

**DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'  
DEPARTMENT**



**SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT**

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

**ST ALBAN'S CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

School URN	106771
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr Graham Kirby
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Jo Ayres
Date of Inspection	7th October 2008
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs Gillian Foster

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

## Introduction

The Inspection of St Alban'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 Alban's Catholic Primary School was opened in 1926 and serves the parishes of St Alban's Denaby Main and English Martyrs Mexborough. Denaby Main is an ex-mining village with high levels of unemployment and deprivation. The school's last Religious Education Inspection took place in February 2004 and its last OFSTED Inspection took place in March 2008. St Alban's is a small to average sized primary school. On entry into Foundation 2, baseline assessment shows attainment to be below/well below that expected nationally for pupils of that age, with many experiencing particular difficulties with their communication and social skills. About 5% of pupils are from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are broadly average. Of the 178 pupils on roll, 74% are baptised Catholics. There are 8 full time teachers, including the headteacher, and one part time teacher; 4 of the teachers are Catholic and 1 holds the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies award. There have been considerable staff changes in the past year and currently, a senior member of staff is acting as deputy head teacher.

The school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities, most of these are managed within school by staff, others are provided by outside agencies. There are good links between the school, parents and carers and the parish communities. Most parents support the school actively and are well satisfied with the standards of education and care that their children receive.

## Information about the school

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Voluntary Aided</b>
<b>Age profile of Students</b>	<b>4 - 11 years</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>178</b>
<b>Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs</b>	<b>1</b>

<b>Number or Catholics on roll</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Number of Other Christian Denominations</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Number of other Faiths</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>School address</b>	<b>Wadworth Street, Denaby Main, Doncaster. DN12 4AQ</b>
<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>01709 862298</b>
<b>Fax Number</b>	<b>01709 869457</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>admin@st-albans.doncaster.sch.uk</b>
<b>Website</b>	<b>www.st-albans.doncaster.sch</b>

## **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 headteacher, ably supported by the acting deputy headteacher, gives very strong leadership focused on the school's Catholic mission. The Governing Body is well informed, hard working and committed to promoting and deepening the Catholic life of the school. The recently reviewed Mission Statement, contributed to by staff, pupils and governors, is evident in all aspects of school life and underpins all the school strives to achieve for its pupils. All staff share the values and beliefs of Catholic education; they are supportive of each other and provide good role models for the children. Relationships throughout the school are good and there is an evident culture of respect and forgiveness. Children feel safe, secure and valued in this nurturing environment. The school works well with outside agencies to provide good quality care, guidance and support to its pupils. Those pupils suffering loss or bereavement are offered Rainbows support in partnership with a neighbouring Catholic school. The Religious Education curriculum allows children to acquire and develop knowledge and skills which have a positive impact on their attitudes and contribute to their spiritual and moral development. Very good relationships exist between the school, parents and parish communities and many acts of Collective Worship and liturgical celebration are shared.

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

The last Religious Education inspection took place in February 2004, Key Issues identified included: up-dating the SEF and including priorities identified in the SDP; extending the role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator to include the monitoring and evaluation of teaching; ensuring well differentiated tasks are offered to pupils, especially the more able; come to an agreement about how much written work is to be expected from each age group, especially at Key Stage 2 and to ensure the importance given to Religious Education is demonstrated by high quality displays, especially in the entrance hall. All the identified issues have been addressed although some now need to be revisited. Priorities now identified in the SEF are included in the SDP which ensures more rigorous monitoring; all teachers now include differentiated work/activities in their planning and the high quality Religious Education displays throughout the school are a visible testament and witness to the Catholic ethos of the school. The degree of challenge offered to the more able pupils still remains an issue as does the development of the role of co-ordinator (a role recently taken on by the acting deputy headteacher due to the retirement of the last co-ordinator following long-term absence). Good plans are in place to develop the co-ordinator role and the new co-ordinator, together with the headteacher, has already made a positive impact on the provision of 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, parish priest, headteacher, co-ordinator and all members of staff are actively involved in the school's mission; they are hard working and committed to providing the best possible education for the children. Parents are well supported by the school in developing their childrens' Religious Education through a variety of newsletters and leaflets and through the regular invitations they receive to attend Masses, liturgies and other celebrations. All staff contributed to the SEF and governors had the opportunity to contribute and discuss the document. Priorities identified have been included in the SDP and detailed action plans constructed to support their implementation. The SDP is used as a working document by staff and is regularly monitored by governors through the school improvement committee. The inspector agrees with the development priorities identified and detailed in the SDP and would add the following areas for development to further deepen the quality of provision of Catholic education

