

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	8303502
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mr Paul McGinley
Name of Headteacher	Mrs J M Bolton
Date of Inspection	19 th , 20 th December 2005
Section 48 Inspector	Mr J J Burke

“... 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 a large school on the edge of the town centre of Chesterfield. The school serves children from a wide catchment area. Many of the pupils are from the parish of The Annunciation. The school also serves the parishes of The Holy Family, St Hugh of Lincoln and Holy Spirit, Dronfield. The school had its last Religious Education Inspection (Sec 23) in November 2000 and its last Ofsted Inspection (Sec 5) in October 2005. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. Eighty five percent of the pupils on roll are baptised Catholics. There are fifteen full-time and four part-time teachers. Eleven teachers are Catholic, seven of whom hold the CCRS qualification. There are plans to build a new dining facility beginning in January 2006. A 'before and after' school club has flourished for the past twelve years. Extra-curricular activities include rugby, cricket, netball and art.

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, assisted by Senior Management, Departmental and Subject leadership teams, identify and address areas for the development of Catholic education. The teams feel an ownership in the process and its application. Pupils are well taught and cared for in a quiet calm environment. They acquire appropriate religious knowledge, skills and attitudes and develop spiritually and morally.

The areas for development as identified in the SEF (Self Evaluation Form) and the School Development Plan are: further spiritual and moral development; assessment procedures; the integration of the Religious Education curriculum into the school's 'Excellence and Enjoyment' initiative and pupil knowledge of Scripture. This report identifies further areas for development as the extension of existing reading material for Religious Education, greater use of the ICT facility to encourage referencing and research and regular reporting to the governing body on the subject.

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

During the Religious Education Inspection of 2000 areas highlighted for improvement included: a timetable review; the monitoring of pupils' work to improve standards; the clarification of assessment procedures; the development of prayer and religious areas in the classroom and the consideration of the role of the Religious Education coordinator in order to encourage staff development.

Each of the issues has been effectively dealt with. Religious Education has ten percent of the taught timetable. Pupil work is monitored and evaluated in line with other subjects. Assessment procedures are used throughout the school to inform planning and ensure progress. There are age appropriate prayer corners in each classroom based on the church's liturgical year. Varying models for coordinating Religious Education have been tried and recent workforce restructuring has resulted in the Headteacher taking on the role of coordinator.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic Education.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic Education is good. A comprehensive Self Evaluation Form (SEF48) outlines the main characteristics of Catholic education for the school and clearly identifies areas for further development. The school Senior Management and Department Leader teams, led by the Headteacher, clearly identify areas to develop learners in the Catholic life of the school. School staff are given clear direction, have inclusive roles for supporting each other and the pupils they teach, personally and professionally. A supportive Governing Body is actively involved in the school's Gospel Mission, its structures and strategies. Parents and the clergy, who regularly visit the school, are actively involved in its Catholic life.

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 Headteacher, departmental, leadership and management teams, meet regularly. They are committed to the Gospel Mission and vision of the school, have clarity of purpose and a collective focus of intention to develop the Catholic life of the school. Staff recently attended a 'retreat' day and regularly attend Diocesan courses to develop their own faith and professionalism. A named teacher has responsibility for home-school-parish liaison. School has close links with four parishes. Clergy play an active supportive role in the life of the school and greatly welcome the help and involvement of staff and pupils in the sacramental and liturgical life of the school. Governors play an active role in the Catholic life of the school. The current School Development Plan involves governors in policy reviews, staff and governor training programmes and the revision of the school mission and vision. A named member of the governing

body has responsibility for Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school. Governors ensured that all the issues from the last Inspection were addressed. Relationships in school are good. Parents speak highly of the caring ethos of the school and how happily their children attend. The effectiveness of leadership and management in the development of the Catholic life of the school is outstanding.

