

DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL
RETFORD

School URN	122813
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr Jim Patchett
Name of Headteacher	Mr Philip Patterson
Date of Inspection	16 th May 2006
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Barbara Jarrett

“... 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.

Information about the school

Type of School	Primary
Age profile of Students	3 to 11
Number on roll	220 (including 30 part-time in foundation stage)
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	26
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	0
Number of Catholics on roll	86 (Full-time in foundation stage and KS1 and 2)
Number of Other Christian Denominations	103 (Full-time in foundation stage and KS1 and 2)
Number of other Faiths	1
School address	Babworth Road, Retford, DN22 7BP
Telephone Number	01777 702850
Fax Number	01777 707117
Email	office@st-josephs.notts.sch.uk
Website	

Description of the School

St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School was founded in 1971 and the Nursery was opened in 1982. The children come from Retford and the surrounding villages. Catholic children are from the parish of St. Joseph's. The school's last Religious Education Inspection took place in 2001 (Section 23) and OFSTED inspected it in November 2005 (Section 5)

An extension has recently been built to provide a large modern staffroom and the area in front of the school is being landscaped to provide an environmental garden. An area for quiet prayer and reflection has been created in the former staffroom.

At present there are 190 children on the school roll and an additional 30 children attend the nursery. The school has a foundation stage area in which the nursery and reception children are taught. Children in Key Stage One and Key Stage Two are taught in distinct year groups. No class is larger than 30. Forty five percent of the children in full-time school are baptised Catholic. There are 9 full-time teachers including the head, 8 of whom are Catholic. Three teachers hold the CCRS qualification. The school has one full-time Foundation Stage teaching assistant and seven part-time teaching assistants.

The school has a wide range of extra curricular activities, which are run by staff, parents and visiting coaches.

The school has recently taken part in the Diocesan Review process and is awaiting feedback from this. It has strong links with Holy Family Catholic Primary School in Worksop and is seeking to develop these further. Feedback from parents in preparation for the review, indicates the school is held in very high regard.

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. Some features are outstanding and are good examples of best practice. These include the leadership of the headteacher in the development of the Catholic Life of the School and in his innovative work with links with the parish. He is well supported in this by the senior management team, religious education subject leader and governors. The planning, opportunities and resources allocated for collective worship and prayer for staff and pupils are also very good.

Children are well taught and cared for in a calm environment. They are happy and enjoy school. They acquire appropriate religious knowledge, skills and attitudes and develop spiritually and morally. The standard of work produced is

good. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and these are valued by the children.

The school needs to further develop the process of self-evaluation to ensure there is evidence to support its judgements. The work that has been started in monitoring teaching and learning and the quality of collective worship; the new assessment procedures that have been put in place and the greater involvement of governors in school improvement planning, will contribute well to this.

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

The governors have addressed all the issues raised in the last inspection which was carried out in 2001.

Religious Education is incorporated into the school improvement plan and governors receive regular reports through the Headteacher's Report.

The standard of written work is now consistently good throughout the school. The subject leader carries out work scrutiny to monitor this.

New assessment procedures have been put in place and systems are in place to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education is good. The head provides a clear vision for the school and this is combined with a creative and determined approach to this area. He is well supported by the new senior management team and the newly appointed Religious Education Subject Leader. This team worked together in the preparation of the SEF and the document was shared with staff and governors. The involvement of other staff and governors in the self-evaluation process would improve the quality of this document as a tool for school improvement.

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 headteacher shows strong, effective leadership in developing the Catholic life of the school. He has the ability to inspire staff and governors through his own determination and vision. This is evident in the enthusiasm and hard work of the newly appointed leadership team and Religious Education subject leader, who meet regularly. The team is committed to ensuring that standards are high and that the school fulfils the Mission of the Church in education. The headteacher

and senior management team prepared the SEF and this was then shared with other staff and governors. This document was overly descriptive and there was little evidence to support the judgements made. The schools processes for self-evaluation should be reviewed.

Following the attendance of the headteacher on the regional sabbatical, the headteacher had led the development of some exemplary links with the parish. These include contact with families following the baptism of their child; a collective worship planning group and prayer partnerships with housebound members of the parish. Eucharistic preparation is carried out by parish catechists whose membership includes staff and governors of the school.

