

Diocese of Hallam

INSPECTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
(Section 23 of the School Inspections Act)

St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School
Prince of Wales Road
Sheffield
S2 1EY

Inspection Date: 7th and 8th October 2004
Diocesan Inspector: Mrs Marian Bolton

This inspection of the denominational character of St Theresa'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 School Inspections Act, Section 13 of the Education (Schools) Act of 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 Working Party in January 2004.

The process of Inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed to support and encourage each school and parish community. It is hoped that this report will celebrate all that is positive and praiseworthy in St Theresa's Catholic Primary School and help to promote sound development for the future.

A copy of this report may be obtained from the Governors of St Theresa's Catholic Primary School, Princes of Wales Road, Sheffield, S2 1EY or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU.

INTRODUCTION

Basic information about the school

Name of School	St Theresa's Catholic Primary School
Type	Primary
Status	Voluntary Aided
Number on roll	230 including nursery
Age Range	3-11 years
Gender of Pupils	Mixed
Chairman of Governors	Mr Gerald Logan
Headteacher	Mr Patrick Nelis
Address of School	Prince of Wales Road Sheffield S2 1EY
Telephone Number	0114 239 7251
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There are 230 children on roll, including the nursery. They are organised into classes as follows:

Nursery	45 (part time)
Reception	17
Y1	29
Y2	28
Y3	30
Y4	28
Y5	26
Y6	27

The Planned Admission Number is 30.

1.1 Key characteristics of the school

- 1.1a St Theresa's Catholic Primary School was founded in 1934 and serves the parish of St Theresa's. 58% of the children are baptised Catholic. The Children generally come from homes below the national average socio-economic index. Currently, 46% of the children are entitled to free school meals. The general level of attainment of children on entry to the school is below that expected nationally, 14% of children have Special Educational Needs; 3 of these pupils have formal statements of Special Educational Needs.
- 1.1b There are 8 full time teachers including the headteacher and one part-time teacher. The majority of the teaching staff are Catholic (88%)
- 1.1c Attainment at the end of KS1 and KS2 is broadly in line with national expectations from similar schools.

1.2 The overall quality of the school's Catholic life and its provision for Religious Education.

- 1.2a St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School is a very good Catholic school with areas of excellent practice. The ideals of the mission statement are lived out on a daily basis.
- 1.2b The school manages to provide a high degree of security while also maintaining an openness and welcome to the whole school community.
- 1.2c The school is very well led by a Headteacher who has a clear vision for the school based on his own commitment to his Catholic faith. He is very aware of the needs of the children and their families. He is highly motivated to serve those needs and to support all his staff in providing for the community within the context of the Catholic ethos of the school.
- 1.2d While being sensitive to the children and their families the Headteacher makes no compromise in the high expectations of hard work and high standards of behaviour which are key characteristics of the school.
- 1.2e The Headteacher is very well supported by a very hard working, effective and sensitive Religious Education Co-ordinator, who is also the Deputy Headteacher.
- 1.2f There is a very strong culture of recognising success and celebrating achievement and attainment. This strengthens the children's confidence and plays a large part in maintaining high self-esteem and respect of themselves and for each other.
- 1.2g The staff demonstrate a strong sense of team work and solidarity which greatly enhances the education provided and underpins the Catholic ethos of the school.
- 1.2h Parents feel totally at home in the school. They identify themselves as part of the community and value the supportive environment of the school.
- 1.2i Teaching assistants work within the school as valued members of the team. They play a significant role in the classroom and are very clear about how they effectively support the children's learning.
- 1.2j The Learning Mentor is a key worker in the school. She provides a vital, caring service to the whole school community. Her hard work, skills and commitment greatly support the school in the realisation of its mission.
- 1.2k The relationship between the school and the parish is excellent. The whole community benefits from the school, the church and the parish hall all sharing the same site.
- 1.2l The parish priest, the Headteacher, the Religious Education Co-ordinator and all teaching staff work very closely together to provide for the Religious Education of the school pupils.

