

DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'  
DEPARTMENT



**SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT**

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST GERARD'S CATHOLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOL  
THRYBERGH

School URN	372 - 3336
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr Chris MacCormac
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Patricia Lunn
Date of Inspection	27 April 2006
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs J M Bolton

"... an enthusiasm for the things of God."

## Introduction

The Inspection of St Gerard'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.

## Information about the school

<b>Type of School</b>	<b>Primary Voluntary Aided</b>
<b>Age profile of Students</b>	<b>4 to 11</b>
<b>Number on roll</b>	<b>129</b>
<b>Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Number of Catholics on roll</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Number of Other Christian Denominations</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Number of other Faiths</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>School address</b>	<b>Park Nook, Doncaster Road, Thrybergh, Rotherham, S65 4AE.</b>
<b>Telephone Number</b>	<b>01709 850568</b>
<b>Fax Number</b>	<b>01709 855948</b>
<b>Email</b>	<b>St.gerardsc.primary@rotherham.gov.uk</b>
<b>Website</b>	

## **INTRODUCTION**

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## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL**

St Gerard's Catholic Primary opened in 1928 and serves the parish of St Gerard's Thrybergh. It is a smaller than average school, at present catering for 129 pupils aged 4 to 11 years. It is situated in an area of significant social deprivation. Almost all pupils are of white British origin; a few have a home language that is not English. Eligibility for Free School Meals is currently about 24%. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities with great variations within year groups.

The Catholic Parish of St Gerard's, which the school serves, originally a mining community, lies within the Thrybergh Education Action Zone, created as part of the Excellence in Cities initiative. Most learners live within walking distance of the school. Attainment on entry is well below average in all areas.

The parish of St Gerard's does not have a resident parish priest. Fr Kieran O'Connell is based at the parish of St Joseph's, Rawmarsh and takes responsibility for both parishes and both primary schools.

Many of the pupils, even those baptised as Catholics, have no experience of Church before starting school

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL**

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

The overall effectiveness of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners in this school is good. The school is a community where relationships are good and morale is high. The hard working staff are well led by an enthusiastic headteacher who in turn is supported by a committed Governing Body.

The school's self evaluation (SEF) is, on the whole, an accurate assessment of the school's provision. This is, however, a dynamic community striving for further achievements and successes. The improvements following a period of challenge and change are happening rapidly. Some areas identified as 'satisfactory' in the SEF are now presenting as 'good'.

The good leadership and management will ensure that good practice becomes embedded across the school.

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

All the issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed. The school ensures that development in Religious Education is continuous and ongoing. For example the assessment systems established after the last inspection are currently being further improved and developed. A portfolio of work containing photographic evidence of the activities to support the children's Religious Education and spiritual and moral development has recently been established.

### **The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic education**

This school is very well placed to further deepen the quality of Catholic education. It is led by a deeply committed headteacher who is very supportive of the staff and recognises and deals sensitively with their developmental needs. She in turn is valued and well supported by the Governing Body and the parish priest. All these key members of the school community demonstrate a deep personal faith and commitment to their mission. This is further enhanced by the commitment of the teaching staff and all other members of the school community.

## **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**

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school is good. Much work has gone into and continues to go into the school's mission statement and vision statement and they accurately reflect daily life in the school. The headteacher, staff and members of the Governing Body

are all committed to the school's Catholic mission. Both the headteacher and the Chair of Governors have a very clear understanding about the needs of the school and work hard to realise their vision for the school.

The Governing Body is led by a well informed Chair who has a long association with the school. He is deeply committed to the life of the school and its continued developments. He recognises the value of the school's work not only in supporting the faith journey of the children but also that of supporting the wider community. The Chair of Governors together with a number of school members including parents celebrate the number of adults who have been baptised in the Catholic faith or who have renewed their commitment to their Catholic faith as a direct result of the work of the school.

