

Diocese of Hallam

INSPECTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

[Section 23 of the 1996 School Inspections Act]

***St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Lidgett Lane,
Dinnington,
S 25 7QD***

Date of Inspection: 31st March & 1st April

Diocesan Inspector: Mrs Delia Kay

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 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 St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Dinnington and help promote sound development for the future.

A copy of this report may be obtained from the governors of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Lidgett Lane, Dinnington, Sheffield S25 7QD or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU.

INTRODUCTION

Basic information about the school.

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| NAME OF THE SCHOOL | St Joseph's Catholic Primary School |
| TYPE | Infant and Junior |
| STATUS | Voluntary Aided |
| NUMBER ON ROLL | 216 |
| AGE RANGE | 4-11 years |
| GENDER OF PUPILS | Mixed |
| CHAIRMAN OF GOVERNORS | Mrs Hilary Massarella |
| HEADTEACHER | Mr Trevor Horton |
| ADDRESS OF SCHOOL | Lidgett Lane Dinnington Sheffield S 31 7QD |
| TELEPHONE NUMBER | 01909 550123 |
| DATE OF INSPECTION | March 31 st & April 1 st , 2003 |
| DIOCESAN INSPECTOR | Mrs Delia Kay |

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School was opened in 1964 to serve the Parish of St Joseph's. The catchment covers a wide area of twelve different communities and different social backgrounds. A school bus enables children from further parts of the parish to attend.

The school is set in the heart of Dinnington and benefits from a large playing field and playground. The outdoor environment has been landscaped to provide an attractive entrance, quiet seating areas, as well as permanently placed basketball nets for the children to use. The newly built nursery, which opened in 2001 caters for 52 children, part time.

There are seven full time teachers including the Headteacher and four part time teachers who work as job shares. The Deputy Headteacher left to take up the post of Headteacher at another school in April 2002, and since then the post of Acting Deputy has been ably covered by two members of staff who have shared the responsibility until a new Deputy is appointed.

The classes are organised into seven year groups not including the nursery:

| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Reception | 27 |
| Year 1 | 29 |
| Year 2 | 22 |
| Year 3 | 23 |
| Year 4 | 29 |
| Year 5 | 32 |
| Year 6 | 28 |
| TOTAL | 190 |

67% of the children are baptised Catholics.

90% of the teaching staff are Catholics.

PART ONE

ASPECTS of the SCHOOL as a CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

1. THE MISSION OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Joseph's Mission Statement is clear and concise and supported by equally clear aims based on Gospel inspired values. The statement is well lived out by all who work in the school and a climate of respect, striving for excellence and caring for one another is present in the school.
- 1.2 The Mission Statement prefaces all documentation and is reviewed regularly. This is good practice.
- 1.3 Twenty six questionnaires were returned by parents. Parents were very satisfied with both the standard of religious education and the amount of information they receive. They were particularly pleased with the provision for the spiritual and moral development in school and the welcoming friendly atmosphere.
- 1.4 Parents are very pleased to be invited to school Masses and Liturgies, which they think help them on their own faith journey. Children take a significant lead in all services providing music and taking part in the readings. The quality of singing by the successful school choir, adds to the prayerful atmosphere on these occasions.
- 1.5 Parents feel well supported by the school in promoting Christian values.
- 1.6 Relationships throughout the school are very good. There is a happy, calm and purposeful atmosphere leading to good behaviour. Staff support and co-operate with one another well, and are good role models for the children to follow. Children are co-operative with one another, both in class and in the playground.
- 1.7 The school is very welcoming to children with special needs. All staff show great sensitivity and awareness of their needs and make good provision for them.
- 1.8 The school works hard throughout the year, raising money for both local and third world charities.
- 1.9 The parish priest is actively involved in the life of the school. He makes a positive contribution to the spiritual development of children, staff and governors. Each half term he leads a reflective meeting for governors, which helps them to keep in focus the Christian values that are the foundation of the school.

- 1.10 There are strong links between school and parish. Parishioners attend school Masses, the parish newsletter is displayed in school. Children making their first Holy Communion are befriended by parishioners who welcome them into the parish community and many of the governors who are also parishioners visit and support on a regular basis.
- 1.11 There is good provision for cultural development through residential and non residential visits and a good range of extra curricular activities are provided for: – football, matball, rugby, choir, guitar and First Communion preparation.
- 1.12 The school reaches out to the local community by providing pensioners with a lunch club each week that the year six pupils help to organise. This provides the older pupils with valuable experience of participating in community activities.

