further the very good level that already exists.
- As recognised in the school's self-review the religious education co-ordinator now needs to build upon the good quality of teaching and learning through a systematic programme of lesson observations.
- Use the Diocesan Self-Evaluation Document to drive the religious education section of the School Improvement Plan, moving the focus away from resources to actions.