

*Diocese of Hallam*

***INSPECTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION***

*(Section 23 of the 1996 School Inspections Act)*

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School  
Muglet Lane  
Maltby  
Rotherham  
S66 7JU**

**Inspection Dates: 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June 2004**

Diocesan Inspector: Mr John A Hutchinson

The inspection of the denominational character of St Mary'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 Guidelines for Section 23 Inspections in Catholic Schools issued by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisors in January 2004.

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 Mary's Catholic Primary School and help promote sound development for the future.



A copy of this report may be obtained from the Governors of St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Muglet Lane, Maltby, Rotherham S66 7JU or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU. It will also be available on the Hallam Diocesan Website.

## INTRODUCTION

### Basic information about the school

NAME OF SCHOOL	St Mary's Catholic Primary School
TYPE	Primary School
STATUS	Voluntary Aided
NUMBER ON ROLL	210 (incl. 34 FTE in the Foundation Stage Unit)
AGE RANGE	3 – 11 years
GENDER OF PUPILS	Mixed
CHAIR OF GOVERNORS	Mr Aden Wass
HEAD TEACHER	Ms Catherine McLaughlin
SCHOOL ADDRESS	Muglet Lane Maltby Rotherham S66 7JU
TELEPHONE NUMBER	01709 812611
DATES OF INSPECTION	14 <sup>th</sup> and 15 <sup>th</sup> June 2004
DIOCESAN INSPECTOR	Mr John Hutchinson

The 210 pupils are grouped as follows:

Foundation Stage Unit:

Maintained Nursery:	32 part-time:	FTE: 16
Reception:	18 full time:	FTE: 18

Total: FTE: 34

Year 1:	30
Year 2:	26
Year 3:	29
Year 4:	32
Year 5:	29
Year 6:	30

Total: 210

### 1.1 What are the key characteristics of the school?

1.1.a St Mary's School, built in 1939 and added to in 1970, is of a broadly average size situated in the mining village of Maltby, Rotherham in South Yorkshire. The school draws from a large catchment area, which includes pupils from the Catholic Parishes of St Mary Magdalene Maltby and the Blessed Trinity Wickersley, though the numbers from Wickersley are in decline. Maltby is an area of social regeneration though unemployment is still high.

1.1.b The socio-economic background of the pupils is varied. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average at 26.8%. The number of children identified as having Special Education Needs is above average. The nature of these needs varies but by far the largest group is those with social, emotional and behavioural problems. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below that

normally found. Nearly all pupils have a white British heritage. There are very few pupils for whom English is an additional language.

- 1.1.c There are one hundred and seventy two Catholic children in the school including full and part-time Foundation Stage pupils. (81.9% of the school population)
- 1.1.d There are 10 teachers in the school (FTE 9.6) and all are Catholic.
- 1.1.e The school has identified the following areas for School Improvement Planning in relation to Religious Education:

“To continue to develop further an RE Programme which will provide children with opportunities for prayer, worship and awareness of other beliefs  
To improve teacher knowledge and confidence  
To assist staff in developing creative links within the curriculum  
To enable staff to be more confident about curriculum coverage and time allocation issues  
To improve creativity achievement and attainment of pupils throughout the school.”

4<sup>th</sup> Priority, School Improvement Plan 2003/2004

- 1.1.f The school is involved in the Sure Start, Single Regeneration Budget and Excellence in Cities initiatives. It has gained the Active Mark, the Healthy Schools award and a School Achievement award in recent years.
- 1.1.g The school was inspected by Her Majesty’s School Inspectorate in March 2004 under Section 10 of the Schools Inspection Act 1996.
- 1.1.h Children make good progress in the Foundation Unit especially in relation to their low baseline on entry. Attainment for pupils in Key Stage 1 is good compared to national averages and very good compared to similar schools. Attainment at KS2 is average for English, above average for Maths and below average for Science. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

## **1.2 The overall quality of the school’s Catholic Life and its provision for Religious Education**

- 1.2.a St Mary’s Matlby is a very good Catholic school. As a community it aims to live out the Gospel message of Christ to ‘Love one another as I have loved you’ as set out in the school’s Mission Statement. The Mission Statement is a lived reality in the daily life of the school.
- 1.2.b The quality of the school’s Catholic life is very good. Pupils receive good teaching in the main and the quality of Collective Worship is very good. Pupils are well cared for and the majority are well motivated and happy at school. Pupils’ Personal, Social and Emotional Needs are catered for very well and there is a tangible ‘Culture of Care’ in the school. Relationships are exemplary. Staff work very well as a team and this is a key strength of the school.
- 1.2.c The school is very well led by a caring, deeply committed and hardworking Head Teacher. She has high expectations and sets the tone for the school, leading all by example.

