

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	3723322
Name of Chairman of Governors	Mrs J Sanigar
Name of Headteacher	Mrs H McLaughlin
Date of Inspection	20 th March 2007
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, opened in 1940, has 210 pupils arranged in seven classes, one for each year group. The school has a catchment area of approximately three and a half miles in radius serving the parishes of The Immaculate Conception, Herringthorpe and Blessed Trinity, Wickersley. The children come from a range of backgrounds with the majority of parents owning their own homes. Six point six percent of the children are eligible for free school meals. The majority of the children are of white Christian origin of whom eighty eight percent are baptised Catholics. Ninety nine point six percent of the children have English as their first language. There are seventeen point one percent of the children on the Special Needs register four of whom have a statement of educational needs. The school does not have a nursery unit and receives children from a variety of Foundation One providers.

The school had its last Ofsted Inspection (Section 5) in January 2007 and its last Religious Education Inspection (Section 23) in June 2001. The school has 8 full-time teachers, 6 of whom are Catholic. Three teachers hold the CCRS Qualification. Four of the nine teaching support staff are Catholic. There are two secretaries, one full time and one part time and a Caretaker who lives on site

Since the last Religious Education inspection, a Special Needs room, a Foundation outdoor area and cloakroom have been added. The school has also acquired a sport's field on the other side of the adjacent main road. Extra curricular provision includes an Amnesty International Group and a Prayer Club.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

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

The effectiveness and provision of Catholic education at St Mary's school is good. The Headteacher, Senior Leadership Team and Governors have clearly identified areas for the development of the Catholic life of the school and its Religious Education. Teaching and learning is of a good standard. The pupils acquire appropriate religious knowledge, skills and attitudes; develop spiritually and morally through excellent use of the curriculum, collective worship and seasonal religious celebrations in and out of school.

The areas for development as identified in the Self Evaluation Form and The Development of Excellence Plan are the consolidation of the monitoring and assessment of Religious Education to include a moderated portfolio of work, further development of school, parish, pyramid links, the evaluation of Collective Worship affording Key Stage Two pupils more input in planning and participation, the consolidation of a cross-curricular approach and the development of differentiation in teaching and learning in Religious Education. This inspection report concurs that the above areas are those necessary to further develop the quality of Catholic education in St Mary's school.

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

During the Religious Education Inspection of 2001 the areas highlighted for development were sacramental preparation, the evaluation, consolidation and implementation of assessment strategies, monitoring of teaching and learning, development of multi-faith and multi-cultural education including resources, and the need to inform parents of forthcoming Religious Education topics. Each issue has been effectively dealt with. Consolidation of the monitoring and assessment of Religious Education is an ongoing priority.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic Education.

The capacity to further deepen the quality of Catholic Education is good. The school Self Evaluation Form is thorough and comprehensive, clearly outlining areas of Catholic educational development and identifying areas for further progress. Religious Education has a focal importance in the Development of Excellence Plan and the five to ten year Action Plan. The Senior Leadership Team assisted by a supportive Governing Body actively promote the gospel values and the mission of the school. School staff are given clear direction, support the structures and strategies of the school and encourage all pupils in their learning and development. Parents and Clergy are warmly welcomed into school where they enjoy an active role in the development of its Catholic life. The pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and others.

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 leadership and management in the development of the school is good. The newly developed Senior Leadership Team including the Headteacher, Governors and Staff, recently revised the school Mission statement, which now provides a clear direction for the school with clear aims, objectives and policies. The school has a

five to ten year Action Plan for the development of St Mary's Community, which has been discussed by school staff, the Parish Advisory Council, Friend's of St Mary's and Governors. There is a named Governor who with the other Governors and Staff is responsible for developing the Catholic Mission of the school and its Catholic life.

Staff regularly attend Religious Education courses based around the Here I Am programme or those related to parish and community links. Performance management criteria are always linked to the Continuous Professional Development of staff. Links with the parishes and local schools in the St Bernard pyramid are strong.

Parents and visitors are welcome in school and regularly attend Eucharistic liturgies and school worship. Parents praise the caring ethos of the school and state how happy their children are to attend. The Parish Priest plays an active supportive role in the life of the school and is intent on developing its Mission and parish-based links further.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL: COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of Collective Worship is good. Each week begins with Collective Worship in the assembly hall. The Eucharistic is celebrated weekly in church or in school. Key Stage One children enjoy regular liturgies. Each week ends with an award or birthday liturgical celebration. Collective Worship takes place in the classroom when not experienced in the assembly hall.

