

*Diocese of Hallam*

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

***St Joseph 's Catholic Primary School  
Bevan Avenue  
Rossington  
Doncaster  
DNJJ ONB***

Inspection Date: 29<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2002  
Diocesan Inspector: Mrs Gillian Foster

The inspection of the denominational character of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the direction of the Governors of the school in fulfillment 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 St Joseph's Catholic Primary School and help promote sound development for the future.

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A copy of this report may be obtained from the Governors of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Bevan Avenue, Rossington, Doncaster DN1 1 ONB or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU.

## Basic information about the school

NAME of SCHOOL	St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
TYPE	Nursery, Infant and Junior
STATUS	Voluntary Aided
NUMBER on ROLL	226 plus 30 place nursery unit
AGE RANGE	3-11 years
GENDER of PUPILS	Mixed
CHAIRMAN of GOVERNORS	Rev. Fr John MacNamee
HEADTEACHER	Mrs Maria Clausen
ADDRESS of SCHOOL	Bevan Avenue Rossington Doncaster DN1 1 ONB
TELEPHONE NUMBER	01302 868098
DATE of INSPECTION	29th -30th April 2002
DIOCESAN INSPECTOR	Mrs Gillian Foster

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School was established in the early 1970s. As a result of increasing numbers, the original school building was significantly enlarged in 1991. The school is the parish school for Christ the King Catholic Church in Rossington but also draws from a wide area covering Tickhill, Bawtry, Finningley, Auckley, Branton and Cantley. The catchment area of the school consists of a mixture of former colliery housing and new estates.

The headteacher has been in post for over twenty five years and there has been very little change in staffing during the past four years.

St Joseph's was awarded Beacon Status during the school year 2000-2001 and this took effect from September 2001.

The children are organised into seven classes. There are eight full-time teachers including the headteacher and four part-time teachers. In addition there is a thirty part-time place nursery with one full time teacher and one nursery nurse.

Class groupings are as follows	Nursery	30 (FTE)
	Reception	30
	Year One	27
	Year Two	35
	Year Three	36
	Year Four	24
	Year Five	39
	Year Six	36

Sixty three percent of the children are baptised Catholics.  
Fifty four percent of the teaching staff are Catholics.

## **ASPECTS of the SCHOOL as a Catholic Community**

### **1. THE MISSION of the SCHOOL**

- 1.1 The Mission Statement of St Joseph's School is succinct and concise. It clearly states that it is the mission of St Joseph's to develop each member of the school community to reach their MI potential in light of the teachings of Christ. The Mission Statement prefaces all documentation and is clearly displayed around the school; it is accessible to all and is reviewed regularly by the whole school community. The statement is further developed in the aims of the school. The daily life of the school community bears witness to the Gospel values that underpin all the school strives to achieve, where each individual is valued and respected as a child of God.
- 1.2 Forty two questionnaires were returned by parents. Almost all parents spoke of their confidence in the school and praised the very good spiritual and moral development of their children and the excellent standards of behaviour and attainment achieved by their children. Parents spoke warmly of the support school offers to their children and to themselves. School proclaims the view that parents are the first educators of their children and work in close partnership with parents: parents highly value this partnership.
- 1.3 A significant minority of parents would welcome more information on what the children are taught in Religious Education. This could be achieved by sending the 'Here I Am' termly topic leaflet to parents.
- 1.4 The school prospectus is an excellent document produced to a very high standard. It contains a comprehensive range of information firmly rooted in the ethos and curriculum values of the school.
- 1.5 The parish priest is a frequent and welcomed visitor to school. He is fully supportive of all the work being done by the headteacher and staff and is anxious to promote the prayer and liturgical life of the school and the children's spiritual development in a way that is most appropriate for them. He contributes to the ongoing formation of staff by leading sessions at the start of some 'Here I Am' topics to develop the understanding of staff and provide them with opportunities for sharing experiences and reflection.
- 1.6 The Governors maintain a keen interest in school and although not all are able to visit school on a regular basis, they participate effectively on governor subcommittees and support social functions at school.
- 1.7 There are very strong links between school and parish. School and parish join together for various liturgical and social functions. Parishioners are invited to and often attend special liturgies and assemblies in school. On Holy Days, a parish Mass is held in school which is always well attended by parishioners. Each month there is a school Mass held in church; the children take a

significant part in this through providing music and taking part in the readings. During Lent, the children visit the church to pray the Stations of The Cross, along with the parish priest and parishioners who wish to join them.