- 1.2.d The Head Teacher is very well supported by a gifted and talented Deputy Head Teacher. Both the Head and Deputy Head Teacher are excellent role models to pupils and staff and inspiration to whole community. The recently appointed Religious Education Co-ordinator works hard to support the senior managers of the school in achieving its aims for religious development. She is well placed to help develop Religious Education, as it moves from strength to strength.
- 1.2.e The Chair of Governors and Parish Priest work hard to maintain the Catholic ethos of the school. They have a very good understanding of the distinctive nature of Catholic education and work hard to ensure that the school continues to make good progress towards fulfilling its Mission Statement and Aims. The Chair of Governors enjoys the full support of the Governing Body in moving the school forward.
- 1.2.f The work of the Parish/School Co-ordinator is excellent and a major strength of the school.
- 1.2.g The school's Senior Management Team completed the Self-Evaluation form on The Catholic Life, Spiritual Development and Religious Education of the School in consultation with the school's Religious Education Co-ordinator, the Governors and the Parish Priest. The self-evaluation form correctly identifies the school's strengths and areas for development.
- 1.2.h The school has made significant progress in all areas for development since the last inspection, most notably in the quality of teaching and learning, planning and preparation of lessons and collective worship. Assessment of pupils' work is much improved but the school has identified that there is still work to do in the area of work sampling and moderation.
- 1.2.i The School Improvement Plan rightly has the development of Religious Education as one its main priorities. This is the case each year as the school continually looks for ways to improve its delivery of the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education.
- 1.2.j The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Where the best teaching takes place the lessons have pace, there are high expectations of pupils' outcomes and the teachers successfully engage the children in achieving the lesson's objectives.
- 1.2.k This is a very inclusive school. Pupils with Special Education Needs have those needs catered for in Religious Education lessons very well. Teachers skilfully deploy support staff in lessons and all share their faith and life experiences with the pupils. All staff are good role models for the pupils.
- 1.2.l Resources are used well to support Religious Education. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection.
- 1.2.m Spiritual Development in the school is very good. It inspires the children to search for meaning in life beyond their normal existence and gives their lives meaning and purpose. Prayer and worship in the school is very good. The school works hard to promote cultural understanding through studying other faiths in Religious Education.
- 1.2.n Moral Development is very good. Pupils behave well in school with very few exceptions and attitudes to learning in Religious Education are good. The quality of

Personal, Social and Emotional Education is excellent from the Foundation Unit all the way through school.

- 1.2.o Twenty-three questionnaires were returned by parents. The majority of parents are satisfied with the school and its performance as a Catholic school. Many state that they chose the school because of its Catholic ethos and the care and attention paid to all pupils.
- 1.2.p Links between home, school and parish are well established and very positive. The parish priest is a weekly visitor to school and he works hard to promote the parish in the school and the school likewise works hard to promote the parish. There is a display in the entrance area of the school outlining this work that is co-ordinated by the Parish/School Co-ordinator.
- 1.2.q The transition into school is very effective and the work of the Foundation Unit is a key strength of the school. Staff in The Foundation Unit work well as a team to promote the school's ethos from an early age and this sets the tone for the development of this work throughout the school.
- 1.2.r There is a well-established culture of celebrating achievement in the school. Pupils appreciate the efforts made to reward attendance, good work and behaviour. This has a very positive impact on school life and improves behaviour and attendance in the school.
- 1.2.s The school works hard to provide for pupils who may need additional emotional support. A very effective Rainbows group works with children who have particular needs relating to their emotional development.
- 1.2.t Pastoral care for pupils is very good. There are good links with home and the school secretary works hard to ensure that effective lines of communication are maintained between home and school. The quality of welcome extended to all is very good.
- 1.2.u Pupils are encouraged to support those less fortunate than themselves both by prayer and by raising money for needy causes. The school supports local and national charities and these include Tanzania, NSPCC and CAFOD.
- 1.2.v The school is spotlessly clean and kept so by a dedicated caretaker and team of cleaners. This makes the school an attractive and pleasant place to live, learn and grow in God's love.

### **1.3 How the school's effectiveness has improved or changed since its previous inspection**

All Key Issues (KI) for further development identified in the 1998 Section 23 Report have been addressed, though some may still require further development and this is acknowledged by the school:

- KI 1 The school has celebrated and built upon the level of parental support for the school and the quality of interpersonal relationships has been strengthened further.
- KI 2 The content of the Religious Education Curriculum now meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools as laid down by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

- KI 3 Planning and differentiation are key features of all Religious Education lessons. Short term planning is effective and manageable. All lessons have clear lesson objectives and most pupils' needs are met through effective differentiation. Medium Term Planning is available on the school's intranet.
- KI 4 The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent. The quality has improved because of rigorous monitoring and evaluation of Teaching and Learning across the whole curriculum of which Religious Education has been an integral part. The Religious Education Co-ordinator observes teaching and monitors planning. Assessment processes are improved; however the school recognises this as an area for further development.
- KI 5 Pupils show greater independence in lessons. They take an active part in discussions and teachers use creativity to enhance Religious Education lessons. Pupils use drama, circle time, art, poetry and creative writing in Religious Education lessons.
- KI 6 The quality and range of work prepared for Collective Worship and Assembly ranges from very good to excellent. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection and is a key strength of the school and a model of good practice.
- KI 7 The Religious Education Co-ordinator now manages a discrete budget for Religious Education resources.
- KI 8 Resourcing for Religious Education generally is much improved. Provision for multi-faith teaching is enhanced by making very good use of resources available in school and from the Diocesan Pastoral Centre.

The school is to be congratulated on the excellent rate of improvement since the 1998 Section 23 Inspection especially in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Prayer and Collective Worship and Leadership and Management including Governance.

#### **1.4 How the school is viewed by its pupils and parents**

- 1.4.a Pupils are happy in school. They enjoy Religious Education lessons and engage in them effectively. There is a tangible sense of enthusiasm for Religious Education in pupils from Foundation to Year 4. Older pupils are more reserved but none the less engage in Religious Education lessons well, especially when discussing issues relevant to their lives.
- 1.4.b Pupils clearly enjoy being in school. They are polite, well behaved and well mannered with few exceptions. The school council talk about how they are involved in decision-making processes and feel their opinions are valued and that action is taken following issues raised. Much is done to make pupils feel safe and secure in school. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and are based on firm but fair discipline. The school has a zero tolerance approach to misbehaviour both in class and in the playground, which pupils understand and appreciate, as this helps to create an environment where teachers can teach and pupils can learn. Behaviour in the school generally is very good.
- 1.4.c Twenty-three parents returned questionnaires. The responses are positive in the main with one exception. Parents overwhelmingly support the school; they praise the quality

of welcome they receive and the positive impact staff have on their children's lives. They state that they receive good information from school and are invited to assemblies and collective acts of worship, which they enjoy. Parents feel supported in their role as primary educators of their children and view Spiritual and Moral development as very good. Parents are encouraged to take an active part in school life and many do, though few help directly in classes.