- 1.2m The parish priest comes into school regularly. He is involved in helping to plan and arrange liturgical celebrations. He helps to deliver aspects of the Religious Education lessons and he makes himself readily available to the children, their families and the staff of the school. He makes a significant contribution to the spiritual development of the children. He is held in high regard by the whole school community and everyone values the significant support he gives the school.
- 1.2n The parish sister is also a regular visitor to school and fully supports all the work the school and parish does together.
- 1.2o The school makes very good provision for children with Special Educational Needs. Children's needs are identified at an early stage. Their needs are met in a very focussed way. In this way Special Educational Needs children are fully integrated into the life of the school.
- 1.2p Behaviour in school is very good. The clearly understood expectations lead to a very calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the school.
- 1.2q Collective worship and assemblies are of a very high standard. The children are very actively involved in their worship at an age-appropriate level.
- 1.2r The prayer life of the school is very good. Children pray regularly using both the traditional prayers of the church and their own prayers.
- 1.2s There are regular class Masses. Each week a different class prepares and leads the celebration. The Masses are usually celebrated in St Theresa's Church and the Parish Community is welcome to celebrate with the children.
- 1.2t The school plays host to parishioners each week when they use the school library to play bingo and take tea together. Once a week a number of parishioners join the children in the dining hall to take lunch together. This is a mutually beneficial event and very good practice.
- 1.2u The school children lead the 11 o'clock Sunday Mass in the Parish Church each half-term. The teachers support the children in the preparation of this Mass and the staff also join the children and the parish congregation in celebrating this Mass. This is an excellent practice. Staff give freely of their own time and often travel a significant distance to be part of the celebration. This commitment is valued greatly by the headteacher, parish priest and the parish community. The commitment of the staff serves to model good practice for the children. Many of the children particularly at the top end of the school put much effort into attending this Mass.
- 1.2v There are teacher representatives on the parish council. This is excellent practice. It enables a holistic development of the school/parish community. The parish priest values the commitment, support and input of the school staff on the Parish Council.
- 1.2w The school children and the staff provide valuable practical help and support to the Parish Christmas Fayre and Summer Fayre.

- 1.2x The accommodation is very well maintained. The physical environment is bright and welcoming. There is a rolling programme of repairs which ensures the high standard of maintenance.
- 1.2y The school is currently developing its ICT suite. Significantly, and in keeping with the traditional Catholic ethos on which this school is rooted, the ICT suite has been given the title the Angel Gabriel, a title chosen by the children, because computers convey messages and Gabriel was God's messenger.
- 1.2z The facilities for staff are excellent and reflect the high value the Governors place on their staff.

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

All the key issues for further development identified in the report of 1998 have been addressed.

- 1.3a The school has celebrated and consolidated all the good practice identified in the previous report.
- 1.3b The time allocation for Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- 1.3c Children actively participate in lessons in an age-appropriate way. A variety of teaching and learning strategies are employed including independent learning.
- 1.3d Lessons are differentiated to cater for the needs of the differing abilities of pupils.
- 1.3e The Religious Education Curriculum shows clear evidence of planning, progression, differentiation and assessment throughout the school.
- 1.3f The school has a detailed policy for Collective Worship in the school and allocates appropriate time to Collective Worship. The policy is reflected in the school's practice regarding Collective Worship. Staff attend Collective Worship with the children.
- 1.3g The Religious Education Co-ordinator monitors the Religious Education curriculum within the school's arrangements for the monitoring of all curriculum areas. This ensures that weaknesses are addressed and good practice is celebrated and shared.
- 1.3h The school has increased its resourcing of the multi-cultural and other faiths dimensions of Religious Education. It has developed the multi-cultural and other faith aspects of the Religious Education curriculum and has plans to continue that development.

1.4 How the school is viewed by its pupils and parents

- 1.4a Informal discussions with children of all ages reveal that the children are very proud of their school. Many children believe their school to be the best in the area. All the children speak of school as a place where they feel happy and safe. They enjoy their lessons and their playtimes. Y6 children speak enthusiastically about their Religious Education lessons and particularly enjoy using proper Bibles with delicate paper.
- 1.4b Forty one parents returned the questionnaires and a number of parents and carers spoke to the inspector in or around school. The people to whom the inspector spoke were unanimous in their praise for the school. They speak of it as a warm and happy place where they are made to feel very welcome and are treated as part of the community. They all believe the school provides a high standard of education, develops sound moral principles and has clear expectations of good behaviour. They identify the headteacher as being especially welcoming and available to everyone and they feel that all the other staff follow this example. Parents who returned the questionnaires value the information which the school provides about the term's Religious Education. The majority of parents are satisfied with the standards of Religious Education and a number said they are very satisfied. Parents are happy with the support the school provides for them. They speak of the headteacher and staff as being readily available to talk about problems at school or at home. Parents value the provision the school makes for the spiritual and moral development of their children.