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. Each day in the school hall, a different staff member leads worship that is liturgically based with Scripture, prayer, song and symbolism. Worship also takes place in the classroom each afternoon. The pupils, who act reverently and prayerfully during worship, enjoy active participation. School staff help learners to prepare for and be involved in worship in the school and parish. During the year the pupils are also involved in other Eucharistic, Liturgical and Sacramental celebrations. The school hall is conducive to meaningful worship. Recent funding from the PTFA has resulted in the hall being repainted, the acquisition of new drapes and a new sound and lighting system. Each classroom has an appropriate prayer table, usually with a religious topic display above it and appropriate resources. The Religious Education coordinator and staff are keen to develop spiritual, moral and scriptural elements of worship as well as greater spontaneity in prayer.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Academic and personal learner achievement is good. Attainment on entry into school is average. Good use of the 'Here I Am' programme with differentiated challenging activities and high expectations from the teachers has enabled written content, its frequency, presentation and level of understanding to be consistently good throughout the school. There is a teacher with responsibility for talented and gifted children and an insightful, enthusiastic SENCO for pupils with special needs. However it is agreed by staff, that further assessment of knowledge and skill-based Religious Education with the possibility of using existing portfolios of work as well as national attainment levels, will further raise achievement.

Pupil behaviour is good. A 'buddy' scheme is in operation where older children care for younger ones. Excellent behaviour in class enables pupils to complete work without distraction and with greater application. Quite often the children work in partnership at activities. The school has anti-bullying and positive behaviour discipline coordinators. Pupils say that they enjoy school and Religious Education. There is a Student Council and a prefect monitoring system.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching and learning is good throughout the school in Religious Education. Staff have a good knowledge of the 'Here I Am' programme and attend appropriate courses run by the Diocese. The Religious Education coordinator monitors and evaluates lessons with typed feedback and discussion so that teachers regularly review teaching styles and delivery. Lessons have clear goals, are clearly planned and delivered. Pupils enjoy their lessons, gain in knowledge and understanding, and develop skills and attitudes of self-respect. For the lesser-able pupils work is appropriately differentiated. Teachers encourage pupils in prayer and reflection.

Further developments of the spiritual and moral dimensions of Religious Education are planned. Parents are informed at the beginning of each term of Religious Education topics their children will study and receive an annual report and assessment of progress in the subject. Pupil learning should improve further by increasing the number of interactive whiteboards and developing the ICT facility, especially for reference and research purposes.

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

The Religious Education curriculum has a significant impact on the needs and interests of the learners. It contributes to their spiritual and moral development. It gives them a greater knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith, its beliefs, values and aspirations. It also contributes to a greater understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christian Churches and other World Faiths. With the planned refurbishment of the library, the school will need to improve religious and curricular reading material.

Relationships in the school community are good. The school, safe and secure, has a quiet, caring ethos engendered by a hardworking staff. Parents are welcome in school. They have their own meeting area adjacent to the office and a PTFA liaison officer. The Headteacher deals promptly with any problems experienced by the pupils. The school has plans to integrate religious education into the 'Excellence and Enjoyment' initiative and to develop spirituality further by extending retreats for staff and pupils.

The school is socially inclusive offering equal access of opportunity for all pupils to make progress. The school has a policy for sex and relationship education and citizenship, and a PSHE coordinator. The school meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference by ensuring that ten per cent of curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education.

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 have put the necessary policies, structures and strategies in place to raise achievement and support learners. The Self Evaluation Form and the School Development Plan are thorough documents clearly outlining developed areas as well as those for further development. Teaching is regularly monitored and evaluated. Pupil work progress is monitored but it is recognised that assessment needs further development. Resources and accommodation are generally good. Good partnerships have been forged with parents, clergy and governors. However it will be necessary for governors to receive regular reports on Religious Education in line with other curriculum areas. The effectiveness of leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education is good.

Information about the school

Type of School	Primary, Voluntary Aided
Age profile of Students	4 to 11
Number on roll	444
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	51
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	4
Number of Catholics on roll	380
Number of Other Christian Denominations	53
Number of other Faiths	11
School address	Cross Street, Chesterfield. S40 4ST
Telephone Number	01246 232170
Fax Number	
Email	info@st-marys.derbyshire.sch.uk
Website	

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?	Outstanding
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	Good
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