- 1.4.d Most parents choose this school because of its excellent reputation, the loving and caring atmosphere and very good management. Parents are very satisfied with the standards of Religious Education provided by the school.
- 1.4.e Parental views are typified by one parent who writes: "As practising Catholics we wanted our children to experience a Catholic education and a sense of being part of a caring community, in a school which would support our role as parents, bringing up our children in the Catholic faith, and which would consolidate the knowledge and teaching that our children gain from home and from Church."

## **1.5 The accuracy of the school's self-evaluation**

- 1.5.a The school's self-evaluation processes are thorough and rigorous. The Head Teacher, Senior Management Team (including the Religious Education Co-ordinator) and the Governors have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has been relatively conservative in its self-evaluation; recording 'good' in areas where this inspection has concluded that it is 'very good'. Governors and senior managers should take note of these areas and seek to consolidate and share this very good practice.

## **2.1 Areas for further development**

The Governors and staff of St Mary's School should now address and include in its post-Inspection Action Plan the following:

- 2.1.a Celebrate and consolidate the excellent progress made since the last Section 23 Inspection especially in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Collective Worship and Leadership and Management, including Governance.
- 2.1.b Develop policies for Spiritual and Moral Development to reflect the very good practice in these areas.
- 2.1.c Expectations in Key Stage 1 written work need to be more challenging especially for the more able pupils.
- 2.1.d Closer links to Literacy should be made in all areas of the school and this work, especially in Key Stage 2, should be prefaced with a Learning Objective. All written work should be dated.
- 2.1.e Assessment portfolios should be developed to reflect the range of work, including multi-faith focuses, covered throughout the school. This will inform moderation and ensure that standards are consistent throughout the whole school. All staff should be involved in this process led by the Religious Education Co-ordinator.
- 2.1.f The good work in Multi-faith education should be consolidated and strengthened within the context of the South Yorkshire e-Learning Programme. The school has been

successful in bidding for Objective 1 European Funding, alongside two other Rotherham Catholic Schools.

## **2.2 The following matters should also be considered as areas for development by the school:**

- 2.2.a Differentiation and challenge for the more able in Religious Education lessons needs to be more consistently applied throughout the school.
- 2.2.b Develop further the use of 'talk-partners' so as to make more consistent use of the good practice that already exists in some classes.
- 2.2.c Develop further opportunities for extended writing in Religious Education, especially in Key Stage 1.
- 2.2.d Develop further opportunities for Key Stage 2 children to plan and lead their own acts of prayer in class, including scheduled opportunities for spontaneous prayer in all classes.
- 2.2.e Explore ways of reducing lunchtime break so as to provide less time for misbehaviour in this period. This might also allow for a short recess in the afternoon session, which would allow pupils and staff to have a break, especially in the summer term.

## **3 The Quality of Religious Education**

### **3.1 Standards and achievement in Religious Education**

- 3.1.a The progress made in attainment in Religious Education ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is largely in line with standards in other subjects. However expectations in Key Stage 1 appear higher in other subjects than for Religious Education.
- 3.1.b Pupils with Special Educational Needs make good progress and their needs are well catered for in Religious Education lessons. Pupils with special needs are well supported by classroom assistants who help to engage the children in their learning. Staff work well to ensure that pupils achieve to the best of their ability.
- 3.1.c Evidence of provision for the higher attaining pupils is less evident throughout school though there are some good examples especially in Year 4. This good work needs to be more widely disseminated across the school so that above average pupils are always being taken to the next level.
- 3.1.d Pupils make very good progress in the Foundation Stage considering that many pupils enter school well below national averages for attainment. Pupils in the Foundation Stage unit work well together and show good independence. Relationships in this unit are excellent and pupils respond well to very good questioning and gentle nurturing of the Catholic faith. There are some excellent routines in the unit that enable pupils to make excellent progress in personal and social education. Spiritual and Moral education is very good. Good use is made of drama, speaking and listening as well as various methods of recording work. Older pupils do record in writing but the quality of this varies due in the main to their lack of experience in the written word on entry to school.

- 3.1.e The progress made by boys and girls is broadly equal.
- 3.1.f Marking and assessment in Religious Education is very good. Care is taken when marking pupils' work to affirm and be positive. Teachers also indicate areas for improvement.
- 3.1.g Expectations for work in Religious Education are clearly higher in some classes than in others, especially in Key Stage 1 where few opportunities for extended writing were observed either in lessons or in the work sample. The quality of work in Key Stage 2 varies with some excellent examples of high expectations and very good quality work both in terms of quality and presentation.
- 3.1.h Teachers use questioning techniques well in class and assembly to elicit good aural responses from the children. Pupils listen well and in the main are engaged in lessons. Pupils listen well to each other, they comment positively on each others contributions to lessons. Standards in speaking and listening in Religious Education are above average. Pupils are given opportunities to develop such skills as reflection, empathy, communications, self-awareness, evaluation and analysis of the beliefs of other faiths.
- 3.1.i Pupils are encouraged to have positive attitudes towards each other in the context of Religious Education lessons. Personal and Social Education plays a prominent part in most lessons and assemblies thereby enabling pupils to develop attitudes such as curiosity, self-respect, compassion and reverence. However, few opportunities for awe and wonder were observed.
- 3.1.j Pupils study other world faiths on a rolling programme that includes Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism. The school improvement plan identifies this as a key area for development for the school indicating that staff confidence and knowledge in delivering this aspect of the Religious Education curriculum is crucial. The Religious Education Co-ordinator works hard to ensure that staff have access to good quality resources including background subject knowledge to deliver a multi-faith curriculum ensuring that standards in this area are improving all the time. The amount and quality of work in this area ranges from satisfactory to very good. The school has identified this as an area for further development especially through the South Yorkshire e-Learning Programme, for which it has successfully secured funding for developments in Information Technologies working alongside two other Rotherham Catholic primary schools.

