

DIOCESE OF HALLAM SCHOOLS'
DEPARTMENT



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST JOHN FISHER CATHOLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOL
SHEFFIELD

School URN	353/5201
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr John Dixon
Name of Headteacher	Mrs Marion Jeffery
Date of Inspection	29 November 2007
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs J M Bolton

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

Introduction

The Inspection of St. John Fisher 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 John Fisher Catholic Primary School was officially opened in September 1957 by Bishop Ellis of the Nottingham Diocese. It began with four teachers and one hundred and twelve pupils.

The school has a wide catchment area including Gleadless, Frecheville, Ridgeway, Sothall, Beighton, Mosborough and Hackenthorpe. It serves the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes, Hackenthorpe.

The parish church is next door to the school.

The majority of the staff is Catholic. All staff are committed Christians.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

All aspects of this school's Catholic life and Religious Education are good and many are outstanding. A key feature of St John Fisher is the outstanding relationships throughout the whole school community. This is a caring, supportive community in which everyone recognises that they are a valued member. The school has a strong spiritual life which further enhances the unity and sense of an all embracing caring ethos. The Religious Education provided for the children is good and enables them to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes to develop spiritually and morally as they journey in faith throughout the school.

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

In the last Inspection of Religious Education in June 2003 the areas for further development were that the Governors and staff should:

- Celebrate and consolidate existing good work and practices, the children's spiritual and moral development, parental partnership and involvement and the strong outgoing links between school, parish and wider community.
- Ensure consistency in teaching standards by sharing good practice and more

regular lesson monitoring.

- Improve existing learning standards by using appropriately differentiated activities, consistent work levelling and marking systems and having higher expectations regarding the presentation of written work.

Each of these areas of development has been dealt with effectively.

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 all the staff, both personally and professionally. She recognises and deals sensitively with all their needs and she also places great value on the school's relationship with parishioners. She is well supported by the Parish Priest and the Governing Body. She has a very hard working and highly competent Deputy Headteacher who is also the Religious Education Co-ordinator. All these key members of the school community demonstrate a deep personal faith and a commitment to their mission. This strength is further enhanced by the dedication and enthusiasm of all staff.

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 of this school is outstanding. It is strongly focused on the school's Catholic mission and has in a short time very successfully created a sense of shared mission amongst all the staff. The Parish Priest is very involved in the life of the school and staff spoke of his commitment to and support of the school. He has a positive impact on many aspects of school life. The school is extremely well organised and runs very smoothly. The inclusion of all learners is central to the school's belief that as a faith community all are created in the image of God. Morale in this school is very high.

Very good links exist with parents the parish and other external agencies. As a result of this pupils feel well supported. They have a very real sense of belonging to a community and speak very highly of and proudly about their school.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

Collective worship in the school is outstanding, celebration of the Mass and prayers are central to the life of the school. The school has an effective policy for Collective Worship, a spiritual development policy and a liturgical plan for each year which includes whole school Masses, class Masses and whole school and class liturgies. Worship follows liturgical principles with Scripture, prayer, symbolism and song. Pupils enjoy taking an active part in Collective Worship and in line with the school's inclusion policy all children are encouraged and supported in their active roles. The Parish Priest plays a very significant part in the Collective Worship in school.

Parents and carers are welcome to attend acts of Worship in school and many take up this invitation. The staff pray together and they pray for other schools in their Catholic cluster. The staff of the school often supports Masses in the parish by taking an active role through reading. Worship is very meaningful and children show great prayerfulness. The school teaches the formal prayers of the Church and there is prayer progression chart detailing the traditional prayers that children learn throughout the school. Children are also encouraged and given opportunities for spontaneous prayer and they demonstrate a real willingness to share thoughtful prayer relevant to their needs and the needs of the whole community.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Achievement in Religious Education is good. The school uses the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme and lessons are planned thoroughly. Pupils achieve high standards and gain knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate across all key stages. Pupils with special needs are well catered for. The teaching assistants who are all valued members of staff work hard and support these children well. Pupil behaviour is very good. Children are secure in their surroundings and therefore are confident and articulate. Teachers and pupils show respect for each other. The children's Religious Education continuity books show continuity and progression throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and take great pride in their work which impacts well on their spiritual and moral development. Lessons effectively incorporate periods of prayer and reflection.

Pastoral Time is a part of the curriculum which the children value greatly. The organisation of Pastoral Time enables the children to work with children from different classes and different age groups. It leads the children to an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of community life and roots the teaching and learning in prayer.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching and learning in Religious Education are good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their commitment to their Faith supports confident teaching in a wide variety of styles.

Children are interested and well motivated. Other subject areas including speaking and listening, art and art appreciation and ICT are used very effectively in imaginative and creative lessons which engage and extend the learners. Religious Education is part of the school's programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The school does excellent work on teaching the children to respect other faiths and cultures.

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

The curriculum time devoted to Religious Education fulfils the requirements of the Bishops’ Conference. The school makes good use of the ‘Here I Am’ programme and in some classes ‘Here I Am’ is supplemented by materials from the scheme of work of the Birmingham Archdiocese. This is used to enhance the provision of Religious Education. The use of Scripture throughout the school is good. As they prepared to celebrate Advent children were clearly very familiar with Isaiah as well as appropriate Gospel readings. Children of other denominations have their faith nurtured and supported.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education is outstanding. The Governors, Headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator work hard to achieve high standards in Religious Education. The Religious Education Co-ordinator makes a formal report to the Governing Body on the Religious Education curriculum. The Parish Priest takes part in Religious Education lessons by, for example, conducting question and answer sessions with pupils covering wide ranging topics including the Sacraments, his work and vocations to the priesthood. All the staff value the contribution the Parish Priest makes to the school. Both the Headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator have only been in post since September but already they make a strong team who ensure that the Catholic ethos of this school embraces all aspects of the community. Resources are well organised within the school and Religious Education spending is part of a planned programme. The Religious Education Co-ordinator ensures new staff have a clear introduction to the ‘Here I Am’ programme and she works along side staff in the classroom to offer support and advice. The school has a strong sense not only of the local community but also of its place in the extended and indeed the global community. Work with both the Comenius project and Citizenship enables the children to live out their faith in a very meaningful way. The Headteacher has a vision to forge ahead with community links and she is very well supported by the very capable and committed Religious Education Co-ordinator.

Information about the school

Type of School	Primary Voluntary Aided
Age profile of Students	4 – 11
Number on roll	190
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	38
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	1
Number of Catholics on roll	123
Number of Other Christian Denominations	65
Number of other Faiths	2
School address	Spring Water Avenue, Hackenthorpe, Sheffield S12 4HJ
Telephone Number	0114 2485009
Fax Number	0114 2510395
Email	fisher@rmpkc.co.uk

Summary of Inspection Judgements:	
Overall Effectiveness	Outstanding
The Catholic Life of the School	
How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	Outstanding
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?	Outstanding

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St John Fisher Catholic Primary School or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU Tel: 0114 2566440