- To ensure that more challenging work/activities are provided for the more able pupils to enable them to reach their full potential
- To further develop assessment procedures to ensure that staff can more accurately match work offered to pupils to their individual needs
- To continue to develop the role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator and establish a time frame for monitoring teaching and learning through lesson observations so that identified existing good practice can be shared and disseminated and impact on standards of teaching throughout the school.

## **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 developing the Catholic life of the school is **good**. Governors are well informed and committed to the mission of the school, they fulfil their role of 'critical friend' effectively through appropriate challenge and support. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher give strong leadership focused on the school's Catholic mission and on raising standards for all pupils in all areas of school life. All staff are now beginning to share and feel a valued part of this mission. The Religious Education curriculum together with Collective Worship makes a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of the children. Staff are well supported in developing their own knowledge and understanding and this is reflected in their growing confidence in supporting the children on their faith journeys. School is fully inclusive, all children are welcomed and recognised as being children of God. Pupils are well cared for and nurtured in a safe environment where Gospel values are apparent. The school works very well with many outside agencies to ensure the best possible support and guidance for children needing additional professional support. Very good links already exist between parents, carers and the parish communities and there are plans to strengthen and develop these links further. Children are offered a wide range of opportunities to meet, interact with and learn about people and their situations in the local, wider and global communities, this makes a powerful contribution to the development of social cohesion.

## **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 an excellent policy for Collective Worship with a clear rationale and practical details for its implementation. There is a wide range of formal and informal opportunities for children and staff to engage in prayer and acts of Collective Worship. The parish priest provides good leadership in the liturgical life of the school and his contributions are valued by children and staff. Parishioners and school share Masses on special days and many parents attend. Collective Worship is thoroughly planned within a liturgical framework and follows the Church's liturgical year. Celebrations are age appropriate and the children are actively involved in them. Increasingly children are being given opportunities to plan and present their own liturgies. Themes from the 'Here I Am' programme are effectively used in Key Stage assemblies to deepen the children's understanding and help them to appreciate the relevance of what they are learning to their own lives. Parents, carers and parishioners receive regular invitations to attend liturgies and celebrations and respond in large numbers. Where appropriate, times of prayer and reflection are included in Religious Education lessons and children are encouraged to offer spontaneous prayers which they do with reverence and confidence. Prayer journals have been recently introduced for the older children, and they are enjoying using them.

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 largely **good** and in line with achievement in Literacy. Almost all learners achieve standards that are good and make good progress given their capabilities and starting points, including those with learning difficulties. The schools' recent focus on the use and impact of language on others and the drive to improve writing is evident in the improved standards of both written and oral work. Where appropriately challenging tasks are set, children achieve very high standards. Children take a pride in their written work which is well presented and the amount of written work recorded reflects the work covered in Religious Education lessons. Scrutiny of pupils' work carried out by the Religious Education Co-ordinator and the feedback given by her to staff has contributed to improved standards. Children are given many opportunities and encouraged to express their views, most do so confidently and they listen to the views of their classmates with respect. Children are given many opportunities to become independent learners and they generally work well together in pairs or groups. Pupils behave well in class and show good attitudes to and enjoyment in their learning. Work in Religious Education has a positive impact on the childrens' spiritual, moral and cultural development and supports them in contributing to the school and broader community. This was very well illustrated in a Year 6 lesson where the children were discussing the work of CAFOD and how their efforts and contributions could make a difference to the lives of others; they demonstrated a mature attitude in appreciating the issues involved and realising the demands of religious commitment in their everyday lives.