## **4 Teaching in Religious Education**

### **4.1 The quality of teaching in Religious Education in relation to its impact on pupils' learning**

- 4.1.a The quality of Teaching in Religious Education lessons ranges from satisfactory to excellent.
- 4.1.b Teachers prepare Religious Education lessons well and openly share their faith with the children in a way that engages them in quality learning experiences. Where the best teaching takes place the lessons have good pace, there are high expectations of pupils' outcomes and the teachers skilfully engage the children achieving the lesson's objectives.

- 4.1.c Teachers plan lessons from the “Here I Am” programme. Planning is made available for staff on the school’s intranet and there is, in the main, consistency across the school in terms of the quality and usefulness of this planning and its impact on pupils’ learning. Where the best teaching and learning takes place the most thorough planning is evident. The Religious Education Co-ordinator monitors teachers’ planning and provides useful feedback and resources to support pupils’ learning. The quality of short term planning is good and informs the lessons that teachers deliver. There are clear learning objectives for each lesson and good learning outcomes follow as a result. This represents very good progress from the last inspection and is why standards in teaching have improved significantly.
- 4.1.d Teachers employ good teaching techniques in Religious Education lessons. Lessons have a clear introduction that reflects on prior learning, introduces the lesson’s objectives and aims to engage and enthuse the children in their learning. Lessons move forward with good pace and children engage in activity followed by opportunities to gather and reflect on the lesson and its purpose. Some teachers are very creative in their teaching though this is not consistent across the whole school.
- 4.1.e Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, and their ability to teach it, is in the main secure and teachers openly share this faith with their pupils. The school works hard to ensure that all staff are trained in specific areas of Religious Education and have targeted In-Service Training to ensure that all are up to date with the latest developments in this subject. Staff also use the support materials provided in the Here I Am programme to ensure that their teaching is sound and based on good Catholic doctrine.
- 4.1.f Scripture is used well to support pupils’ learning and teachers employ good questioning techniques to allow pupils access to the written word. Further links to literacy could be made in future to ensure that older pupils have the opportunity to study scripture in greater depth and come to a clearer understanding of its meaning for their lives and the lives of others.
- 4.1.g Expectations in lessons vary and particularly for the more able pupils. Where teaching is at its best there is clear evidence of differentiation and challenge. In these lesson pupils are set tasks, which enable them to think, evaluate and raise questions of their own.
- 4.1.h Pupils’ behaviour in Religious Education is very good. Pupils are engaged in lessons and kept on task by diligent and caring teachers and support staff who ensure that there is a caring and supportive atmosphere where teachers can teach and pupils can learn. Pupils know what is expected of them in lessons and generally set to work quickly and quietly. Teachers prepare work well and there is evidence of appropriately differentiated activities in most classes.
- 4.1.i Support staff are employed well in lessons and work hard to ensure that all pupils remain on task and are listening attentively at carpet times. Teachers and support staff work very well as a team. This is most evident in the Foundation Unit where all staff work as a team both to support and deliver lessons. This is excellent practice.
- 4.1.j Resources are used well to support teaching. Information Technology was used in only two lessons to support teaching and pupils’ learning. The use of PowerPoint in one lesson had a dramatic impact on the pupils and helped to keep them engaged, interested and stimulated. The use of music from the teachers’ laptop enhanced the

lesson further. This is very good practice and it would be beneficial for all staff to employ similar techniques especially when trying to keep older pupils engaged in Religious Education lessons.

## **4.2 How well pupils learn in Religious Education**

- 4.2.a Pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons and engage in them well. This is more clearly evident in the younger children who display enthusiasm for their learning and engage readily in tasks. Pupils are in the main motivated, inspired and interested in their Religious Education lessons and many confidently ask questions. Pupils understand what is expected of them and most apply themselves very well in Religious Education lessons.
- 4.2.b Pupils' learning is based on prior teaching and learning experiences and teachers use this prior knowledge well to inform future practice. Teachers plan to enable pupils to acquire new knowledge in Religious Education lessons and help to move them forward in the understanding of their personal journey of faith. There are many examples of teachers asking pupils to apply their knowledge in Religious Education to the real life contexts that reflect the lives of many of the children from this largely, socially deprived area of Rotherham.
- 4.2.c Pupils are encouraged to work together and to respect each other's views. Personal and Social aspects of the curriculum are very strong and this has a very positive impact on pupils' ability to learn effectively.
- 4.2.d Teachers plan effectively for lessons and this includes preparing good resources to facilitate good learning opportunities for the children. Good classroom organisation usually enables pupils to settle to work quickly and helps maintain good discipline in lessons.
- 4.2.e Some of the lessons observed were relatively short therefore opportunities for extended work were limited. The work sample reveals that opportunities for extended work are not taken in all classes and that this should be an area for development in the future.
- 4.2.f Pupils work independently and show good concentration in lessons. Teachers use these short sessions well to ensure that the pace of the lesson is maintained and pupils are expected to work hard for short periods to complete tasks.
- 4.2.g Pupils in the Foundation Unit learn very well. Staff employ a range of techniques to ensure that pupils remain focussed and on task including circle time, music and drama. Scripture is used well and at a level appropriate to the pupils' age and ability. There are good routines in this class that impact positively on the children's learning including creative use of 'rap' to reinforce very good Personal and Social teaching inspired by Religious Education lessons. Staff reinforce learning with good first-hand experience that pupils clearly remember and lead them to reflect on good times in their lives highlighted by their Religious Education lessons. The 'share-picnic' is a very good example of this and staff used this well to reinforce the message of the scripture being taught.
- 4.2.h Pupils are given opportunities to work collaboratively. This includes preparing drama and mime for assembly and in class. Children clearly enjoy this work as it engages in their learning and makes it real for them. Older pupils questioned each other and

analysed their peers' drama work. This was affirming and incisive and showed good respect for self and others.

