
The Diocese of Hallam

Inspection Report: The Catholic Life of the School and Religious Education

Diocese of Hallam



INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST CATHERINE'S CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

School URN	107112
Name of Chair of Governors	Michelle Grant
Name of Headteacher	Fiona Rigby
Date of inspection	31 st June – 1 st July 2014
Section 48 Inspector	Peter Davison

“ An enthusiasm for the things of God”

Introduction

The Inspection of St Catherine’s Catholic Voluntary Academy has been carried out 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 Catherine’s Catholic Voluntary Academy is an inner city school situated in Burngreave and serves the parish of St Catherine’s although many of the Catholic pupils and their families worship in neighbouring Parishes including St Patrick’s, St Theresa’s and St Vincent’s. The school has responded to community needs for more school places caused by rising birth rate and an increased population in the Burngreave area of new comers to Britain and is now a two form entry Primary School. As a result of acute demand for places in this area of Sheffield the school has worked with the Local Authority and agreed Fair Access Places for an additional 4 pupils per year group. The school has a 52 place nursery.

St Catherine’s is now larger than the average sized primary school. Burngreave is a vibrant multi-cultural and multi-faith part of the city; many of the pupils come from socially and economically deprived homes. Of the 476 pupils on roll, 35% are baptised Catholics, 33% belong to other Christian denominations and 27% belong to other World Faiths. 72% of pupils are from Minority Ethnic Groups and 46% of pupils speak English as an additional language. 43 languages are spoken in school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is significantly above, average. Pupils’ attainment on entry to Foundation Stage is significantly below national age-related expectations but as they move through the school they become closer to national expectations and by the end of Key Stage Two, attainment is in line or above.

There are 14 full time and 10 part-time teachers, 35% of the school staff are Catholic (49% of teachers are Catholic) and one holds the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies. There are currently 82 staff in school with a variety of faith backgrounds.

The school offers an extensive range of extra-curricular activities for pupils and facilitates many adult and family learning opportunities. The school has received many awards including the International School Award, Eco School Award, it is a Read Write Inc Model School and The School Council has recently been asked to represent the local constituency in a Parliamentary Competition. David Blunkett nominated the school in recognition of the work that it undertakes within its community to promote community cohesion.

The Headteacher is a Local Leader of Education and three members of staff are Specialist Leaders of Education. The school supports a number of schools in challenging circumstances. St Catherine’s has also been recently accredited as a provider of School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT)

Type of School	A Catholic Voluntary Academy
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Age profile of students	3 to 11
Number on roll	476
Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register	147
Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	10
Number of Catholics on roll	168
Number of Other Christian Denominations	154
Number of other Faiths	124
No religious affiliation	30
School Address	St Catherine's Catholic Voluntary Academy Firshill Cescent, Sheffield, S4 7BX
Telephone Number	0114 3030381
Email	enquiries@stcatherines.academy
School Website	http://www.stcatherinesprimary.org.uk

SUMMARY JUDGEMENTS

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

1

THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

1

The overall effectiveness judgement is based on all the evidence available.

- Outcomes for pupils,
- The provision for Catholic Education
- Leaders and Managers

Inspection Grades:

1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking into account variations between groups.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship	1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is OUTSTANDING:

- Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the Catholic life of the school and gain considerable benefit from it. They are able to express their own beliefs with confidence and have a good understanding of how their faith impacts on their own lives and others.
- Pupils are at the centre of the school's vision and mission and pupil voice is a high priority. They take full advantage of the many and varied opportunities provided for their personal and spiritual development and they have a tangible and deep sense of belonging to a strong gospel centred community.
- Relationships within the school are very positive. Pupils work well together and show enthusiastic attitudes to all aspects of school life.
- Behaviour management is very effective. Pupils are extremely polite and considerate of others demonstrating good emotional awareness. They value the Catholic tradition of their school and are proud of it.
- The welcoming ethos, together with the culture of support for others, enables the majority of children to contribute to the life of the school and the wider community. As a result they are enthusiastic about the activities which they can contribute to within the school as well as the links they have with the parish.
- Children who are experiencing personal difficulties are given great support through appropriately trained staff and facilities that aid well-being. The ocean and jungle rooms provide an environment to help achieve this.
- The School Council is an effective means for pupils to contribute to the life of the school and, notably, led an inter-faith "Question Time" by including faith leaders answering children's questions about their beliefs. In a very culturally diverse part of the city, projects like this contribute greatly to St Catherine's being an exemplary socially cohesive community that is highly valued and respected.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is OUTSTANDING:

