

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT**



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

School URN	106940
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr Aden Wass
Name of Headteacher	Miss Catherine McLaughlin
Date of Inspection	3rd June 2008
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Gillian Foster

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

Introduction

The Inspection of St Mary's 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.

Description of the school

St Mary's Catholic Primary School is an average sized primary school which serves the two parishes of St Mary Magdelene, Maltby and Blessed Trinity, Wickersley; the overwhelming majority of pupils are from Maltby. Most pupils are of White British heritage, a small number have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, as is the percentage who have learning difficulties or disabilities. Its last Religious Education inspection took place in Summer 2004 and its most recent OFSTED inspection was in January 2008. Fifty seven percent of the children are baptised Catholics. There are six full time and five part time teachers of whom all but one are Catholic. One teacher holds the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. In 2006, the school gained the Activemark and an award as a healthy school.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities including many sporting activities, art and craft and a gardening club; some are managed by school staff and others are provided by local agencies. There are excellent links between the school, parents and members of the parish communities. Most parents support the school and are well satisfied with the standards of education their children receive, they value the very good care and guidance offered to their children. Parishioners are justly proud of St Mary's school and it is held in very high regard within the community.

Information about the school

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age profile of Students	3 - 11
Number on roll	197
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	56
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	5
Number of Catholics on roll	113
Number of Other Christian	32

Denominations	
Number of other Faiths	3
School address	Muglet Lane Maltby Rotherham S66 7JU
Telephone Number	01709 812611
Fax Number	01709 790694
Email	maltbystmarys.primary@rotherham.gov.uk
Website	

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 is **good**. The Governing Body is well informed, hard working and committed to promoting and deepening the quality of Catholic education. The senior leadership team, the school/parish co-ordinator and the parish priest work closely together with enthusiasm and vision to improve the provision of Catholic education and to provide the best possible care and guidance for all the children. All staff share the values and beliefs of Catholic education, they are supportive of each other and provide very good role models for the children. The Gospel values enshrined in the Mission Statement are evident in the daily life of the school. The excellent relationships which exist within the school community promote and strengthen the Catholic ethos. Pupils are respected and they flourish in a happy, supportive, nurturing and forgiving environment. The well delivered Religious Education curriculum allows pupils to acquire and develop a sound knowledge of the traditions and beliefs of the Catholic Church, other Christian churches and other world faiths. Together with this knowledge and participation in high quality worship, pupils develop understanding and skills which have a positive impact on their attitudes and contribute to their spiritual and moral development. Excellent relationships exist between the school, parents and the parish community. The role of the school/parish co-ordinator has a significant impact on these links and her contribution to the preparation and presentation of liturgies and celebrations both in school and in church is valued and appreciated by all. The sharing of high quality Collective Worship with families and parishioners, is an outstanding and successful feature of the school.

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

The last Religious Education inspection took place in Summer 2004 and the following areas for development were identified:

- To develop written policies for spiritual and moral development to reflect the very good practice in these areas.
- Expectations in Key Stage One 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 Two, 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.

Each issue has been dealt with effectively; a policy for spiritual and moral development is now in place reflecting the very good practice in this area; the standard of written work in Key Stage One is generally good with appropriate levels of challenge offered to all pupils; all teachers now plan links with Literacy and this has greatly enriched the Religious Education curriculum; assessment portfolios are now in place and reflect a wide coverage of Religious Education work throughout the school. Assessment remains a focus for development.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education

The capacity of the school to further deepen the quality of Catholic education is **good**. The Self-Evaluation Form (SEF) correctly recognises how the whole school community is focused on providing a caring, safe, nurturing and forgiving environment with a very strong Catholic ethos and high quality Religious Education for all its pupils. The headteacher supported by the governors and parish priest provides strong leadership and together with the senior leadership team, gives very clear direction; all staff, including the teaching assistants, feel part of the mission and work closely together to provide the best possible outcomes for the children. Many areas for development have been correctly identified in the SEF and fed into the School Development Plan (SDP). Currently, although there is a section in the SDP with Religious Education Action Plans, there is not a specific section for further developing the Catholic life of the school. The inclusion of such a section would ensure that the many priorities noted in the SEF in this area, would be supported by detailed action plans set within realistic timeframes and accompanied by success criteria, this would enable more rigorous monitoring of initiatives by governors and staff. The Inspector agrees with the school's assessment of areas to be addressed and developed and suggests the following three areas become the focus following this inspection:

- Include a specific section in the School Development Plan for the development of the Catholic life of the school supported by detailed action plans. (These plans would include the role of the school/parish co-ordinator)
- Further develop assessment procedures and ensure that they are used consistently throughout the school.
- Develop marking procedures to support pupils in improving their performance

in written work.

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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 enthusiastic and fully committed to maintaining and developing the Catholic life of the school, they fulfil their role as 'critical friend' effectively through appropriate challenge and support. The development of a specific section in the SDP for this crucial element of the life of the school, would enable them to monitor and evaluate initiatives more rigorously. High quality leadership is provided by the headteacher and senior staff in promoting the school's ethos. The school focuses in many ways on effectively promoting learners' spiritual and moral development, for example, through the very high quality Collective Worship that takes place in school and through the well planned and well delivered Religious Education curriculum. Excellent relationships exist throughout the school; children feel safe, secure, respected and loved and they flourish in a supportive, caring, forgiving environment. All adults in school work closely together for the good of the children. Very good links exist with the parish community, these links are greatly enhanced and strengthened by the work of the school/parish co-ordinator, she supports children in the preparation of liturgies and celebrations which are shared with parents and parishioners and greatly appreciated by all. The school has plans to strengthen and develop these links further. The many shared Masses and liturgies help the children to understand that they are an important part of a worshipping, Eucharistic community. The childrens' involvement with the parish and local community and outreach activities, in particular their support for a school in Uganda, impacts greatly on their spiritual, moral and social development and contributes effectively to developing social cohesion. Several members of staff are trained Rainbows facilitators and they offer support to children suffering bereavement or loss as the need arises.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship at St Mary's is **outstanding**. An excellent Collective Worship policy gives a clear rationale and practical guidelines for Collective Worship. Governors and the parish priest in particular, monitor its effectiveness through regular attendance and participation in liturgies and celebrations. Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and the whole school community. Collective Worship is always planned within a liturgical framework and follows the liturgical year, it is always appropriate to the ages of the children. For many of the children, school is church, they share their worship on many occasions with parents and parishioners and this gives them a sense of