- 1.8 The school prays regularly for the parish and the parish likewise offer weekly bidding prayers for the school. A copy of the weekly school Newsletter is sent to church and the school displays the church bulletin each week.
- 1.9 St Joseph's school is highly committed to the needs of others and those less fortunate, by prayer and giving. Some of the charities regularly supported are the Hallam Caring Services, Mission Together, CAFOD and NSPCC. At Harvest Festival each child makes a 'love in a box' where shoe boxes are filled with gifts for a child the same age and gender as their own who live in war torn areas around the world.
- 1.10 There is very good provision for cultural development within the school. Children across the Key Stages have the opportunity to visit art galleries, museums and theatres. Once a year a family theatre visit is arranged to encourage families to become involved in taking their children to the theatre. An Arts Summer School open to 50 Key Stage Two pupils, was held last year during the Summer holidays, visiting artists conducted the week. The children spoke with great enthusiasm about how much they had enjoyed the week. By the time they enter Key Stage Two, almost all children play a musical instrument and music throughout the school is of a very high standard. The children's enjoyment and pride in this is clear to see.

## **2. The SCHOOL as a WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY**

- 2.1 The collective worship at St Joseph's school meets statutory requirements and is celebrated daily in the classroom or in the hall as a key stage or whole school assembly.
- 2.2 Collective worship in the classrooms is of a high standard. Each classroom has a focal area for prayer where the scriptures are displayed together with examples of formal prayers and the children's own prayers. The five acts of worship seen by the inspector in classrooms were in all cases appropriate to the ages of the children. Atmospheres of reverence were created where the children had the opportunity to reflect on the mystery of God, reflect on spiritual and moral issues in the context of their own situations and develop a sense of community spirit in a prayerful way.
- 2.3 The inspector was provided with a large collection of assemblies/liturgy plans, photographs and books of children's own prayers. All of these were of a high standard and illustrate the high priority given to acts of worship by the school.
- 2.3 During the Inspection the inspector saw two key stage assemblies. Key Stage One gave a presentation to the whole school on the life of St Francis. This was of a very high standard. All the children spoke clearly and with confidence and obviously enjoyed taking part. The audience, made up of pupils, parents

and parishioners listened with interest and were very appreciative of the children's work. The second assembly was given by Key Stage Two pupils again to an audience of pupils, parents and parishioners. This assembly was based on work the children had done during the previous term on multi-faiths delivered through the 'Here I Am' programme. The children portrayed important stories from the Hindu, Jewish and Islamic faiths through narrative, mime and drama. Again, the assembly was of a very high standard, children of all abilities took part and they did so confidently and with great assurance. On speaking to the children afterwards it was obvious that they had learnt a great deal from their multi-faith studies and had developed an awareness and understanding of different faiths and cultures. Both of these excellent assemblies could easily have been extended to become real acts of worship by including times for reflection for all the children and the inclusion of more opportunities for prayer.

- 2.4 During Holy Week the inspector was invited to attend a presentation on the Passion of Our Lord. This was performed by the Year Five pupils for the whole school, parents and parishioners. All pupils in the class took part. The presentation was of a very high standard, the children spoke and acted with reverence and conviction. Year Six pupils provided musical accompaniment which added to the atmosphere and reverence of the occasion. Later on in the week, the pupils gave the same presentation in church.

### **3 SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT**

#### **3.1 Spiritual development**

- 3.1a The spiritual and moral development of the children at St Joseph's is a great strength of the school. The aims of the Mission Statement permeate all areas of school life. This creates a serene atmosphere and natural spirituality to which children respond.
- 3.1 b The school has an excellent policy on spiritual development. The policy clearly states the school's understanding and aims of spiritual development and identifies opportunities where this can take place.
- 3.1c Spirituality is an integral part of school life and extends into all curriculum areas. The children are given time to think and reflect and share discussion, especially in circle time. This helps them to develop a respect for the wonders of God's World and respect for others.
- 3.1d There is a schedule of prayers to be learnt by each age group. These prayers are said regularly with care and thought.
- 3.1e Children are encouraged and given the opportunity for spontaneous prayer. Some classes display well presented books of children's own prayers and in other classes these prayers are displayed around the prayer areas.

3.1 f Each class features a prayer area, they are of a consistently high standard and affirm the high priority given to spiritual development in the school.

### **3.2 MORAL DEVELOPMENT**

3.2a St Joseph's has an excellent behaviour policy which together with the Mission Statement spell out the Gospel message of love, respect and care for each other.

3.2b In speaking to the children, it is obvious that they have a good understanding of what is right and wrong and a strong sense of fairness. They treat each other and adults with respect relating their understanding of how Christ wants us to behave to their own situations.

