

DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
WOMBWELL

School URN	370/3318
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr Eddie Goddard
Name of Headteacher	Mr Peter Davison
Date of Inspection	12 th December 2007
Section 48 Inspector	Mr Stephen Owen

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

The inspection of St. Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act of 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. Michael and All Angels is a small Catholic primary school within the Diocese of Hallam, in the parish of St. Michael and All Angels, Wombwell.

Wombwell is a densely populated and relatively disadvantaged urban district. The majority of its children come from Wombwell itself and Darfield but other children come from the outlying villages of Middlecliffe, Billingley, Broomhill, Brampton, Elsecar, Great Houghton and Hemingfield.

The school, which is part of the Dearne Valley Federation of Schools, works in partnership with Saint Helen's Catholic Primary School, Hoyland and Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Goldthorpe, to develop links between staff, pupils and governors that benefits all three schools and strengthens their religious and educational provision. Similarly, the three parishes work together in partnership, sharing the same parish priest.

Currently 28% of the 127 pupils on roll are baptised Catholics and there is also a significant minority from the Traveller community. Recently, there have been a number of children from Eastern Europe and Asia contributing to the cultural diversity of the school.

The percentage of children entitled to free school meals is around the national average. Attainment on entry is below schools nationally.

The children are educated in five classes of mixed age groups. There are six full time teachers and one part-time, of which four are Catholic. All teachers run after-school clubs at some part of the year including football, cookery, art, gardening and Spanish.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school	Primary, Voluntary Aided
Age Profile of Students	4 – 11
Number on roll	127
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	12
Number of Catholics on roll	36
Number of other Christian Denominations	88
Number of other Faiths	4
School address	Stonyford Road Wombwell Barnsley S73 8AF
Telephone Number	01226 752120

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 in meeting the needs of learners is good. The school is a community where relationships are excellent and the hard-working staff are ably led by an enthusiastic headteacher, who in turn, is supported by a committed Governing Body. These aspects of good leadership, ensure that good practice becomes embedded throughout the school. Strategic planning for development is good and staff training is closely linked to identified priorities, enabling all staff to share the vision and feel an ownership of the process and its application. Pupils are respected and well cared for. They enjoy the calm and positive learning environment that is apparent in all areas of the life of the school. They acquire appropriate religious knowledge, skills and attitudes, developing spiritually and morally.

The school's self evaluation process, as recorded in the School Evaluation Form (SEF), is a detailed and realistic assessment of the school's provision. The Religious Education Plan clearly identifies areas that need addressing..

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

The last inspection took place in March 2001 and the school was advised to:

- Develop more systematic and formalized procedures for the monitoring and assessment of learning and teaching in religious education, in order to improve and enhance the delivery of appropriate activities for children of differing abilities.
- Review arrangements for Collective Worship, to ensure the involvement of all concerned and to draw up a whole school policy.
- Review and develop the Vision Statement and Mission Statement of the school.

Each area for development has been addressed and actioned appropriately.

The school has obviously benefited from the stability of leadership provided by the current headteacher, who has done much to improve many aspects of the school, supported by staff, parents and the Governing body.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The school is well placed to further deepen the quality of Catholic education. It is led by a deeply committed headteacher who recognizes, and is sensitive to, the developmental needs of the school and its community. He, in turn, has the support and trust of that community, ensuring a collegiate approach to school improvement.

Parents praise the support given by the school, not just to the pupils, but to their families and the wider community. They are offered an open welcome into the school. Parents are pleased about the information they receive.

Religious Education is given a high priority. Training and resource allocation is sufficient to promote a developmental programme to further develop the quality of Catholic education.

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 effectiveness of the leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school is good. The headteacher has a clear vision of the distinctive nature of a

Catholic school, which is effectively communicated and shared by the community. He leads by example through the respect, care and humour he shows to all involved in the life of the school. The school is utterly inclusive and welcomes all who wish to journey in faith. The school runs very efficiently, offering an explicit and tangible ethos where Gospel values of respect, love and tolerance prevail, in an environment where pupils feel valued, happy and secure. The links with the parish are very good and valued by the parish priest.