2. THE SCHOOL AS A WORSHIPPING COMMUNITY

- 2.1 Collective Worship meets statutory requirements and is celebrated daily in the classroom, in whole school assemblies or in Key Stage liturgies.
- 2.2 The well written Collective Worship Policy is implemented throughout the school.
- 2.3 The children take an active part in worship by listening attentively, singing enthusiastically, reading and praying. They are interested and enjoy these opportunities to develop their spiritual life.
- 2.4 During the Inspection the inspector observed two Key Stage assemblies and a Peace Liturgy. Good use was made of visual aids and both assemblies were appropriate to the age of the pupils. The children had an opportunity to deepen their understanding of God's love for them.
- 2.5 In the Peace Liturgy all classes contributed prayers and the atmosphere of reverence was deepened by the carefully chosen hymns and the high quality of the singing and music. An opportunity for the children to have offered their own spontaneous prayers would have added to this spiritual occasion.
- 2.6 All classes had special prayer areas with displays related to either 'Here I Am' or the season of Lent. Where these were of a high standard they enhanced the provision for deepening the children's relationship with God.
- 2.7 The Inspector was provided with a very good photographic record of displays, liturgies and dramas that had taken place in school and the parish church. These reflect the high priority that the school places on celebrating the Good News.

3. SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Spiritual Development

- 3.1 The school has a very good 'Spiritual Development Policy' incorporated in the religious education policy, which is clearly followed by all who work in the school. It fully recognises that spiritual development is not seen as an 'added extra', but is a part of the whole development of the child.
- 3.2 Prayer was a whole school focus for Lent. Children were encouraged to pray and add their prayers to a symbolic vine that would grow and lead to New Life at Easter. Formal prayers are displayed in classrooms and in some rooms children's own written prayers are bound in a book for children to use.
- 3.3 There is a schedule of formal prayers to be learnt by the children. These prayers are said with thought and meaning and the children speak out confidently. More opportunities for spontaneous prayer would be beneficial.
- 3.4 All classes have a focal area for prayer which are generally of a high standard. If an area could be found in the school for children to withdraw for their own private prayers, the spiritual life of the school would be enhanced.
- 3.5 Display in the school is of a high standard. Some displays include children's work and others are created to stimulate thought about the 'Here I Am' topic or the season of the church. All help to provide a stimulating learning environment.
- 3.6 Sacramental preparation is carried out in the parish with strong support from school and governors and parents. The children take great pride in completing their 'My Reconciliation Journey' book.
- 3.7 The religious education co-ordinator runs a voluntary prayer group twice a week during Lent during her lunchtime. This is well attended and enjoyed by children.

Moral Development

- 3.8 The school has worked hard to produce an excellent behaviour policy. This policy together with the Mission Statement and Aims of the school spell out the Gospel values of love, respect and forgiveness which are the foundations of the good behaviour observed in the school.
- 3.9 In speaking to the children it is obvious that they have a good understanding of what is right and wrong and a sense of fairness. They treat each other and the adults in the school with respect.
- 3.10 Behaviour is good throughout the school both inside and outside the classroom. The support staff and lunchtime supervisors treat the children with respect, which encourages a positive response from them.

- 3.11 There are very good playing facilities. They include two playground areas, a quiet seating area and a large field. Children share their space and the play equipment provided considerately.
- 3.12 Children are praised for good behaviour and there is a clear Home School Agreement setting out the responsibilities of all concerned.

PART TWO

CURRICULUM RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

4. STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Attainment and progress.

- 4.1 All classes over the year allocate 10% of teaching time to religious education, as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- 4.2 From the Religious Education lessons observed it is obvious that the children make good progress in knowledge and understanding. Even the very youngest children in the nursery were learning about God's creation of new life.
- 4.3 The quality of written work varies. Some excellent work which was well presented and challenging was observed but some work was not of the same high standard and children were not given clear guidance on how to improve this. Once the schools new Marking Policy has been introduced, standards in written work should improve and children should make more progress.
- 4.4 Children listen well and answer questions thoughtfully and appropriately.
- 4.5 Work mounted on the wall for display is of a high standard and well presented. Children's work is valued and appreciated.
- 4.6 A very good lesson was observed where children explored the feelings of the apostles at the Last Supper through drama. The learning and understanding that took place for all pupils was very good.

Attitudes to Learning

- 4.7 Children's attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school. They show interest and respond positively. There is a high level of support from parents.

- 4.8 When questioned, all the children said they liked Religious Education lessons. Teachers plan interesting lessons that cater for the many different learning styles and as a result children enjoy them.
- 4.9 Children are keen to participate in assemblies and liturgies and offer to take active parts in singing, reading, miming, acting and also playing musical instruments.