## **QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?**

Teaching and learning throughout the school is **satisfactory** with many examples of good practice. An audit of practice in teaching Religious Education was carried out by the headteacher and the now acting deputy headteacher, last academic year. As a result of this audit, all classteachers now teach Religious Education to their own classes, rather than a few, more experienced teachers teaching all classes as happened previously. This new strategy is already impacting positively on provision. Teachers new to teaching Religious Education and NQTs are being offered effective support with planning and delivery of the curriculum. All teachers are committed to teaching high quality Religious Education and are enthusiastic about doing so. They plan thoroughly, often together, using the 'Here I Am' programme in addition to SEAL materials and the Statements of Belief. Work is planned to take into account the varying needs of all learners although sometimes the level of challenge is not sufficient to enable the more able pupils to achieve their full potential. Teachers' affirmative and

constructive marking supports children in understanding how they can improve their work further. Assessment procedures are in place throughout the school and are reflected in teachers planning. The introduction of the Overview Level sheets will add further rigour to the assessment process and help teachers to match tasks/activities more exactly to pupils' needs. Parents are well informed of what their children are learning through 'Here I Am' leaflets, newsletters, frequent invitations to attend celebrations, acts of worship and assemblies and through the detailed annual reports they receive on their child's attainment and progress.

### **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 the learners is **good**. The Religious Education curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference by devoting ten percent of teaching time to Religious Education. Children acquire a sound knowledge of the Catholic faith. Children are taught to understand and respect other faiths and cultures in practical and exciting ways; they are given many opportunities to meet and interact with members of other Christian faiths, world faiths and cultural communities in addition to their studies within the 'Here I Am' programme. Children are supported and encouraged in a variety of ways to consider local and world moral issues. They regularly hold fund-raising events to support local and global charities. All of these initiatives together with the Religious Education curriculum, make a positive impact on the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the children. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves, and where appropriate, others; the School Council is a good example of this, where the views of the children are taken into account in the daily running of the school. A Personal Relationships Programme is well established including appropriate sex education. The school is socially inclusive offering equal access of opportunity for all pupils to make progress academically and personally. The partnership with parents and carers is valued, they are regarded by school as partners in their childrens' education. Relationships throughout the school are good and promote the strong 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 currently **satisfactory**. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher together with governors have correctly identified priorities to continue to improve this element of school life. These priorities provide a very sound foundation for the school to build on and raise achievement in this area. One critical issue which is already in place and resulted from the audit of practice referred to earlier, is to support staff in their own knowledge and understanding of teaching Religious Education to enhance their provision to the children. Staff are enthusiastic about delivering high quality Religious Education and are appreciative of the support they are receiving from the headteacher and co-

ordinator and from each other. Another identified priority, which when fully implemented will have a positive impact on raising standards and supporting all learners, is to further develop the role of the co-ordinator to include lesson observations. The new co-ordinator has already made a positive impact on standards through her scrutiny of planning and pupils' work. When her role is extended to lesson observations, she will be able to identify the existing good practice in teaching and learning and devise methods to share this with colleagues. This will help to raise the standard of teaching to at least good throughout the school. Committed and skilled classroom support assistants wisely deployed, contribute to the childrens' achievement and attainment, especially those children with additional learning needs. Religious Education is given a high priority and is allocated an annual budget which is administered by the co-ordinator following discussions with colleagues. Resources are currently adequate to deliver the curriculum and future spending is planned to further enrich provision. The learning environment of the school has been greatly enhanced by the opening of a new Foundation Stage Unit at the beginning of Advent last year. This unit provides a stimulating and exciting learning environment for the youngest children and is much appreciated by them and their parents. The space made available by the youngest children moving into the new unit is being well used as additional teaching areas. Display in school is now of a high standard and reflects the Catholic ethos of the school and affirms the work of the children.

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<b>Summary of Inspection Judgements:</b>	
<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>The Catholic Life of the School</b>	
How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	<b>Good</b>
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	<b>Good</b>
<b>Religious Education</b>	
How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?	<b>Good</b>
How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?	<b>Satisfactory</b>
How well does the RE curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	<b>Good</b>
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	<b>Satisfactory</b>

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St Alban'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