Governors are fully involved in developing the Catholic Life of the school. There is a Religious Education link governor and the headteacher regularly includes Religious Education in the headteacher's report to governors. Governors attend Diocesan training. Governors visit school regularly and have a high regard for the school. They have ensured that all the issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed. The school has set up procedures for gathering the views of parents and should ensure that these become part of regular practice. Feedback from consultation shows that parents are very satisfied with the school. Overall the leadership and management of the Catholic Life of the School is good.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

There is a good policy in place for collective worship, which has been approved by governors. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

Collective worship is carried out on a daily basis by classes or in Key Stage groups. On special occasions the whole school gathers for collective worship and this includes a Eucharistic celebration, where appropriate. There are examples of good practice in Collective worship. It is well planned; there is a collective worship group made up of staff and governors who meet termly with the parish priest to plan liturgy and seek ways of ensuring links between school and parish are developed. Staff then meet regularly to ensure that all liturgy is planned to meet the needs of the children, following the Here I am programme and the seasons of the Church's year. Prayer partnerships have been set up between children in the school and members of the parish community who are housebound. Children regularly visit these prayer partners and photographs are displayed in the prayer corners in each classroom. There are regular opportunities for the children to take part in voluntary prayer groups, and these focus on the seasons of the church. At the time of the inspection children have the opportunity to meet weekly to say the rosary and the children spoke with enthusiasm about this. Time is allocated at staff meetings for regular staff prayer and reflection. The school is developing a very attractive environmental garden to

provide children and staff with a further place for quiet worship and reflection.

The Act of Collective Worship observed during the inspection, was good. A prayerful atmosphere was created through the use music and visual aids, with an appropriate focus on scripture. Children took an active part and most children responded well. The school has rightly identified the monitoring and feedback to staff on the quality of class and Key Stage Collective Worship as an area for development. Overall the quality of Collective Worship is outstanding.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

The quality of pupil achievement overall is good. Given the capabilities and starting points, all pupils achieve well. Learning objectives are shared with the children at the start of each lesson. Pupils enjoy their lessons and in particular the opportunities they are given to develop their understanding by exploring through the use of drama, hot seating and group discussion, their own and others feelings and emotions. This has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children. Behaviour is generally good.

The quality of written work is consistent throughout the school and compares well with work in other core subjects. The marking of work gives children positive feedback on their work, some marking tells children what they need to do to improve their work. This good practice should be extended to all classes. New assessment procedures have been introduced which, when fully embedded, should impact further on standards. The School Council gives children a voice in school and they feel that their views are heard. Children are very positive about the pastoral care offered by staff.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Overall teaching in Religious Education is good. Staff are confident in delivering the Here I Am programme of work and use the Diocesan support materials for planning. Teachers work hard to make their lessons interesting and engage the full range of abilities in their class. Differentiation by support and outcome is used to ensure all children access the curriculum. The classroom support offered by the teaching assistants is of a very high standard. ICT is used effectively to support the teaching of Religious Education. Learning objectives are shared with children. In some lessons shared success criteria ensure that children understand clearly how to meet these objectives. When embedded, the new more rigorous assessment systems should impact on teacher's planning and enable more effective differentiation of task and activity. Staff are keen to improve their practice and are given support in this from the Subject Leader, who regularly attends the Diocesan co-ordinator training. The Subject Leader has

carried out some observation of teaching and scrutiny of work. This work should continue so that best practice can be shared throughout the school.

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

The 10% curriculum time devoted to Religious Education meets the requirement of the Bishops' Conference. The school uses the Here I am programme successfully and all staff use the Diocesan support materials for planning. The school is developing a cross curricular approach to planning making appropriate links between Religious Education and other curriculum areas. Children are given frequent opportunities for discussion and reflection and are able to express their views confidently.

Relationships within school are good and the children speak highly of the pastoral care offered by staff. Governors and parents are welcome into the school and are confident that their children are safe and secure. There is an area within school for quiet worship and reflection and the new garden will enhance these opportunities further. The children in Year Six have an annual opportunity for a residential retreat when they visit the Briars Centre in Crich.. The children were looking forward to this eagerly at the time of the inspection.

The school is inclusive and offers equality of access for all pupils to all areas of school life. The curriculum enables the children to deepen their understanding of their own faith and also the beliefs and practices of other World Faiths. The school has a policy and programme for sex education, which has been approved by the governors. The curriculum impacts well on the spiritual and moral development of the children. Overall the provision of religious education is good.

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 is good. The newly appointed subject leader has taken on her role with enthusiasm and commitment. She has been well supported by the previous subject leader, who is now a member of the senior management team.

There is a good policy in place for Religious Education which has been approved by governors. Religious Education is included in the School Improvement Plan and Governors receive regular reports on Religious Education. The subject leader has led training for Governors on the Here I am programme. There is a link governor for the subject.

The subject leader regularly attends diocesan briefings and training and supports staff in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Some staff have attended

INSET and the subject leader is keen to extend these opportunities to all staff. A whole school INSET day has not been part of regular practice but the school is planning to include this in the future. There is a joint INSET day planned for next year with the Catholic Secondary School and other feeder primaries.

The subject leader has been involved in monitoring of teaching and learning and needs to develop this area further to ensure that good practice is shared throughout the school. The new assessment procedures also need to be monitored and their on impact teaching and learning evaluated. Monitoring of the quality of Collective Worship, also needs to be developed.

Summary of Inspection Judgements:	
Overall Effectiveness of the School	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?	Good
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	Good

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St. 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