5 QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 5.1 The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. Where the teaching is very good the learning objective is shared, the lesson moves at a good pace and there are clearly identified differentiated activities for the children to participate in.
- 5.1 The 'Here I Am' programme is used throughout the school. Planning is never less than satisfactory and in some cases very good.
- 5.2 Resources have been purchased wisely and there are adequate sets of Bibles, religious education books, drapes and candles. This same level of spending on religious education resources needs to be maintained.
- 5.3 All classes have learnt about another faith this year and there were some very good displays of this work around the school. Multi-Faith resources have been purchased to enhance the teaching and learning in this area.

Religious Education Curriculum and Assessment

- 5.4 Religious education is central to the life of the school and all documentation is led by the Mission Statement.
- 5.5 The school has a good Religious Education Policy which includes an excellent vision statement that is worthy of being formally displayed in school. However, it could be further improved if more detail was included about the 'Here I Am' programme followed in school, the policy of the school on Multi-Faith teaching and the purchasing of religious education resources.
- 5.6 The policy for pupils with special educational needs is based on the school's belief that every child is a special and unique gift from God deserving the best quality teaching environment and education, regardless of ability. The good practice witnessed in school indicates that the school meets these aims and makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

- 5.7 Good clear documentation on Equal Opportunities, Sex Education, Drug Use & Misuse were also provided for the inspector.
- 5.8 The last Religious Inspection Report [1998], identified as a Key Issue the need to further develop assessment procedures. The religious education co-ordinator has worked hard to develop this and now all work is assessed at the end of every topic against the Diocesan Assessment framework. This framework is then used to report to parents at the end of the year and is also sent to the next teacher. One piece of written work each term is put into the children's 'Special R.E. Book' and this book passes up through the school, so that when the child leaves there will be a record of work completed and progress made for each child. This is good practice.
- 5.9 The school has recently completed the Diocesan Self Evaluation and identified areas of development that now need to be put into an action plan.
- 5.10 There are good links between St Joseph's and St Bernard's High School, which could be strengthened if the religious education co-ordinator worked with the high school to ensure that there are procedures in place to pass on information about standards achieved by pupils in religious education and work taught.

6. THE MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership and Management

- 6.1 The school is very well led by an able and committed Headteacher. He has a clear vision for the school, which is rooted in his own personal faith. Since the promotion of the Deputy of the school to Headship, he has been generously and ably supported by two members of staff who are sharing the post of Deputy, until a new appointment is made.
- 6.2 The chair of governors is a valued member of the school community who gives unsparingly of her time to support school, home and parish. Her involvement in school and the active involvement of the other governors is a great strength of the school. Each governor has been allocated a class to befriend and visits school on a regular basis.
- 6.3 The parish priest, who is also the vice – chair of governors, visits weekly to chat to the children and staff. His visits are much appreciated and the spiritual direction he gives the governing body is also greatly valued.
- 6.4 The religious education co-ordinator is a hard working and committed teacher. She is a member of the parish and also runs the First Holy Communion preparation, which enhances her co-ordinator role. She has made good progress developing the assessment procedures in school. However, she now

needs to further develop her monitoring role to include lesson observations and work scrutiny. When undertaking a work scrutiny exercise she needs to ensure there is differentiation and effective marking.

- 6.5 The governors are currently considering developing the role of Chaplaincy, which will benefit all pupils and strengthen the parish school link.

Staffing, Accommodation and Resources

- 6.6 The staff at St Joseph's are hard working and dedicated. Relationships are excellent and there is clearly an ethos of caring and support for one another.
- 6.7 Support staff work well with the teaching staff who recognise their strengths and talents and make good use of them. Many of the students working in school express their gratitude to all staff for giving them the experience of learning in a co-operative and supportive environment.
- 6.8 The caretaker takes a pride in keeping the school building and grounds clean, tidy and looking attractive.
- 6.9 The school is set in very pleasant grounds that have been attractively developed. Best use has been made of the space outside to provide an excellent outdoor environment for the children to learn and play in. A lot of hard work was put into making a delightful Millennium garden, which the pupils can withdraw to for some peace when they are playing on the field.
- 6.9 Displays within school enhance the learning environment and help to promote spiritual development.
- 6.10 The newly purpose built nursery is an asset to both the school and the local community. The children attending are offered an excellent start to their education.

MAIN FINDINGS

- 7.1 St Joseph's is a good Catholic school where the Mission Statement is a lived reality, placing Christ and his teachings at the centre of school life.
- 7.2 The school is very well led by a committed and able headteacher.
- 7.3 All the staff, teaching and non-teaching, are cheerful and co-operative and work hard to ensure that all pupils do their best and reach their potential.
- 7.4 Relationships throughout the school are very good. Children and adults feel valued and secure. This helps to create a positive learning environment.