- Pupils enjoy and understand the value of Religious Education. They talk enthusiastically about their experiences in lessons and value the support given to them by their teachers and support staff.
- They work well in lessons, applying themselves to the tasks and work at a good pace. They seek to produce their best work and like to tackle challenging activities.
- Most pupils work cooperatively in pairs and groups and develop the ability to work independently from an early age. Support staff play an excellent role in contributing to every child's achievement.

- Pupils make excellent progress in their learning. The majority of children start school with knowledge and skills typically below those expected for their age but by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is in line or above national expectations.
- As a result of accurate feedback from teachers, pupils are aware of the levels they are working on and the next steps needed to achieve at a higher level. This is evident throughout the school and through this consistent approach and aspirational targets set, children’s improvement in attainment is exceptional.

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools’ Collective Worship is OUTSTANDING:

- St Catherine’s is a vibrant worshipping community where pupils’ response to and participation in Collective Worship is outstanding. There are opportunities for both formal and spontaneous prayer and music, dance and drama engage pupils’ interest and enthusiasm.
- From Early Years through to Key Stage 2, the appropriate use of all elements of liturgy enable pupils to develop knowledge, skills and understanding about the liturgical year very well.
- The school’s calm and peaceful atmosphere is reflected in the pupil’s excellent behaviour and consideration for others. From the earliest age pupils act reverently and show respect when participating in acts of worship. Whatever their faith background they listen well and are happy to take part in Collective Worship, liturgies, Masses and assemblies.
- Adults provide good role models for the children and contribute significantly to their spiritual and moral development. Pupils show respect for different faiths and are aware of how religious beliefs are important to people. Children from different faith backgrounds are valued and encouraged to share their beliefs with others. The Faith Room displays the Bible, the Qu’ran and the Torah in a highly prominent and reverent way reflecting the mutual respect evident in the whole school community.
- The annual Year 6 residential trip to the Briars Catholic Youth Retreat Centre in Crich has enhanced the prayer life of the school and given pupils the inspiration and confidence to create and lead worship in a lively, enthusiastic way.

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	1
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils’ learning.	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education is OUTSTANDING:

- Teaching and assessment is outstanding. Teachers plan lessons very thoroughly and set challenging targets for pupils to achieve in their work, consequently, from their starting points all groups of pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- Through effective training and personal commitment teachers have excellent subject knowledge. The school has used its budget to provide high quality resources and highlights the school’s commitment to providing children with the best possible learning experience.
- Teachers are highly effective at meeting the needs of all their pupils. They regularly check pupils’ learning, plan exciting activities that motivate them to want to learn and use focused, differentiated and open-ended questioning to extend their understanding.

- Teachers intervene when necessary to deal with pupil misconceptions or to provide useful feedback so that all learning is outstanding. All pupils are provided with rich experiences that make learning exciting, promoting their spiritual, moral and social and cultural development extremely well.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning is OUTSTANDING:

- The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Of the total curriculum time, 10% or more is allocated to Religious Education thereby fulfilling the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.
- The school's strong Catholic ethos underpins all aspects of the curriculum resulting in a high degree of cohesion and consistency of approach.
- The 'Come and See' programme is delivered extremely well and is enhanced by the effective use of supportive resources. During the inspection, many of the classes were using multimedia materials from CAFOD in a lively way to stimulate interest and enrich learning.
- The school is highly innovative in its approach to teaching and learning with extensive opportunities for pupils to explore, discover and create. Learning is supported by trips and use of visitors sharing their expertise.
- Children are provided with a wide variety of activities and experiences that draw on and extend a variety of skills from other areas of the curriculum. Enrichment activities such as use of music, ICT, role play, philosophy, dance and art have a positive impact on the Religious Education curriculum.
- By the time the children leave St Catherine's they have visited places of worship for many world faiths including other Christian denominations as evidenced by a recent visit to an Anglican church where similarities and differences were explored.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is OUTSTANDING:

- Collective Worship reflects the Catholic character of the school and takes into account any faith backgrounds among staff and pupils. It has a profound and visible impact on pupil's spiritual and moral development.
- The school fosters a deep sense of respect for different faiths whilst maintaining its Catholic identity.
- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship and a good range of structures to ensure it is frequent, regular and inclusive. Staff willingly share responsibility for leading good quality liturgy at each week's staff briefing meeting highlighting their commitment to the spiritual dimension of the school.
- Teachers are skilled in planning varied opportunities to ensure that pupils are able to participate in prayer in different ways. They use a range of strategies to ensure that worship is inclusive of all.
- Governors, parents, parishioners are welcome to be part of prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school and they express their appreciation for this.
- The parish priest is most supportive of both the curriculum and the Catholic life of the school and speaks highly of the cordial relationship between school and parish. He is a welcome presence in the school, supporting and leading Acts of Worship and visiting classes.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective the provision is for Catholic education

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is OUTSTANDING:

- The headteacher is a very positive presence around the school and together with the leadership team has a very clear understanding of Catholic education and the role of the Catholic school.
- The school’s self-evaluation is rigorous through effective monitoring, analysis and self-challenge. There is a clear focus on the Catholic Life of the school.
- Leaders are not afraid to take tough or unpopular decisions in order to strengthen the quality of education and improve opportunities for children to thrive in this faith community.
- Staff and pupils work together to live the mission of the school with understanding and appreciation.
- Governors are confident in holding the leadership team to account whilst being actively involved in supporting its mission. They have an excellent grasp of the challenges faced by the school and work very effectively with the headteacher and leadership team.
- The school has developed very successful strategies for engaging with parents and carers who have a clear understanding of the school’s mission. They feel that the Catholic ethos is very strong; “St Catherine’s lives out what they believe. It’s wonderful to be a part of this”, “ St Catherine’s has a fantastic reputation, as a Christian family it was important to us for the faith of our children to be taught alongside an amazing education.”, “St Catherine’s openly accepts people who may have other faiths. Even though it is a Catholic school, children of other faiths are treated equally.”
- Parents, carers and pupils are consulted through discussion and questionnaires and their views influence action planning. The weekly Parents’ Forum and class representation are effective means to give stakeholders a voice in school improvement.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for the Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is OUTSTANDING:

- The headteacher demonstrates and shares a highly ambitious vision for the school and for what every pupil and teacher can achieve. She inspires and supports the whole school community.
- The headteacher, along with the deputy headteacher and Religious Education coordinator, provide strong and highly effective leadership ensuring that all pupils achieve well.
- Self-evaluation is firmly based on the results of systematic monitoring of teaching and learning. This leads to well focused development plans that accurately identify areas for improvement and offer realistic targets and time frames to realise ambitious future developments.
- The subject leader is outstanding in guiding Religious Education. She shows great knowledge, enthusiasm and commitment in her role. She models best practice effectively and develops the skills and expertise of staff through coaching, training and day-to-day support.
- Assessment and tracking of pupil progress is well developed and plans are in place to improve this further using data generated through more detailed analysis.

This final section draws together all the evidence and judgements made in the preceding sections.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education	1
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The overall effectiveness of St Catherine's School is OUTSTANDING:

- Through the drive, vision and inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the leadership team, the school lives out its Catholic mission very well.
- Governors and staff have high expectations with regard to the Catholic mission and ethos of the school.
- Pupil progress and achievement is exceptional. The quality of teaching is always good and much of it is outstanding.
- Good assessment procedures are in place to drive progress and these are being developed further.
- Prayer underpins the life of the school and pupils participate in many forms of worship.
- The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is outstanding,
- There are excellent links with parents and carers and they overwhelmingly support the school and appreciate the high quality care and education their children receive.
- The school has gained the trust of the local community and is held in very high regard by them.
- All staff act as very good role models for the pupils. They not only support but deepen the Catholic ethos of the school on a daily basis.
- The school is recognised as a beacon of good practice hence its role in successfully supporting other schools to move out of Special Measures. Being accredited as a provider of teacher training is another indication of the school's achievement.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Provide appropriate support and training so that good teachers are helped to be outstanding.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to use their skills at extended writing in Religious Education lessons.
- Develop further pupil involvement in preparing and leading worship from their earliest years.