

DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
SHEFFIELD

School URN	373 3414
Name of Chairman of Governors	Fr John Metcalfe
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Anne Brighton
Date of Inspection	10 th October 2006
Section 48 Inspectors	Mr Stephen Owen

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

Introduction

The inspection of St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocese of Hallam Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections as approved by the Bishop of Hallam.

The process of inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in further deepening the quality of Catholic education provided.

Information about the school

Type of School	Primary, Voluntary Aided
Age profile of students	4-11
Number on roll	211
Number of students on Special Educational Needs Register	29
Number of students with a Statement of SEN	9
Number of Catholics on roll	163
Number of other Christian denominations	40
Number of other Faiths	3
School Address	Chancet Wood Drive Sheffield S8 7TR
Telephone number	0114 274 5597
Fax number	0114 274 6499
Email address	headteacher@st-thomascanterbury.sheffield.sch.uk

Description of the school

St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school situated to the south west of Sheffield. The children are taken from the parishes of Our Lady of Beauchief and St Thomas of Canterbury, Sheffield and Holy Spirit, Dronfield.

The church is a 15 minute walk from school; the parish priest, Father John Metcalfe, is also Chair of Governors.

77% of the pupils are baptised Catholics; the children come from a complete cross section of homes and backgrounds and from a wide geographical area. It has an Integrated Resource for children with physical difficulties (always with other needs in addition). Six children are members of the Integrated Resource and a further three children have Statements of Special Educational Needs. Four children are brought to school by SEN transport.

There are currently 211 pupils on roll organised into seven classes.

Five of the teachers are Catholic.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners?

The effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners is good. The Headteacher, supported by the Religious Education Co-ordinator, is focused on raising standards for all in all aspects of Catholic education. Relationships are excellent throughout the school community, with a very strong yet implicit emphasis on inclusion ensuring that pupils are respected and well cared for. The pupils' religious knowledge is good and they acquire the skills and attitudes to develop spiritually and morally as they journey in faith throughout the school.

The school's self evaluation process as recorded in the Self Evaluation Form (SEF), is a realistic and accurate assessment of the school's provision. The Religious Education Development Plan clearly identifies areas that need addressing, enabling all to share in the process.

The areas for development identified in the Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and the School Improvement Plan (SIP) are to enhance resources, provision (including ICT), further develop assessment, especially through lesson observation. Work has already begun to address these issues.

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

The last Religious Education Inspection took place in the Autumn Term of 1999. The following areas for development were identified:

- Further develop and structure procedures for assessment and evaluation in Religious Education
- Review management and co-ordination of Religious Education
- Develop a consistent policy for children's written work in Religious Education
- Clarify reports to parents and ensure ten percent of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education as required by the Bishops' Conference.

Much of the above criteria has been successfully addressed. Children's work is assessed in line with diocesan recommendations. The headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator have ensured steps have been taken to address the systematic management of this subject. Children's written work is assessed annually and compared to national standards and expectations in Literacy. The process and reporting to parents has improved substantially. The school meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference by ensuring that ten percent of the curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education is good. The Governing Body, Headteacher, and all members of staff are actively involved in the school's mission. All are hardworking and committed to providing the best possible Catholic education for the children. Parents are supported by the school in developing their children's Religious Education through information leaflets and regular information newsletters. The SEF gives a clear, honest and realistic analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development and the inclusion of a specific section relating to the development of the Catholic life of the school ensures a strategic overview of what needs to be done. This is good practice.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in the development of the Catholic life of the school?

Leadership and Management in the development of the Catholic life of the school is good. Governors are well informed and committed to the Catholic mission of the school. The leadership of the school is strongly focused on the school's Catholic mission and is successful in creating a sense of shared mission amongst the staff. The leadership team constantly strives to raise standards and promotes the personal development of the children. Pupils feel respected and they in turn show respect to others. They are well cared for and nurtured in a happy, inclusive, caring and forgiving environment, where Gospel values prevail.