The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and recognises the very fruitful way the school supports the Church's mission to its children and their families. He stressed how much the Governing Body value the hard work and commitment of the recently appointed headteacher. The headteacher is motivated by a deep personal faith. This faith together with her knowledge of good educational practice ensures the continued development of this Catholic community. Parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their children's Religious Education and are welcome into school. Many parents play a significant role in the life of the school.

The school is very actively involved in the work of the Catholic cluster of schools, who co-operate with and support each other very effectively.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **How good is the quality of Collective Worship?**

The quality of Collective Worship is good. The staff begin each day by coming together in prayer. The prayer is rooted in Scripture and then related to the current needs of the school community.

The children are effectively involved in acts of Collective Worship both as a whole school and in class groupings. Scripture was a focus of all the acts of worship seen during the inspection.

A class Mass is celebrated each half term and children take an active part in the preparation of this Mass. The parish priest is involved in the school and helps plan the school liturgical calendar of events in both school and parish.

The children are offered a variety of experiences of worship through prayer, singing and reflection.

Each classroom has an appropriate prayer area. The school is committed to the maintenance and further development of Collective Worship and this commitment is clearly demonstrated by a very detailed, honest and accurate audit of current

practice and a resourceful approach to problems. A parishioner regularly visits the school to provide music for assemblies.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS**

### **How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?**

The quality of pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. The school uses the 'Here I Am' religious education programme and lessons are planned thoroughly. The school plans to further develop assessment in Religious Education. This will support the need for more consistent standards and achievement from class to class. The school provides significant support for children with learning difficulties and expectations of these children are high. The teaching assistants who are all valued members of staff work hard and support these children well. There is a need to ensure that expectations of the more able children are consistently high throughout the school.

All the children behave well. The school's ethos of encouraging children results in confident children which is a very good basis for raising the level of achievement.

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

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

All the lessons seen during the Inspection were at least satisfactory and a number of lessons were good. Teachers have a strong personal faith which they readily share with the children. Where lessons were good the children were clearly enjoying their work, which was well paced, realistic but demanding. The children were clear about the objective of the lesson and as a result the learning was good. The open ended, probing but supportive questioning seen in a KS1 lesson resulted in children verbalising some very thoughtful learning. In KS2 the Religious Education co-ordinator designate, led the children through a demanding, well paced lesson using a variety of teaching and learning processes where the children had great autonomy. With her support and encouragement the children were all engaged in a thoughtful and though provoking exploration of Pentecost.

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

### **How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and**

## **interests of the learners?**

The school meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference by ensuring that ten per cent of curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education. The Religious Education curriculum contributes well to the spiritual and moral development of the children. It also provides opportunities for the children to gain knowledge and understanding of other Christian religions and other world faiths.

The school recognises the differing nature of the home backgrounds of their children and within that context seeks to deliver Religious Education that provides for the diverse needs of their children.

Relationships in the whole school community are good. The school has a sex and relationship policy and works closely with members of other agencies, such as the school nurse to support pupils.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the children.

The Religious Education provision is greatly enhanced by the work of the School Council which encourages in the children a sense of responsibility, social awareness and a recognition of inter-dependence. Positive behaviour initiatives like the Gold Star Club are highly valued by the children and further enhance the provision. The school's involvement in the work of the parish, the Diocese and charities, such as Cafod and Mission Together is another factor that ensures that the needs and interests of learners are well met.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

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

The leadership and management is effective in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education.

The inconsistent quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is currently being addressed by effective monitoring and evaluation. This coupled with opportunities for teachers with higher level teaching skills to demonstrate good practice will ensure consistently good teaching and learning in Religious Education. The enthusiastic newly qualified teacher who is currently shadowing the headteacher as Religious Education Co-ordinator is a talented teacher who should prove to be a very positive force in the continuing development of the school's provision for Catholic education.

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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>Satisfactory</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>Satisfactory</b>
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	<b>Good</b>

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St Gerard'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