### **4.3 The quality of assessment of pupils' work in Religious Education**

- 4.3.a Assessment was a key issue for action at the last inspection and much work has been done to ensure that assessment impacts positively on pupils' future learning and thereby raises standards in Religious Education. Progress in assessment is good.
- 4.3.b Pupils' work is marked carefully and sensitively and aims to move pupils forward in their learning. This has a positive impact on their learning. Teachers also complete records of how well pupils have worked on specific areas of the Here I Am programme using the assessment overview sheets provided by the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department.
- 4.3.c Pupils complete a review for each Here I Am topic. This enables pupils to reflect on their learning and draw conclusions from it. This is consistently applied throughout the school and this is very good practice.
- 4.3.d At present there are no portfolios of assessed work in Religious Education. This is an area that needs to be addressed and is planned for by the Religious Education Co-ordinator who will lead staff in collating samples of work from across the school. In this way the school will be able to agree greater consistency in terms of quality, challenge and presentation in Religious Education, which at present varies across the whole school. Links to other subjects can be discussed along with greater opportunities for creativity and diversity. There are some good examples of these areas but they are limited. Portfolios of assessed work in multi-faith aspects of the Religious Education curriculum should also be collated by the Religious Education Co-ordinator and shared with staff and Governors.
- 4.3.e It has also been suggested that an individual portfolio of work should be introduced for each child where assessed work can be recorded using the guidance provided by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers. These books can be passed from year to year as the child progresses through school providing a complete record of the child's achievement and attainment in school. This will provide the school with an accurate view of individual pupils' progress through school and will help teachers to monitor continuity and progression.

## **5 Pupils' response to Religious Education**

- 5.1 As stated above pupils generally respond well in Religious Education lessons with few exceptions. Pupils appear motivated, inspired and interested in what they are doing and seem to enjoy Religious Education lessons.
- 5.2 Pupils work well together in lessons. They respect other's views and try to encourage each other to participate and work hard. Pupils' Personal and Social development is often uppermost in teachers' minds and this focus has led many to feel safe and secure at school and enabled them to develop further towards their full potential as unique people of God. In this respect the school lives out its mission statement very well indeed.
- 5.3 Pupils enjoy assembly and collective worship. All but the eldest children in school are totally engaged in assembly and join in with enthusiasm confidently answering and

asking questions. The children in Key Stage 1 especially enjoyed their excellent assembly and were totally engaged in its content and presentation.

- 5.4 Pupils on the student council shared examples of how they have taken initiative and that this has had a positive impact on the lives of all the pupils in school. The 'time-out' bench is a very good example of this as are the basketball posts and the provision of parasols at the school benches in the playground.
- 5.5 Pupils in the main have high self-esteem and appear confident when speaking to adults. Many children approached this inspector and made him feel very welcome and at home in St Mary's School. Pupils held doors, smiled back in greeting and chatted openly. Many pupils clearly love being in school.
- 5.6 The Head Teacher and senior staff comment that behaviour is an issue in school especially at lunchtime. Lunchtime currently runs for an hour and a quarter in Key Stage 1 (one hour in Key Stage 2) and it might be appropriate, especially in the summer months, to consider revising this arrangement and reduce lunchtime by fifteen minutes so as to relieve the pressure on lunchtime staff during the last period of lunch break when the greatest number of instances of misbehaviour occur. This might also allow staff and children to have a short break mid-afternoon, which would allow for children to have a drink and a comfort break thereby relieving some of the pupils' lethargy towards the end of the afternoon, especially in the summer term when it gets very hot in the Junior block. Infants currently have a break mid-afternoon.
- 5.7 Provision of a greater variety of playground toys might also provide the children with more opportunities for creative and co-operative play. Lunchtime staff could then receive further training on how to encourage collective play and positive behaviour management.

## **6 The provision for the curriculum in Religious Education**

- 6.1 The planned curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory.
- 6.2 Teachers carefully plan to deliver the ten percent of teaching time to Religious Education as recommended by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in all classes. There is also a daily act of planned collective worship in each class. Assembly is used very effectively to enhance pupils' learning in Religious Education and all employ good teaching techniques and very good questioning skills.
- 6.3 All classrooms have a focal point for prayer. These are used effectively by staff and pupils and have a direct impact on Religious Education lessons and prayer times. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
- 6.4 Resources to support the learning and teaching of Religious Education are good. The Religious Education Co-ordinator monitors a specific budget for resources (£700 in 2004-2005) and has planned and reviewed current and future spending needs.
- 6.5 Staff are deployed well to secure good quality teaching and learning in Religious Education. Support staff are used effectively in lessons and the use of teamwork is a key strength of the school, especially in the Foundation Unit and in all collective worship. Staff confidently and willingly share their faith experiences with pupils. All staff are very good role models for the pupils at St Mary's School.

- 6.6 There are many very good quality Religious Education displays around the school. These include focuses on the current “Here I Am” theme (Building Bridges), relevant displays relating to the Church’s Year (Pentecost) as well as generic displays rewarding behaviour, attendance and attitude. The excellent work in ‘Rainbows’ is also displayed prominently. This is very good practice and enhances pupils’ feelings of self-worth.
- 6.7 This is an inclusive school. All pupils’ needs are met especially their Personal, Social and Emotional needs. Pupils with Special Education Needs experience appropriate provision in lessons and there is good support for them.
- 6.8 The school promotes racial equality and it reflects the culturally pluralistic nature of modern Britain. Teachers plan to promote racial harmony and understanding in the curriculum by ensuring that pupils study other world faiths including Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism. Resources to support this area of the Religious Education Curriculum are made available for all staff. The Religious Education Co-ordinator works hard to promote this area of the curriculum and provides useful background notes to influence teachers’ subject knowledge. This impacts positively on teaching and learning in Multi-faith Education. The school recognises that this is still an area for further development.