belonging to a worshipping community. Music, provided by the school/parish co-ordinator greatly enhances and enriches these celebrations and the children sing with enthusiasm and joy. From the earliest years, children develop an understanding and reverence for the Liturgy of the Word, greeting Gospel readings by singing the Alleluia. Children are encouraged and given many opportunities for spontaneous prayer. Childrens' response to Collective Worship is excellent, they behave reverently and with interest, Collective Worship impacts positively on the childrens' spiritual and moral development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Learners' achievement in Religious Education is **good** and is at least as good as achievement in Literacy. Pupils on the whole enter Foundation Stage below or well below national expectations and leave in Year Six in line with national standards, progress is therefore good. This good progress is replicated in Religious Education. Staff have high and realistic expectations of attainment and behaviour. Pupils respond well to these expectations. Pupil behaviour is on the whole good and those pupils with challenging behaviour are very well catered for and integrated into class activities. Pupils are engaged in the activities offered to them, they are motivated and work well co-operatively. Pupils are given many opportunities from the earliest years to develop as independent learners. Most children work with enthusiasm and meet the challenging objectives set for them. Written work is consistently well presented. Pupils are confident to express their views and they listen with respect to the views and opinions of others. Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of the teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Church and other Christian churches and world faiths. The Religious Education curriculum makes a significant impact on the childrens' spiritual and moral development.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching and learning throughout the school is **good** with some outstanding teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are committed to teaching high quality Religious Education. All staff are well supported by a skilled and enthusiastic Religious Education Co-ordinator. All teachers are confident to teach the 'Here I Am' programme, they plan lessons thoroughly and use assessment data to ensure that pupils receive appropriate levels of challenge; as a result, almost all pupils make good progress. In the best lessons, the level of challenge enables learners to reach high levels of knowledge and understanding. Teachers share Learning Objectives with the children at the start of each lesson and employ a variety of teaching methods effectively related to the objectives and the needs of the learners, for example the use of 'talking partners', role play and 'hot seating'. Children with additional learning needs and disabilities are very well catered for by teachers and highly committed and skilled teaching assistants who make a valuable contribution to the childrens' learning. In many of the lessons, excellent cross-curricular links are planned for especially in Literacy and

ICT, and these enhance and enrich the Religious Education curriculum. Religious Education lessons often contain elements of prayer and reflection, this has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children and of their understanding and appreciation of the demands of the religious commitment in everyday life. Parents are well informed of what their children are studying and are frequently invited to share liturgies and celebrations together with parishioners. Assessment has been identified in the School Development Plan as a priority for further development. Consideration should also be given to developing marking procedures to support children in improving their performance in written work.

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

The efforts of the school in meeting the needs and interests of all learners is **good**. The Religious Education curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference by devoting ten percent of teaching time to Religious Education. The teachings of Jesus underpin all the school's efforts to meet the needs of its pupils. The Religious Education curriculum is well delivered and ensures that children acquire a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith and develop an understanding and respect for other faiths and cultures. Literacy and ICT are developed through Religious Education and enrich the curriculum. Teachers plan many opportunities for children to respond to God's call in everyday life and encourage children to take responsibility for themselves and others where appropriate. This is very well illustrated in the effectiveness of the School Council and the generous way in which children participate in and support the many fund-raising activities which take place throughout the year. The school is fully inclusive offering equal access of opportunity for all pupils to develop to their full potential; standards of care and guidance offered to pupils is outstanding. Children are offered and take part in, a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. The partnership with parents is valued, they are kept well informed of what their children are learning and how they can support them. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and promote the strong, caring Catholic ethos.

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 in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education is **good**. The headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator give strong and clear leadership in the educational mission of the school. Religious Education is given a high profile and is treated with the same rigour as other core subjects. The skilled Religious Education Co-ordinator supports colleagues well in the drive to improve standards. Regular scrutiny of planning and pupils' work together with lesson observation by the co-ordinator ensure that any issues identified as needing development are addressed.

Consideration now needs to be given to developing procedures to allow some of the outstanding practice identified to be disseminated and shared with colleagues. Governors are supportive and effective in promoting the raising of standards and achievement for all learners. The school has very good links with other Catholic schools in Rotherham, this gives valuable opportunity to share ideas and practice and participate in in-service training together. Senior staff have Religious Education performance management objectives linked to identified priorities, this is very good practice. School is fully inclusive and welcomes and makes excellent provision for pupils of all abilities and needs. Religious Education receives an annual budget, this money has been well spent over the years and good resources contribute to the successful delivery of the Religious Education curriculum. The school environment is enlivened by excellent displays of childrens' work in Religious Education and photographs of past events. The governors, headteacher and leadership team work hard to ensure that St Mary's School is a safe, happy place fit for purpose. The proposal to build new accommodation for Key Stage Two some time in the future would greatly enhance provision for the older children.

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?	Outstanding
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 Mary's Catholic Primary School or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU Tel: 0114 2566440