- 7.5 The governors are a great support to the school and are seen as a strength. They are actively involved in the life of the school attending not only regular business meetings but also half termly reflective meetings led by the parish priest.
- 7.6 Developing the role of chaplaincy is currently being considered by the governors, which would further strengthen the parish school links.
- 7.7 The parish priest is committed to supporting the school. He is actively involved in the life of the school and makes a positive contribution to the spiritual development of all concerned.
- 7.8 Collective worship meets the statutory requirements and provides some excellent opportunities for pupils and staff to deepen their relationship with God.
- 7.9 Sacramental preparation takes place in the parish, but is well supported by the school. The religious education co-ordinator prepares the children once a week after school hours and is supported in this by parishioners.
- 7.10 Parents are satisfied with the information they receive about religious education and are particularly pleased with the provision for spiritual and moral development.
- 7.11 Behaviour is good throughout the school both inside and outside of the classroom and children enjoy their religious education lessons.
- 7.12 The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. Where teaching is very good the learning objectives are shared, the lessons move at a good pace and there are clearly identified differentiated activities.
- 7.13 Children make good progress in knowledge and understanding but standards in written work vary. Once the new marking policy has been implemented standards in written work should improve.
- 7.14 The religious education co-ordinator has worked hard to develop assessment procedures. All work is assessed at the end of each topic and one piece of written work each term is filed into the children's 'Special R.E. Book', which passes up through the school. This is good practice.
- 7.15 The role of the religious education co-ordinator needs to be further developed to include lesson observations and work scrutiny to give a more detailed overview of teaching and learning in religious education.
- 7.16 There are good links between St Bernard's High School and St Joseph's. However, these could improve if the religious education co-ordinator ensured that there was a procedure in place to pass on information about standards achieved in religious education and work covered.

- 7.17 All Key Issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed, although further development is needed in the monitoring of religious education including both work scrutiny and lesson observations, as part of the religious education co-ordinator's role.

AREAS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The governors should now:

1. Celebrate and consolidate the good work in religious education, the good spiritual and moral development of the children and the excellent relationships which exist between all members of the school community.
2. Develop the role of the religious education co-ordinator to include undertaking lesson observations and work scrutiny exercises to ensure that all year groups make as much progress as possible and that the new marking policy is followed.
3. Ensure all lessons have clearly identified differentiated activities so that all pupils make as much progress as possible.
4. Further develop the links with St Bernard's High School by ensuring that meaningful religious education records are passed on from St Joseph's to St Bernard's to ensure that progress and continuity are maintained.

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 all classes. A Key Stage 1 assembly, a Key Stage 2 assembly and a Peace Liturgy were also observed.

Interviews were held with the chair of governors, the parish priest, the headteacher and the religious education co-ordinator.

Informal discussions were held with parents, children, support staff, lunchtime supervisors and teachers.

Parents were consulted through the pre-inspection questionnaires. Twenty six questionnaires were returned.

A comprehensive range of documentation was provided by the headteacher and religious education co-ordinator:

School Prospectus

Staff Handbook

Termly Planning

School Improvement Plan

Home School Agreement

Admissions Policy

Sex Education Policy

Equal Opportunities Policy

Collective Worship Policy

First Communion Preparation

Drug Use and Misuse Policy

Special Needs Policy

Behaviour Policy

R.E Policy

Forms S3 & S4

Last R.E Inspection Report

The Co-ordinator also provided a range of children's work, books, liturgies and photographs.

Summary Report

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

Children's attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school and they like religious education lessons.

Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good.

Collective worship takes place daily for all children in the school.

The spiritual and moral development of the children is good.

How the school has improved since the last inspection.

All Key Issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed, although further development is needed in the monitoring of religious education including both work scrutiny and lesson observations, as part of the religious education co-ordinator's role.

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

Parents are very satisfied with both the standard of religious education and the amount of information they receive.

Parents are particularly pleased with the provision for the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

Parents are very pleased to be invited to school Masses and liturgies.

Parents are very pleased that the school is a friendly and welcoming place.

Areas for further improvement following the inspection:

1. Celebrate and consolidate the good work in religious education, the good spiritual and moral development of the children and the excellent relationships which exist between all members of the school community.
2. Develop the role of the religious education co-ordinator to include undertaking lesson observations and work scrutiny exercises to ensure that all year groups make as much progress as possible and that the new marking policy is followed.
3. Ensure all lessons have clearly identified differentiated activities so that all pupils make as much progress as possible.
4. Further develop the links with St Bernard's High School by ensuring that meaningful religious education records are passed on from St Joseph's to St Bernard's to ensure that progress and continuity are maintained.