## **7 Leadership and Management**

### **7.1 The quality of leadership provided for religious education**

- 7.1.a The Head Teacher, together with the Deputy Head Teacher and members of the school’s Governing Body, ensure that the school’s Mission Statement is a lived reality in the school. It impacts positively on the life of the school and its pupils. The Head Teacher is deeply committed to the school’s vision and aims providing an excellent role model to all staff, pupils and parents at St Mary’s School. The Governors describe the Head Teacher’s impact on raising standards in Religious Education as excellent. She ensures that Religious Education is a key feature of the School Improvement Plan.
- 7.1.b The Deputy Head Teacher is an excellent role model to staff and pupils. She is an inspirational figure in the life of the school, widely respected by everyone in the whole school community, she sets high standards in Religious Education and delivers very high quality teaching and learning experiences. Her impact on the lives of pupils is heavily influenced by her own deep commitment to faith.
- 7.1.c The Religious Education Co-ordinator is recently appointed. In the short time she has been in post she has worked hard to identify the school’s strengths and areas for development in Religious Education and provides good leadership for this subject. She is enthusiastic about her role and is having a positive impact on raising the profile of Religious Education in the school and is keen to improve standards. She has monitored and evaluated Teaching and Learning across the school including undertaking lesson observations, scrutinising teachers’ planning and preparing resources including assessment proformas. She has correctly identified the need to scrutinise pupils’ work so as to identify potential areas of inconsistency that might exist across the whole school. Once completed this essential work will allow her to have a much clearer understanding of standards in Religious Education and will enable her to confidently identify further areas for development.
- 7.1.d The Governing Body has a very clear understanding of its role in promoting the mission of the school. Governors are consulted at every level of school development

and have a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for development in Religious Education. They are involved in the school's self-evaluation processes and take an active part in the formulation of school priorities in the Religious development of the school.

- 7.1.e The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to school. He regularly meets the children informally and makes himself available to them as a visible figure in the community that they can relate to and approach.
- 7.1.f The School/Parish Co-ordinator has a very positive impact on the religious life and development of the school. She co-ordinates liturgy, teaches liturgical music, coordinates parish events and catechesis and is a key figure in the life of the school. She is a key figure in the school and the parish and she is an effective link between both.

## **7.2 The effectiveness of management in Religious Education**

- 7.2.a Management in Religious Education is very efficient and effective. There are very good systems in place to ensure that Religious Education resources are available to all staff including the organisation of the planning documents on the school's intranet. Each class has its own resources and some are kept centrally. Resources are deployed efficiently and have a positive impact on raising standards.
- 7.2.b The Head Teacher is an excellent manager meeting deadlines efficiently and communicating effectively with governors, staff, pupils and parents. Governors describe her as thorough, hardworking and efficient in all her management duties including liaising with them and the whole school community.
- 7.2.c The Religious Education Co-ordinator is also very well organised. She has good systems in place to monitor, evaluate and review the Religious Education curriculum. She plays an active role in the setting of priorities for Religious Education in the School Improvement Plan.
- 7.2.d Planning for Religious Education is mainly consistent in the school. The resources provided by the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department are used for medium term planning. A consistent school format is used for short term planning enabling continuity and progression across the school. This Religious Education Co-ordinator monitors this planning and gives useful feedback to staff. Planning is much improved since the last inspection however further links to literacy might be sought in the future.
- 7.2.e The school's Self-evaluation processes are well embedded and are rigorous and thorough.
- 7.2.f Staff development in Religious Education is seen as a key priority for each year's School Improvement Plan. All staff have access to good quality Spiritual Development experiences as part of this process. This includes using the expertise and knowledge of external providers to enhance the quality of spiritual knowledge and development of staff.
- 7.2.g Performance Management processes are well established in the school and are used to develop teachers' Continuing Professional Development.

7.2.h The school manages its financial resources very well and ensures that there is a discrete budget for Religious Education resources each year.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

### **8.1 How well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's religious foundation**

8.1.a The Governing Body has a very good understanding of the school's Mission Statement and knows how well it is lived out in the school on a daily basis. They enjoy presentations on the school's priorities in Religious Education from the Head Teacher and are well informed of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are heavily involved in the school's self-evaluation processes.

8.1.b The Governors monitor and evaluate the quality of Religious Education and are aware of the school's current and future development priorities.

8.1.c The school's Mission Statement has been in place for some time. Governors recognise the need to revisit this statement and are keen to reaffirm what they consider to be the essence of their school. This process might be completed as part of the work leading to the achievement of the Investors in People Standard if the decision to pursue this avenue of development is taken.

8.1.d Governors take a very active role in the preparation of the Governors' Report to Parents. They also recognise the need to re-visit the school's prospectus and enliven it with a more 'glossy' image including the use of Information Technology to enhance the presentation of this vital document. They also recognise the development of a school website as a possible way to promote the public image of the school.

8.1.e The Governing Body has adopted and implements the Diocesan Model Policy for Admissions.

8.1.f The Chair of Governors is highly effective and has a very clear understanding of the school and its priorities to promote the Religious life of the school. In partnership with the Head Teacher he has ensured that standards in Religious Education have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

8.1.g Governors play an active part in the life of the school ensuring that representation is made at all key school events including liturgical celebrations, major assemblies and acts of collective worship and school events like plays and sports days.

### **8.2 The quality of leadership of the Head Teacher and senior staff in leading the Catholic life of the school**

8.2.a The quality of leadership of the Head Teacher is excellent. She sets and maintains high standards for the staff who in turn work hard and drive the school forward. She is deeply committed to the school and its mission and works hard to ensure that the pupils at St Mary's get the very best possible educational opportunities available to them. The Governing Body describe her as an inspiration to everyone and very much appreciate the impact she has made on leading the school forward in recent years.

