

Diocese of Hallam



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

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

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

School URN	112899
Name of Chair of Governors	Father Peter McGuire
Name of Head teacher	Mary Emmott
Date of inspection	28th February 2012
Section 48 Inspector	John Greenwood

“ An enthusiasm for the things of God”

Introduction

The Inspection of Immaculate Conception 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

Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School is a one form entry school with 207 pupils from a wide geographical area and diverse social mix. Many of the children are transported to school on one of the 4 school buses servicing the surrounding areas. The majority of pupils are from white British backgrounds and have English as their first language. The children's knowledge and skills on entry to school are average. The school moved into its new school building in November 2009 from the previous split-site. The school is fed from two parishes, Immaculate Conception, Spinkhill and Sacred Heart, Clowne.

Type of School	Voluntary Aided Primary
Age profile of students	4-11
Number on roll	207
Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register	24
Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	1
Number of Catholics on roll	185
Number of Other Christian Denominations	16
Number of other Faiths	1
School Address	College Road, Spinkhill, Sheffield, S21 3YB
Telephone Number	01246 432916
Fax Number	
Email	headteacher@immaculate.derbyshire.sch.uk

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education	2
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The overall effectiveness of Catholic education at Immaculate Conception School is good. The school has a most welcoming, caring environment and its distinctive nature as a Catholic school is clearly apparent in the displays and artwork around the school. The Headteacher, the Religious Education Co-ordinator, Governors and staff, identify and address areas for development in the Catholic life of the school. The children are well taught and cared for; they participate in excellent liturgies resulting in them developing spiritually and morally and acquiring appropriate religious knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The behaviour of the children is outstanding. Children contribute to a variety of high quality liturgies and a weekly school Mass which families and parishioners value greatly.

Teaching and learning in the school is good overall with some examples of outstanding practice. Through the 'Here I Am' Religious Education curriculum offered, children develop a good understanding of the Catholic faith and are able to recall a great deal of knowledge about their Religion and the life of Jesus. In their lessons and in the general life of the school, this knowledge is then related to the children's lives resulting in the children achieving a good level of moral and spiritual development. The very close relationship between the school and parish is a real strength of the community. The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to the school and his liturgical expertise benefits the school greatly. Through the Religious Education teaching, the children learn about other faiths and further enrich their knowledge of the world through supporting various charities. The school is exploring plans to link with a community in a developing country and is supporting three of the school's children in their forthcoming visit to a charity in India. This has enabled all the children to have a real practical dimension to their Lenten fundraising efforts.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
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The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. The development of the Catholic life of the school has a highly prominent position in the School Development Plan and is monitored regularly by the governors, headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinator. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and provides calm, caring and committed leadership to promote school improvement. The governors have recently appointed a new link governor for Religious Education and she is already building up her knowledge of the Catholic life of the school. The Religious Education Co-ordinator supports colleagues and monitors teaching very effectively; she evaluates the children's learning accurately and thus plays a pivotal role in ensuring that there is a good capacity to improve the school further. The school views the forthcoming publication and implementation of a new programme for Religious Education very positively.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed assessment procedures consistently through the school and enable the children to self-assess
- Extend multi-faith and multi-cultural learning given the limited diversity in the school community

- Plan effectively for the implementation of the new 'Come and See' Religious Education programme

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
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The outcomes for the children are good as children of all abilities make good progress. The children obviously enjoy their Religious Education lessons and respond with enthusiasm. Many children are also very thoughtful in their responses; they listen attentively, behave beautifully and have a strong desire to do their best.

Children from Reception right through to Year 6 make significant contributions to the prayer life of the school and all show due respect and reverence during liturgies. The regular Monday morning collective worship assemblies enable children from different classes to actively participate, and children of all ages are confident enough to contribute very thoughtful answers in front of the whole school. The older children could be given more opportunities to have a greater responsibility in leading class based liturgies. The children work very well together and co-operated very effectively in a Year 6 Religious Education Drama lesson, and in other lessons to produce shared work. The children also demonstrated an excellent knowledge of their religion for example the Year 1 children recalled the miracles of Jesus with tremendous accuracy and children in other classes also recounted previous learning and exhibited an excellent understanding of the structure of the Mass and the Mass responses. The highly valued Friday morning School Masses also enable the children to practise their faith as part of a worshipping community.

The standard of written work in Religious Education is good. Teachers provide differentiated activities for children of varying abilities although on a few occasions the children could have been given more challenging tasks. Children are able to relate what they learn in Religious Education to their own lives and this makes a significant contribution to the way they treat each other and the caring ethos which pervades the whole school environment.