The quality of the School Self Evaluation Form and the Development Plan show that governors and staff have accurately identified areas for development.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. The current policy for Collective Worship was written in February 2005. It is a clear, detailed and comprehensive document. With the advent of a newly appointed Religious Education Co-ordinator, this is now an ideal opportunity and most timely, to review both policy and practice. This would ensure sound liturgical principles are clearly focussed and communicated to the whole school community.

Two acts of worship were observed during the inspection. In both instances a more simple and direct liturgical framework might have been more carefully thought out. Consideration should be given to the room dynamic in general and a simplicity of communication that lies at the heart of the gospel message. Children's concentration was satisfactory and they did sing well generally. Planning and delivery of Collective Worship activities need to be more focussed enabling staff to create that sense of awe and wonder that such opportunities can readily afford.

Each classroom has an appropriate prayer area and the children are offered a variety of experiences of worship through prayer, singing and reflection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

The quality of pupils' achievement is good overall. The school uses the 'Here I Am' religious education programme and the majority of lessons showed evidence of thoughtful planning. In most lessons, there was a clear learning objective and the pace of work was generally good. Pupils showed good knowledge and understanding in both written work and class/group discussions. However, not all lessons were carefully planned and there seemed a lack of focus. Some children were insufficiently challenged and gained only satisfactorily from the experience. The Teaching Assistants, who make

a significant contribution to the life of the school, work hard and ably support children as required. Children behave well generally and in most cases respond to the challenges set them. Teachers and learners show respect for each other and the different views expressed. There is a positive atmosphere for learning in most classes. Assessment procedures are in place and portfolios of work are kept to ensure consistency of development throughout the school. Children from other religious denominations have their faith nurtured and supported.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

All lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory and some were good. Teachers have a strong personal faith which they readily share with the children and when asked, the majority of children said they enjoyed their lessons. Lesson observation showed that staff were confident in using a range of teaching styles. There were very good questions and answer sessions used in upper Key Stage Two, giving children the chance to think and reflect on what they knew. Where lessons were well planned, the pace was generally good, though sometimes more detailed attention to the timing of lesson delivery might have been given more explicit attention.

Lessons observed showed the staff were confident in using a range of teaching styles. ICT was used effectively to support learning in a number of cases. Most teachers encouraged their children to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Religious Education. The children leave school with a good knowledge of the Catholic faith and of other traditions.

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

The efforts of the school in ensuring that the Religious Education Curriculum meets the needs and interests of learners is generally good. The Religious Education curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Catholic Curriculum Directory and has an impact on the needs and interests of the learners and on their spiritual and moral development. The school ensures that opportunities are provided for the pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of other Christian religions and other world faiths. Relationships throughout the school community are excellent and promote the strong, caring, inclusive Christian ethos. Parents are regarded as partners in their children's education and are kept well informed of what their children are learning and are invited to share in many aspects of their children's education.

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 are good in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education. The newly appointed Religious Education Co-ordinator is strongly committed to her new role and she, in partnership with the headteacher, has plans to review existing policy and practice. They are ably supported by the parish priest and governors in a joint commitment to the school's Mission Statement, its ideals and aims, and is raising achievement for all learners.

Religious Education development is included in the School's Improvement Plan in a detailed, systematic and comprehensive manner. This important aspect of the school's life is also an integral part of its performance management system and process. Religious Education is given a very high profile in the school and is effectively managed.

Teaching accommodation is good and high quality displays of a Religious Education nature in classrooms and public areas, provide an uplifting and stimulating environment for children and visitors to the school.

Summary of Inspection Judgements	
Overall Effectiveness	Good
The Catholic Life of the School	
How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	Good
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	Satisfactory
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, Michael and All Angels Catholic School or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St. Charles Street, Sheffield, S9 3WU. Tel: 0114 2566440.