8.2.b The Deputy Head Teacher's leadership is also excellent. As mentioned earlier she has a major impact on the school and is an excellent role model for all. She will be sadly

missed when she takes up her post as a Head Teacher in another school from September 2004.

- 8.2.c The school's Religious Education Co-ordinator is recently appointed and as such has had a limited time to have a major impact on raising standards in Religious Education. She is well placed to do this in future.
- 8.2.d Strategic planning is very good in the school. The School Improvement Plan is a very good and effective document and Religious Education is rightly placed as one of the school's key areas for development.
- 8.2.e The quality of teamwork in certain areas of the school life, in particular the planning and delivery of collective worship, is exemplary. This is due in no small measure to the quality of the leadership of the School Parish Co-ordinator who is excellent.

## **9 The quality of Collective Worship**

### **9.1 The frequency and quality of prayer and Collective Worship**

- 9.1.a Collective Worship fulfils statutory and diocesan requirements. Acts of Collective Worship are held each day either in whole school assemblies, Key Stage Assemblies or in prayer sessions in each class.
- 9.1.b There is an excellent Collective Worship policy and this is reflected in the quality of assembly that takes place in school. Collective Worship is well planned and co-ordinated; it relates to both the Church's Liturgical Calendar and the current "Here I Am" themes.
- 9.1.c The role of the Parish Co-ordinator in arranging collective worship is exemplary. She coordinates with all staff and works with groups of children to prepare work of the highest quality. The quality of delivery of assembly is excellent and shows tremendous teamwork and mutual support. This is excellent practice.
- 9.1.d The Head Teacher also leads whole school assembly each week. There are merit assemblies at which acts of worship take place as well as opportunities for pupils to receive positive feedback on behaviour, attendance and acts of good work including academic and non-academic achievements.
- 9.1.e Pupils are generally well engaged in prayer sessions and Collective Worship however opportunities for older pupils to plan and organise their own prayer sessions independently of staff is a possible area for further development. This would enhance the very good practice already in place.
- 9.1.f Prayer sessions held in class each day have a clear focus. They engage pupils and reflect the pupils' lives and experiences and serve to reinforce the positive teaching in Personal, Social and Emotional Education. The quality of prayer and collective worship observed in Key Stage 1 was excellent.
- 9.1.g Opportunities for spontaneous prayer were observed in some classes. This good practice should be shared throughout the whole school.

## **9.2 The provision and quality of the liturgical life of the school**

- 9.2.a The school plans and delivers appropriate Eucharistic and non-Eucharistic liturgies that reflect the Church's Liturgical Calendar and the organisation of the school year. The Parish/School Co-ordinator works closely with the Parish Priest and the school to ensure that liturgy is of the highest quality. There are very good displays of images and icons that reflect the importance of events in the Church's calendar. The evolution of the display that dominates the hall, reflecting the school's voyage through Lent into Eastertide and the events leading to Pentecost, provides pupils with a very good visual interpretation of this collective journey.
- 9.2.b Sacramental preparation is carried out in partnership with the school and parish. The role of the Parish/School Co-ordinator is crucial to delivery of this programme. She coordinates catechists and arranges meetings with parents. The children follow the programme 'Called to his Supper' and receive First Eucharist in Year 3. The school is continuing to build on the very good parish links, which have been put in place in recent years to enhance this area of school and parish life.
- 9.2.c The Parish Priest meets with parents to support them in their role as primary educators in the faith giving input on various topics related to the spiritual development of children.
- 9.2.d The recently appointed Parish Priest is a regular visitor to school and is a central figure in the life of the school. He aims to be a spiritual support for both staff and pupils. He attends and supports the school's acts of worship and leads them when approached or appropriate.

## **10 The Spiritual and Moral Development of the Pupils**

### **10.1 Spiritual Development**

- 10.1.a The spiritual development of the pupils is very good. Their knowledge of Jesus is central to their lives and this is evident in the way they respond in Religious Education lessons and acts of Collective Worship as well as in the day to day relationships within school. The school needs to write a spiritual development policy to reflect the very good practice in this area.
- 10.1.b There is a significant use of Scripture as stimulus in Religious Education lessons. In the best lessons in school pupils are encouraged to explore and question Scripture teasing out meaning that impacts on the lives of the pupils studying it.
- 10.1.c Pupils are taught to respect and value the beliefs of others through a planned programme of multi-faith education. Pupils are given opportunities to understand other's culture, belief systems and spirituality. This enhances their own spiritual development and helps prepare them for life in a culturally pluralistic world.
- 10.1.d There is a very strong culture at St Mary's School of recognising and affirming pupils' achievements in a variety of ways. This promotes the development of self-esteem, self-respect and respect for others.
- 10.1.e Pupils enjoy a vibrant prayer life in school. Staff work hard to ensure that prayer is central to all they do and encourage the pupils to see prayer as a natural part of each school day. Pupils in a Year 2 class write their prayers on a prayer board each

morning and the teacher skilfully uses these prayers to enhance the spiritual development of all the pupils. All the children say prayers reverently and confidently. They sing hymns with enthusiasm and joy.

10.1.f Liturgical music is used well to enrich the pupils' spiritual experience. Appropriate hymns are sung to enhance liturgy and reflective music is used with good effect to create mood and setting conducive to good spiritual growth.

10.1.g Pupils are taught that there is something beyond the material and they are encouraged to look beyond their immediate experience for meaning in their lives. They are taught to understand how their actions can impact the feelings and emotions of others.

## **10.2 Moral Development**

10.2.a The moral development of the pupils is very good. The school has a good discipline policy and it is enforced consistently, rigorously and fairly. Pupils behave well in school and in particular in lessons where pupils appear to enjoy the learning experiences planned for them.

10.2.b The Discipline or Behaviour Management Policy, subtitled 'Working together for a happier school' outlines very clearly what is expected in terms of appropriate behaviour and what will happen if sanction is needed to be applied. Each day is seen a 'New Resurrection' and pupils are encouraged to give and receive forgiveness following any wrongdoing. Good behaviour is rewarded and the policy outlines the way in which the school plans to implement this.