3.2c Behaviour is very good throughout the school, inside and outside the classrooms. The ancillary staff treat the children with care and respect the children respond in like manner.

3.2d Children share the spacious and pleasant outdoor play areas with enjoyment and show consideration for each others needs.

3.2e The older children are encouraged to develop a sense of responsibility by assisting younger children in various ways, they happily undertake these duties.

3.2f The children feel secure and cared for and in return they care for and respect one another. Relationships within the school are very good. Children are affirmed by staff who support one another. This creates an atmosphere in which children can build up a good self-image and feel valued.

## **PART TWO**

### **CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

#### **4. Standards achieved by pupils**

##### **4.1 Attainment and progress**

4.1 a Not all classes in school allocate ten percent of teaching time to religious education, as required by the Bishops of England and Wales. This needs to be reviewed.

4.1 b It is clear from the six lessons observed by the inspector that the children make very good progress in knowledge and understanding. They listen well and respond confidently with appropriate answers and comments. They develop skills of reflection, self-awareness and analysis as they progress up the school, appropriate to their age.

4.1 b From the earliest age the children are encouraged and given opportunities to

talk about their views. Circle time provides an excellent opportunity for this, pupils feel valued and this in turn leads them to respect and value the opinions of others. By the end of Key Stage Two the children demonstrate very good speaking and listening skills.

- 4.1 c Written work is of a high standard and is carried out in books and on paper for wall mounting or class books. The children take a great pride in their work and are appreciative of each other's work.
- 4.1 d Samples of pupils' work seen by the inspector showed a clear development in knowledge and understanding and spirituality as the children progress through the school. Discussions with the children showed an understanding of what had been taught in their lessons and an enthusiasm for religious education lessons.

## **4.2 ATTITUDES to LEARNING**

- 4.2a Children's attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school. They show interest and listen well, they respond positively to the high expectations of the staff. The very good level of support from parents has a marked influence on the positive attitudes and good achievements of the children.
- 4.2b In all of the lessons observed, the children worked well together; they were prepared to contribute ideas and listen to the views of others. In a Year Six lesson observed, the children showed a high level of co-operation when working on an activity in groups. This led to good quality written work.
- 4.2c Children take a pride in their work and generally produce well presented work.
- 4.2d Children are keen to participate in assemblies and liturgies and offer to take active parts in singing, reading, miming, acting and where appropriate, playing an instrument.

## **5. QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **5.1 Teaching**

- 5.1a All teaching seen during the inspection was good and in some lessons the teaching was very good.
- 5.1 b The best lessons were well structured with clear objectives and well differentiated activities. The children were always on task and were motivated by the good pace of the lesson and the interesting and in some cases challenging tasks presented to them.
- 5.1 c The newly revised 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme is used throughout the school. Planning is never less than satisfactory and in some cases is excellent. Where this is so, differentiated activities appropriate to the needs of all pupils are included; opportunities for assessment are identified

and effective evaluation is included to inform future planning. The inconsistencies identified in planning could be addressed by the religious education co-ordinator scrutinising plans as part of her monitoring role and sharing the good practice which exists with colleagues.

- 5.1 d Effective classroom management by all teachers ensures a good environment for teaching and learning. Resources needed for lessons are prepared and on hand. Children move sensibly around the classroom when necessary.
- 5.1 e Multi-faith and multi-cultural education is developed through the new 'Here I Am' materials. Visitors from other faiths and cultures are invited into school to speak to the children. A recent guest was Roop Singh; the work produced by the children as a result of his visit was of an excellent standard and beautifully displayed in an area accessible to parents and other visitors to the school.

## **5.2 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULUM and ASSESSMENT**

- 5.2a Religious education is central to the life of the school and the Mission Statement leads all documentation. There is a good religious education policy, which could be developed even further to include the specific role of the religious education co-ordinator.
- 5.2b The policy for children with special educational needs is led by the Mission Statement. Children with special needs are welcomed into the school. The policy includes detailed procedures for identifying and addressing the needs of pupils. It underlines the frequently stated objective of working in close partnership with parents to develop each child's potential. The successful outcome of these objectives is evident to see in the good progress the pupils make and the supportive and caring environment which nurtures and values each child.
- 5.2c Good, clear documents on behaviour, anti-bullying and personal relationships were also provided for the inspector.
- 5.2d The last Religious Education Inspection Report (1997) identified as a Key Issue the establishment of whole school assessment procedures. This area has not yet been addressed. Assessment throughout the school is inconsistent. This area now needs to be addressed to achieve consistency and better inform planning. The Diocesan assessment materials could provide a useful model. One outcome of this could be the establishment of a Religious Education Portfolio, another recommendation from the previous inspection.
- 5.2e Another Key Issue from the 1997 Inspection Report which has not yet been addressed is the monitoring of teaching and learning of religious education. There is currently very good practice in school in monitoring other curriculum areas. The school now needs to build on this good practice by extending it to include religious education. The scrutiny of teachers planning would be part of this monitoring.