The headteacher's collegiate model of leadership ensures all who work in the school have ownership of the Mission Statement and the vision of the school. All who work for the good of the children are justly proud of the distinctive and inclusive ethos at St Thomas of Canterbury and are totally committed to its Catholic life. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's Religious Education and are welcome and welcomed into the school. Many parents play a significant role in the life of the school.

The school's belief that all are created in the image of a loving God underpins the totally inclusive culture of the school. Pupils of all needs and abilities are welcome and well catered for. They each, in turn, bring their unique contribution to the life of the school.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship is good and meets statutory requirements. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and a systematic and cohesive planning programme which is carefully and reflectively thought out. Collective Worship is an implicit element in the life of the school and enhances the school's very commendable culture of inclusion.

The children are afforded a variety of opportunities of Collective Worship relevant to the liturgical seasons of the Church's year. They have a sound knowledge of this process and during a whole school assembly observed during inspection were prayerful, reverent and enthusiastic in their worship.

Collective Worship impacts positively on the children's moral and spiritual development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

The quality of pupil's achievement in Religious Education is good overall. Learning objectives are shared with the children very effectively and pupils achieve well. A common proforma, with a record of the time spent on each section of the lessons would further enhance the process and make monitoring strategies more effective.

Lessons are enjoyed and the good practice of offering children a variety of learning strategies, including drama, hot-seating and group discussion enables a sharing and exploration of ideas, feelings and emotions in a safe, secure yet challenging environment.

Behaviour is very good. The school provides significant and effective support for children with learning difficulties and all teaching assistants work extremely hard to ensure such pupils have every opportunity to develop and achieve. Assessment procedures are well in place and in line with Diocesan recommendations.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching and learning in Religious Education ranges from satisfactory to good. Staff are confident in delivering the 'Here I Am' programme of work, using Diocesan support materials for planning. Teachers work hard to ensure their lessons are interesting and engaging for their pupils. The quality of support given by the teaching assistants is of a good standard and differentiation by support and outcome was observed in most classes. Where lessons were particularly good differentiation by task was part of the learning process and also in these lessons ICT was used effectively.

The Religious Education Co-ordinator, who regularly attends Diocesan Co-ordinator training sessions, monitors children's work through scrutiny and moderation. To further enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning, a planned process of lesson observation should be put in place.

Parents and carers are kept well informed of what their children are being taught in Religious Education and are encouraged to support them in this work.

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

The school's clear endeavour to meet the needs and interests of the learners is good. The curriculum time devoted to Religious Education fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The school makes effective use of the 'Here I Am' programme and the children are given frequent opportunities for discussion and reflection and express their views competently and confidently.

The school's inclusive culture is exemplary and a joy and privilege to witness. Governors and parents value the role they play in the school community and appreciate the strands of communication that are now very effective.

Children acquire and develop a good understanding of the Catholic faith and learn to understand and respect other faiths and cultures. Their knowledge of scripture is good and many are mature enough to relate this knowledge to everyday life, absorbing the values of Christ's life in the way they love and help each other. The Religious Education curriculum contributes well to the spiritual and moral development of the children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?

Leadership and Management are good in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education. The Religious Education Co-ordinator has a strong commitment to the Catholic faith. Her role is clearly defined in an explicit job description and she works hard to fulfil her responsibilities. The Leadership Team and Governors are totally committed to the school's Mission Statement, its ideals and aims, and in raising achievement.

Staff are given appropriate training opportunities to give them the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver lessons of quality.

Religious Education is given a very high profile in the school, and is a lived reality in the lives of all who work there.

Policy Documents, other comprehensive documentation and the inclusion of Religious Education in the School Development Plan ensures a detailed and strategic understanding of what needs to be done to develop even further the Catholic life of the school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS:

Overall Effectiveness	Good
The Catholic life of the school	
How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	Good
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	Good
Religious Education	
How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?	Good
How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?	Good
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	Good
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	Good

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield, S9 3WU. Tel: 0114 2566 440.