10.2.c Expectations of pupils' behaviour are high. All staff expect pupils to behave well in class and around school and all work hard to ensure that this is the case. Pupils' behaviour in the playground is reported by the Head Teacher as being less good than that in school but other than one or two minor incidents this inspector did not see any major incidents of misbehaviour during the inspection. It is noted however that the lunchtime break is rather long and pupils seem more unsettled in the last fifteen minutes of the lunch break. It might be worth the school exploring ways of reducing this time and so alleviating potential problems.

10.2.d There is currently no written policy for moral development though practice in this area is very good. Pupils' Personal, Social and Emotional Development is very well catered for across the school. Consideration should now be given to writing a moral development policy that reflects the good practice in this area.

10.2.e The school has a policy for Education for Personal Relationships. The school has correctly identified this as an area for development in the future so that practice in this area can take full advantage of the opportunities for growth to full emotional and sexual maturity.

10.2.f The children are encouraged to give generously of their time, money and prayers to children and others less fortunate than themselves. This includes supporting organisations like CAFOD as well as other national and local charities. The school was recently involved with a very successful awareness raising initiative in partnership with another Rotherham Head Teacher and school that also raised funds for children in Tanzania.

## **CONCLUSION**

The inspector wishes to place on record his personal thanks and appreciation for the kind cooperation received from the Head Teacher, staff, governors, parish priest, parish/school Co-ordinator, parents and children of St Mary's School, Maltby.

## **APPENDIX: EVIDENCE BASE**

The following evidence was used to formulate the above report:

1. A comprehensive pre-inspection documentation pack including all relevant policy statements, planning documents, timetables and school's self review document.
2. Samples of work from across the school including liturgy schedules and notes.
3. The OFSTED report from 2004 and the previous Section 23 report (1998).
4. The school prospectus and Governor's Report to Parents.
5. Seven lessons were observed and oral feedback was given to all teachers.
6. Three assemblies were observed; one whole school, two Key Stage assemblies. as well as class based prayer services
7. Interviews were held with the Head, RE Co-ordinator, Parish Priest, a group of Governors including the Chair of Governors, the Parish/School Co-ordinator and the school secretary
8. 23 parental questionnaires were returned and analysed

## **SUMMARY REPORT**

**The major strengths in Religious Education, Collective Worship and the spiritual and moral development of the children.**

- St Mary's Maltby is a very good Catholic school. As a community it aims to live out the Gospel message of Christ to 'Love one another as I have loved you' as set out in the school's Mission Statement. The Mission Statement is a lived reality in the daily life of the school.
- The quality of the school's Catholic life is very good. Pupils receive good teaching in the main and the quality of Collective Worship is very good.
- The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent.
- Relationships are exemplary. Staff work very well as a team and this is a key strength of the school.
- The school is very well led by an excellent Head Teacher and Deputy Head Teacher. They have high expectations and set the tone for the school, leading all by example. They are very well supported by the Religious Education Co-ordinator, Parish Priest and Governing Body.
- The work of the Parish/School Co-ordinator is excellent and a major strength of the school.
- This is a very inclusive school. Pupils with Special Education Needs have those needs very well catered for in Religious Education lessons.
- Support staff work very effectively in classes and make a significant contribution to helping children achieve their full potential.
- Spiritual and Moral Development in the school is very good. It inspires the children to search for meaning in life beyond their normal existence and gives their lives meaning and purpose. Prayer and worship in the school is very good.
- The school works hard to promote cultural understanding through studying other faiths in Religious Education.

- Pupils behave well in school with very few exceptions and attitudes to learning in Religious Education are good.
- The quality of Personal, Social and Emotional Education is excellent from the Foundation Unit all the way through school.
- Links between home, school and parish are well established and very positive. The parish priest is a weekly visitor to school and he works hard to promote the parish in the school and the schools likewise works hard to promote the parish.
- The transition into school is very effective and the work of the Foundation Unit is a key strength of the school.

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

The school has made significant progress in all areas for development since the last inspection, most notably in the quality of teaching and learning, planning and preparation of lessons and collective worship. All Key Issues have been addressed although there is still more work to be done regarding assessment, work sampling and moderation. The school has identified these areas as the next steps in its development.

### **How the parents view the Religious Education, Collective Worship and spiritual and moral development of the children.**

- Parents overwhelmingly support the school; they praise the quality of welcome they receive and the positive impact staff have on their children's lives.
- They state that they receive good information from school and are invited to assemblies and collective acts of worship, which they enjoy.
- Parents feel supported in their role as primary educators of their children and view Spiritual and Moral development as very good.
- Parents are encouraged to take an active part in school life and many do, though few help directly in classes.
- Most parents choose this school because of its excellent reputation, the loving and caring atmosphere and very good management.
- Parents are very satisfied with the standards of Religious Education provided by the school.

### **Areas for further development.**

- Celebrate and consolidate the excellent progress made since the last Section 23 Inspection especially in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Collective Worship and Leadership and Management, including Governance.
- Develop written policies for Spiritual and Moral Development to reflect the very good practice in these areas.
- Expectations in Key Stage 1 written work need to be more challenging especially for the more able pupils.
- Closer links to Literacy should be made in all areas of the school and this work, especially in Key Stage 2, should be prefaced with a Learning Objective. All written work should be dated.
- Assessment portfolios should be developed to reflect the range of work, including multi-faith focuses, covered throughout the school. This will inform moderation and ensure that

standards are consistent throughout the whole school. All staff should be involved in this process led by the Religious Education Co-ordinator.

- The good work in Multi-faith education should be consolidated and strengthened within the context of the South Yorkshire e-Learning Programme. The school has been successful in bidding for Objective 1 European Funding, alongside two other Rotherham Catholic Schools.