1.5 The accuracy of the schools' self-evaluation.

The school has completed the Diocesan Self Evaluation Form. This provides an excellent tool for development. The assessment is accurate, realistic and rigorous. Areas of development are detailed throughout the report and there is clear evidence that developmental work is already underway on areas of improvement. These areas of development together with those identified in this report should now be included in the School Development Plan.

2.1 Areas for further development

- 2.1a Celebrate and consolidate the excellent work the school does in supporting each child and their family.
- 2.1b Celebrate and consolidate the excellent relationship between the school and the parish.
- 2.1c Continue the work to improve written skills in Religious Education in line with developments throughout the wider curriculum.

2.2 The following matters should also be considered as areas for further development

- 2.2a Arrange an annual staff retreat.

3 Quality of Religious Education

3.1 Standards and achievement in Religious Education

- 3.1a The progress made by pupils in Religious Education is very good.
- 3.1b Pupils with Special Educational Needs are very well supported by all staff. Pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties are very well catered for and very well integrated into the life of the school.
- 3.1c The progress made by girls and boys is broadly equal.
- 3.1d Teachers' lesson plans include learning objectives appropriate to the "Here I Am" Religious Education programme. There are well planned and differentiated activities.
- 3.1e Pupils are able to communicate their understanding of religious concepts well. At KS2 it is evident that children are able to relate their current area of study to knowledge and concepts developed in earlier Religious Education lessons.
- 3.1f The "Here I Am" programme is used well. There is very clear evidence of continuity and progression throughout the school. This results in children exploring the topics at an age-appropriate level and children are challenged and supported as they think through the implications of issues for themselves and then in turn how their actions impact on others.
- 3.1g The exploration of issues is firmly rooted in the beliefs and values of the Catholic Faith.
- 3.1h Children benefit greatly from their regular meeting with their parish priest, from their active involvement in the celebration of Masses and collective worship and from their assemblies.

4 Teaching

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

- 4.1a The quality of teaching in Religious Education ranges from good to excellent.
- 4.1b All teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith, of Religious Education and the HIA programme. For the majority of teachers this is rooted in their own personal Catholic faith. All teachers attend topic days at the Hallam Pastoral Centre to help them to understand and explore the topics. Staff work together on the 'Before You Begin' element of the 'Here I Am' programme at the start of each new topic. This is very good practice and helps to support all staff and greatly enhances the whole school approach to topics and their development.
- 4.1c Teachers are confident enough in their teaching to allow children's thinking to develop in sometimes unexpected ways.

- 4.1d In all lessons pupils behaviour is well managed and there are consistently high expectations in the standard of behaviour.
- 4.1e Other areas of the curriculum are well integrated into Religious Education lessons. For example in one class a group of children were given an activity to encourage speaking and listening skills, in another a teacher modelled a writing activity with a group of children. ICT was well used in many of the lessons and PSHE is readily integrated into lessons.
- 4.1f Teaching frequently consolidates prior learning.
- 4.1g A variety of teaching methods are used throughout the school.
- 4.1h Resources are well thought out and prepared.

4.2 How well pupils learn in Religious Education

- 4.2a Children are clear about what they are learning. They show interest in their Religious Education.
- 4.2b All children are secure and confident. Children ask questions freely and readily interact with adults and with each other. Children are encouraged from an early age to respect each others views and to be confident themselves. The use of circle time and prayer circles which were incorporated into some lessons greatly supports this development.
- 4.2c The children work in a variety of different ways.
- 4.2d A key feature of all teaching and learning is the warm relationships between teachers and pupils.

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

- 4.3a Children's work is marked regularly and much of the marking contains encouraging remarks and also constructive and specific comments which give children indications of how to improve their thinking further.
- 4.3b Assessment of children's Religious Education work is formally on-going through general observation by teachers carried out at the end of each topic. Children also complete their own evaluation sheets. At the end of the school year parents receive a written report informing them of their child's achievement and progress in Religious Education
- 4.3c Each child has an assessment sheet based on Level of Attainment in Religious Education produced by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers 2000. This is updated annually by the class teacher and passed to the next class teacher at the end of the academic year.