- 5.2f The school has not so far used the Diocesan Self-Evaluation Document. A whole school community day spent addressing this document could provide a useful tool to audit the current situation, provide a strategic, shared view of the way forward and deal with issues identified in this inspection and the previous one.

## **6 THE MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **6.1 Leadership and Management**

- 6.1 a The school is very well led by an able, deeply committed and dedicated headteacher. Her influence on the school over many years has ensured that St Joseph's school has a wonderful 'Catholic heart'. She is well supported in these aims by the deputy headteacher.
- 6.1 h The parish priest, who is also Chairman of Governors, gives generously of his time and is a welcome and frequent visitor to school and plays a crucial role in supporting the spiritual and moral development of the children. He is committed to strengthening even further the already strong links between school/home and parish. Parents spoke appreciatively of his regular involvement with school.
- 6.1c The governors of the school play a valuable part in the life of the school. They maintain a good overview through an effective sub-committee system.
- 6.1 d Parents value the information they receive through home/school books and regular newsletters.

### **6.2 STAFFING, ACCOMMODATION and RESOURCES**

- 6.2a The staff at St Joseph's are hard working and dedicated. Relationships are excellent which leads to effective team work. Staff are co-operative and very supportive of each other. Parents praise the staff for the commitment they show towards the children and themselves.
- 6.2b Non-teaching and administrative staff are hard working, loyal and cheerful; they feel valued and respected and express their justifiable pride in the school.
- 6.2c St Joseph's school is set in very pleasant surroundings. The children enjoy large and spacious hard surface areas and grassy areas for play and outdoor activities. The buildings and outdoor areas are well looked after by the caretaker and cleaners.
- 6.2d The serene atmosphere created in part by suitable background music and the high quality of displays around the school enhance the learning environment of the children and help to promote their spiritual development and excellent standards of behaviour.

- 6.2e Resources for Religious Education are good and help to deliver the curriculum effectively. Many multi-faith and multi-cultural resources have recently been purchased which have greatly enhanced learning in this area.

### **PART THREE**

#### **MAIN FINDINGS and AREAS for FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

- 7.1 St Joseph's is a good Catholic school in which the Mission Statement is a lived reality; the Gospel values of freedom, justice and love permeate all aspects of school life.
- 7.2 The school is very well led by an able, deeply committed and dedicated headteacher. She is supported by a highly committed staff of teachers and non-teaching staff who all feel valued and contribute richly to the life of the school.
- 7.3 The parish priest, who is also Chairman of Governors, is deeply committed to supporting the school in every way possible. He is a regular and welcome visitor to school.
- 7.4 The religious education co-ordinator has had this responsibility for just over a year. She is conscientious and committed to improving the already good standards in religious education. Developing her role could include the scrutiny of planning, and monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning.
- 7.5 The governors of the school play a valuable part in the life of the school through an effective sub-committee system.
- 7.6 Parents are very supportive of the school. Forty two questionnaires were returned, replies and comments indicate a high level of satisfaction with the education their children receive and an appreciation of the commitment shown by staff to their children and themselves. Parents feel valued and enjoy the sense of partnership fostered by the school. A significant minority of parents would welcome more information about religious education lessons. The excellent partnership between home and school is a strength of the school.
- 7.7 Parents spoke of the welcoming and supportive ethos of the school, the high standard of behaviour of the children and the excellent reputation the school has in the wider community.
- 7.8 There are long established, close links with the parish.
- 7.9 Currently Sacramental preparation takes place in school in close partnership with parents and the parish. These arrangements could be reviewed by governors in the light of Diocesan policy, to strengthen even further, parish school links.