The children's contribution to the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. They are very proud of their brand new school. The children support the charitable activities enthusiastically and take on responsibilities around the school as buddies for the youngest children, school councillors, librarians, times tables testers and playground pals.

PROVISION:

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	2
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Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some examples of outstanding practice. Lessons are well planned and resourced with the teachers using a variety of approaches to interest the children such as pictures, powerpoints, video and drama. Most lessons are well paced and give opportunities for the children to use other curriculum skills, eg ICT and literacy skills, as part of their Religious Education work.

Effective assessment procedures are being put in place and teachers are becoming more confident in assessing the children's Religious Education work. The Religious Education co-ordinator has played a particularly supportive role to implement and monitor how these assessments are carried out. Marking of children's work is largely limited to encouraging comments for the children but little reference is given to how they could improve their work further. As assessment procedures become more embedded, the criteria could be shared with the children (especially the older pupils) so that they can assess their own work. Some activities lacked challenge but most lessons are stimulating and interesting and enable the children to deepen their understanding of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school.

The Religious Education curriculum is good in meeting the needs of the pupils. At least 10% of teaching time is devoted to Religious Education but through the use of whole school and class based liturgies, school Masses and many other events the Catholic life of the school is made real and celebrated.

Provision for Collective Worship is outstanding. The Friday Mass is a highlight of the week when all members of the school community, parents, grandparents, governors and parishioners come together to worship. The children are also encouraged to attend monthly Sunday 'Family Masses' at both Clowne and Spinkhill further strengthening parish/school links. Whole school and class based liturgies are well planned and make excellent links with the children's Religious Education work and the liturgical seasons. The support and input by the Parish Priest is valued highly by the school and the relationship between the children and the Parish Priest is excellent.

Given that there is limited diversity among the school population, the school is promoting Community Cohesion ensuring the children experience opportunities within the local and wider community. These include working with children from local secondary schools, visitors to school, extensive sports programme with primary schools in Chesterfield and Sheffield and a 'safety crew' day. These are complemented by raising awareness through global charities such as Mission Together and the work of Cafod. Plans to form links with a school in a developing country are being explored and the visit to India by some of the pupils may give opportunities for the children to appreciate first hand the impact their charitable support can have.

The school provides 'Rainbows' sessions for those children experiencing bereavement or loss of some kind. This programme has proved most worthwhile in supporting children who are feeling vulnerable.

Parents are very proud of their school. One spoke for many when she said that her children attended the school because she knew everyone in the school cared for the children. Another put down her son's success in Religious Education at secondary school to the firm foundation he received at Immaculate Conception. All were pleased with the provision for Religious Education and were very appreciative of the values and high expectations for behaviour instilled in their children.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school

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The Headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator, together with all staff and governors, are good in developing the Catholic life of the school. This is accomplished within a spiritual environment and by remaining true to faith values. The school works closely with the Parish Priest to ensure that the Catholic faith is at the very centre of everything that happens. The mission statement is lived out on a daily basis and is best illustrated by the outstanding liturgical celebrations each week. The leadership provides a strong and consistent moral framework in which relationships flourish in mutual respect and faith appreciation. By working with local and international organisations the children extend their understanding of how to live responsibly, following gospel values.

The development of the Catholic life of the school has a high priority in the School Development Plan and is fundamental to the life of the school; this vision is shared by all in the school community. The governors are frequent visitors to the school and experience the school Masses, collective worships and assemblies regularly. This has built up strong relationships between staff and governors, and the governors act as key critical friends to the school. The governors have been able to share their own expertise and reflect upon the daily religious life of the school. The Governing Body analyses the school improvement plans and responses from parent questionnaires and are well placed to evaluate improvement.

Monitoring of provision within school is carried out by the headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator and this has developed significantly this academic year, as have assessment procedures. All staff share the responsibility to promote the Catholic life of the school. The support staff demonstrate great care and patience, particularly in the way they support children experiencing difficulties. The leadership of the school has ensured that full opportunity has been made to benefit from a new building and that Immaculate Conception School is a safe, caring and very happy place to be.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 Outstanding Grade 2 Good Grade 3 Satisfactory Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness	2
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
<input type="checkbox"/> how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<input type="checkbox"/> pupils' attainment in Religious Education	2
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
<input type="checkbox"/> how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship	1
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic Education	2
<input type="checkbox"/> the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
<input type="checkbox"/> the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	2
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
<input type="checkbox"/> the quality of collective worship provided by the school	1
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school	2
<input type="checkbox"/> how well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
<input type="checkbox"/> how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities are met	2
<input type="checkbox"/> how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being	2
<input type="checkbox"/> how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	2

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