- 4.3d Staff compile a book for each child which contains a piece of assessed Religious Education work for each year of their life in Primary School. This records the child's progress and development. Children are presented with the book when they leave Primary School.

6 The provision for the curriculum in Religious Education.

- 6.1a The planned curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory.
- 6.1b All classes allocate ten per cent of teaching time to Religious Education which fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- 6.1c Religious Education is a core element of the school's curriculum and this is reflected in the time allocated not only to teaching but also to monitoring the Religious Education Curriculum.
- 6.1d Religious Education has a financial allocation in line with other curriculum areas.

7 Leadership and Management in Religious Education.

7.1 The quality of leadership provided for Religious Education.

- 7.1a Religious Education is co-ordinated by a very hard working, deeply committed and sensitive co-ordinator.
- 7.1b The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the needs of both the children and staff and leads and supports the development of high standards in Religious Education throughout the school.
- 7.1c The co-ordinator has a very sound knowledge and understanding of how Religious Education is planned and delivered. Her regular monitoring of planning, her lesson observations and her discussions with staff enable her to identify and address any issues that arise.
- 7.1d Plans are in place to develop assessment procedures to ensure that standards in Religious Education continue to rise over time.

7.2 The effectiveness of management in Religious Education

- 7.2a The Religious Education co-ordinator has a strong ability to use self-evaluation to ensure the continued development of Religious Education throughout the school.
- 7.2b The co-ordinator supports the spiritual development of the staff in a way that meets them where they are as a team and gently offers suggestions for progression. In the staffroom there is system of 'looking out for' a member of staff for a week. Staff chose a card with a name on and "look out" for that colleague all week. 'Looking out for' can also include saying a prayer for them and all staff are comfortable with this and value the initiative.

- 7.2c The school has completed the Diocesan Self-Evaluation Form and this provides a good means of assessing current practice and identifying areas for future development.

8 THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

8.1 How well the Governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's religious foundation.

- 8.1a The Governing Body has a clear understanding of what is distinctly Catholic about their school.
- 8.1b The parish priest who is also a school Governor, feels that the school plays a very effective part in the mission of the Church in education.
- 8.1c The parish priest feels that the school enables more lives to be touched by the Gospel message. The religious life of the school touches not just the children and staff of the school, but also the wider community.
- 8.1d There is a clear vision and hope for the future of the school that it should remain part of the parish, living out the Gospel message, building on what it has and keeping the Spirit alive.

8.2 The quality of leadership of the Headteacher and senior staff in leading the Catholic life of the school.

- 8.2a The Headteacher provides very strong leadership. He is very aware of the needs of each individual within the community he serves.
- 8.2b He knows his staff well and cares for them at both a professional and personal level.
- 8.2c The school doors open at 8.40am and the Headteacher, who knows each child by name stands inside the door and greets each child as they enter school. Parents are also welcome to come into school. Many parents take the opportunity to talk to the Headteacher often just a brief exchange, or an update of news. Sometimes they withdraw to the Head's office to discuss issues.
- 8.2d The learning mentor also stands on the corridor to greet each child by name and again clearly knows the families and the issues they are dealing with.
- 8.2e The staff then welcome children and parents into their classroom. The adults leave the building at 8.50am and the formal school day begins.
- 8.2f The warmth of the welcome each morning and the ready availability of the Headteacher is excellent practice in this school. Parents place a high value on this practice.
- 8.2g The school has a recently revised Mission Statement which was drawn up by representatives from the Governors, the parents, the parish priest and the Headteacher.

- 8.2h The Mission Statement is shared with all members of the school community in an appropriate way. Moreover, the Mission Statement has critical success factors that enable the community to identify the extent to which they are fulfilling their Mission which is based on their Catholic faith and rooted in Gospel values. This is an excellent development.
- 8.2i New staff are supported in their induction into the specifically Catholic nature of the school and their professional development needs in terms of Religious Education are served well.
- 8.2j The Headteacher ensures that leaders are able to fulfil their duties by means of a very structured curriculum co-ordinators plan which features the seven elements of monitoring and ensures staff have sufficient non-teaching time to carry out their duties. Religious Education is incorporated into this structure.
- 8.2k Inset provision, finances and resources are allocated to Religious Education in line with allocations to other subject areas.