- 7.10 The spiritual and moral development of the children is very good and is a strength of the school.
- 7.11 Collective worship at St Joseph's meets statutory requirements. Appropriate use of formal and spontaneous prayer and scripture are found across the Key Stages, and reverence and involvement reaches a high standard in some classes.
- 7.12 Religious Education whole school assemblies and presentations are of a very high standard. Pupils of all abilities take part and they are self-confident and assured. Music, often provided by the children, enhances these gatherings. Parents and parishioners are invited to attend and do so in large numbers; they are most appreciative of being included.
- 7.13 Overall, teaching in the school is good to very good. Good provision is made in lessons for children of different abilities. Planning throughout the school is never less than satisfactory and in some cases is excellent. These inconsistencies could be addressed by scrutiny of planning and sharing good practice.
- 7.14 Pupils make very good progress in religious education and attain standards appropriate to their abilities. This is a strength of the school.
- 7.15 Children's attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school. They show interest and listen well; they respond positively to the high expectations of the staff and are made to feel secure and valued. This is a strength of the school.
- 7.16 The learning environment and the ethos of the school which values children and develops self-esteem and respect for others, contributes to the excellent standard of behaviour of the children. This is a strength of the school.
- 7.17 Display of religious education themes and topics throughout the school is of a very high standard. This affirms the priority given to religious education and celebrates and values the children's work. This is a strength of the school.
- 7.18 The school is well resourced for religious education.
- 7.19 Not all classes in school allocate ten percent of teaching time to religious education. This needs to be reviewed.
- 7.20 Assessment procedures are not consistent throughout the school. This area now needs to be further developed to achieve consistency and better inform future planning.
- 7.21 There has been no INSET day devoted to religious education issues during the past few years. Such a day could provide the opportunity for the school community to review its current distinctive provision of religious education by using the Diocesan Self Evaluation Document.

7.22 Not all Key Issues from the last inspection have been addressed.

### **AREAS for FURTHER DEVELOPMENT**

The Governors and staff of St Joseph's School should now:

1. Celebrate and consolidate the good work being done in religious education, the very good spiritual and moral development of the children and the very good relationships which exist between all members of the school community.
2. Review arrangements for sacramental preparation to strengthen even further the good links with the parish.
3. Ensure that the allocation of teaching time for religious education in all classes meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
4. Build on parental support by providing parents with more religious education curriculum information.
5. Consider devoting an INSET day for the school community to use the Diocesan Self Evaluation Document; during that audit consider in particular the monitoring of teaching and learning, the development of assessment procedures and the establishment of a Religious Education Portfolio.

### **Conclusion:**

The Diocesan Inspector would like to place on record her thanks for the kindness and co-operation shown to her by the governors, headteacher, all staff, parents and children during the inspection.

### **APPENDIX: EVIDENCE BASE**

The programme of inspection included a pre-inspection visit to the school and two full days of inspection.

Religious Education was observed in six of the seven classes, a school assembly led by Key Stage One and another assembly led by Key Stage Two. During Holy Week the Inspector was invited to attend a presentation of the Passion of Our Lord given by Year Five with music by Year Six.

Interviews were held with the headteacher, Religious Education Co-ordinator and the Chairman of Governors.

Discussions were held with children, parents, teaching and ancillary staff, classroom assistants and dinner ladies.

Parents were consulted through a pre-inspection parents' meeting and questionnaires. Forty two questionnaires were received by the inspector.

A comprehensive range of documentation was provided by the headteacher and religious education co-ordinator including: The Mission Statement, Religious Education, Special Educational Needs, Behaviour, Spiritual and Moral, Social and Cultural Development and Personal Relationships policies. Other documentation requested by the Diocese was also available.

The co-ordinator provided a wide range of children's work, books, teacher's plans, liturgies and assembly plans and photographs.

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

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

- The spiritual and moral development of the children is very good.
- The children's behaviour is very good. They learn to respect themselves and each other.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent.
- Children's attitude to learning is very good and they make good progress in religious education.
- Teaching ranges from good to very good.
- There is strong support from parents, governors and parishioners.

### **How the school has improved since the last inspection**

- The school has developed the very good parental and community relationships established by the school.

### **Areas not addressed since the last inspection**

- Consistent assessment procedures are not yet in place throughout the school.
- A Religious Education portfolio has not yet been established.
- Currently the religious education co-ordinator does not monitor religious education across the Key Stages.

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

- Parents are very satisfied with the religious education their children receive.
- They value the support given to their children and themselves by staff
- They praise the very good spiritual and moral development of their children.
- They praise the high standards of behaviour and work achieved by the children.
- Parents value the very good reputation of the school in the wider community.
- Parents feel welcome in the school both as visitors and when working in classrooms.
- They welcome the strong links between school, home and parish.

### **Areas for Improvement following the inspection**

- Review arrangements for sacramental preparation to strengthen even further the good links with the parish.
- Ensure that the allocation of teaching time for religious education in all classes meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference.
- Build on parental support by providing parents with more religious education curriculum information.
- Consider devoting an INSET day for the school community to use the Diocesan Self-Evaluation Document; during that audit consider in particular the monitoring of teaching and learning, the development of assessment procedures and the establishment of a religious education portfolio.