9 The quality of Collective Worship

9.1 The frequency and quality of prayer and Collective Worship

- 9.1a The school provides pupils with many opportunities for spiritual experiences throughout the day.
- 9.1b Prayer is central to the life of the school, e.g. in the nursery in the role play area is a Chapel and post-its are displayed showing who the children are praying for.
- 9.1c A lesson in Y2 ended with children displaying their work on a prayer table and ending the session in prayer. The ease with which they did this indicated that it is a regular feature of their lesson.
- 9.1d The younger children of the school took part in a Collective Worship based on the 'Here I Am' theme they had just completed. The worship featured a variety of ways of celebrating in words and music. It incorporated Scripture, rejoiced in the children's work and featured formal prayers. The prayerful mood was greatly enhanced by the Nursery teacher's excellent presentation and the worship was supported by the parish priest.
- 9.1e Each child has a prayer book called 'Circle Me Lord'. This comprises of sheets of blank paper with captions on eg. "Each that I pray for I place into your hands." "Pray as you can, not as you can't." Children are free to write their own prayers in the book and they are also free to share the book or keep it private. This is an excellent practice and the books that were shown to the inspector were being used very well by the children.

9.2 the provision and quality of the liturgical life of the school

- 9.2a The school recognises the Eucharist as being at the heart of the school's liturgical life and provides regular opportunities for the celebration of Mass. Pupils are given leadership roles in their class Masses.
- 9.2b The children are given the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school. The parish and the school work closely with the home in preparing children for the Sacraments of Eucharist and Confirmation.

10 The spiritual and moral development of the pupils

- 10.a The school provides very well for the spiritual and moral development of its pupils.
- 10.b Children are encouraged to develop understanding of feelings and emotions and the effect they can have on themselves and on others.
- 10.c Teachers also share their experiences with the children in an appropriate and valuable way.
- 10.d Pupils are taught to respect themselves, to respect others and to respect their environment.
- 10.e Adults in the school act as excellent role models in this teaching.
- 10.f The moral development in the school is firmly rooted in the teachings of the Catholic faith and in scripture.

CONCLUSION

The inspector wishes to place on record her personal thanks and appreciation for the kind co-operation received from the Headteacher, staff, governors, parish priest, parents and children of St Theresa's School.

APPENDIX: EVIDENCE BASE

- The programme of inspection included one pre-inspection visit to the school and two full days inspection.
- Religious Education lessons were observed in each class including the nursery.
- The inspector attended a class Mass, a KS1 assembly and a whole school assembly.
- Formal discussions were held with the Headteacher, the parish priest, the RE co-ordinator and the SENCO.
- Informal discussions were held with the children, the parents and extended families, the staff and visitors to the school.

- The Headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator provided a very comprehensive range of documentation which included all the items on the Diocesan list. The inspector was also provided with samples of children's work in Religious Education, examples of assessment sheets and reports to parents, details of liturgical events and photographs of celebrations.

SUMMARY REPORT

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

- The progress made by pupils in Religious Education is very good.
- The quality of teaching in Religious Education ranges from good to excellent.
- Collective worship and assemblies are of a very high standard.
- The school provides pupils with many opportunities for spiritual experiences throughout the day. Prayer is central to the life of the school.
- The school provides well for the spiritual and moral development of its pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is well managed and there is a consistently high expectation in the standard of behaviour.
- The school is very well led by a headteacher who has a clear vision for the school based on his own commitment to this Catholic faith. He is supported by a very hard working, effective and sensitive deputy headteacher.
- Relationships throughout the school community are very good and very strong. Excellent links exist between school and home and the school and the parish. This is a very real strength of the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

All the key issues for further development identified in the report of 1998 have been addressed.

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

- Parents view the school as a warm and happy place where they are made to feel very welcome and treated as part of the community.
- All parents believe the school provides a high standard of education, develops sound moral principles and has clear expectations of good behaviours.
- Parents value the provision the school makes for the spiritual and moral development of their children.
- Parents value the ready availability of the headteacher and his staff.

Areas for further development

- Celebrate and consolidate the excellent work the school does in supporting each child and their family.
- Celebrate and consolidate the excellent relationship between the school and the parish.
- Continue the work to improve written skills in Religious Education in line with developments throughout the wider curriculum.
- Arrange an annual staff retreat.