Prayer plays a significant part in the life of the school. All the children use age-appropriate prayers. There is a prayer table in each classroom with appropriate resources and artefacts and an adjacent, current, religious topic display. All the pupils relate to Collective Worship celebrations, Eucharistic and Para-liturgies and all forms of prayer with enthusiasm and reverence. Appropriate Scripture readings, hymns, symbolisms and artefacts are used to enhance the celebrations. The Religious Education co-ordinator and staff are keen to develop spiritual, moral and scriptural elements of worship. The school plans to give opportunities to upper Key Stage Two pupils to plan and participate more in worship and liturgy and to include the evaluation of those celebrations in the monitoring and assessment of Religious Education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?

Pupil achievements and standards are good. Attainment on entry into the school is average. The attainments of learners are compatible with the level descriptors and attainment targets of the Religious Education programmes of study. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and values of Catholic life, other faiths and cultures. A newly adopted cross-curricular approach to the teaching of Religious

Education has engendered greater enjoyment and excitement for the pupils and increased wonder and reverence for God's creation. Progress is commensurate with age across the Key Stages. Pupils' work should, however, improve with further attention to presentation and content especially in Key Stage Two. Pupils are generally informed and confident in what they do.

Pupil behaviour is excellent. Pupils contribute to the broader community by engaging in programmes that help others such as CAFOD, Mission Together and The Good Shepherd Collection. There is a School Council where the pupils have an input into school decision making.

It is the intention of the school to improve the achievements and standards of the pupils by consolidating existing monitoring and assessment procedures and by developing a moderated Religious Education portfolio of work.

QUALITY OF PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?

Teaching and learning in Religious Education is good throughout the school. Teaching staff are secure in the knowledge of the Here I Am programme. Lessons have clear goals and are clearly planned and delivered. Lessons are observed and evaluated, and appropriate feedback given.

Pupils enjoy their lessons, gain in knowledge and understanding of their faith and others' faiths, and acquire values and attitudes of the spiritual and moral dimensions of life. There is good use made of ICT facilities. The older Key Stage Two pupils take Religious Education homework. Pupils with special educational needs have differentiated activities and their parents are regularly informed of their progress. Parents receive an annual report and assessment of the progress their children make in Religious Education.

It is the intention of the school, supported by this inspection, to develop differentiated activities in order to further benefit the progress and enjoyment of the pupils.

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

The overall provision of the Religious Education curriculum to meet the needs and interests of learners is outstanding. The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher have a clear vision of what constitutes the essential needs and interests of the learners. Ten percent of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of Religious Education and meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.

The Religious Education curriculum is very well delivered, greatly supported and enhanced by dance, drama, art and music with high standards of work, participation and understanding. The recent Ofsted report stated and this report agrees that the personal and moral development of the pupils is outstanding. Appropriate age groups use the All that I Am sex education programme and the Hallam ethos statements with effect. The school is socially inclusive and provides equality of access and opportunity for all the pupils. The Headteacher deals promptly with any problems encountered by the pupils.

The pupils make excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic Faith, its beliefs and values. Two weeks a year are devoted to the teaching of world faiths and the school has plans to develop multi-faith, multi-cultural resources further.

The pupils feel safe and secure in a quiet environment conducive to learning. The personal development and well-being of the pupils is extremely well catered for. Relationships between all the parties in school are excellent. Parents who regularly assist with pupil learning, in school celebrations, with extra curricular provision and a variety of clubs, feel very welcome in school and enjoy participation.

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 learners is good.

The school Mission statement, which grew out of the school aims and objectives, was revised in 2005. It is a clear signpost of the awareness and involvement of the Senior Leadership Team, Governors and Staff, in developing specific aspects of the Catholic life of the school.

Governors receive regular reports on Religious Education. They support and challenge the Senior Leadership Team to promote the curriculum and the Catholic ethos of the school.

Staff, where appropriate, have a Performance Management objectives linked to the school mission. Staff avail themselves of Diocesan and Continuous Professional Development courses to help them promote the ethos and values of the school. Three teachers hold the CCRS qualification. Staff have adopted a cross-curricular approach to include dance, drama, art and music, which greatly supports the Religious Education curriculum making it more varied and exciting for the pupils. Teaching and pupil progress is regularly monitored and evaluated but it is acknowledged that assessment processes need consolidation.

Partnerships with parents, parish groups, clergy and outside agencies are excellent.

School accommodation and resources are generally good although there are plans to further develop multi-faith and multicultural resources. An appropriately significant amount of the school budget is used for the Religious Education curriculum.

Information about the school

Type of School	Primary, Voluntary Aided.
Age profile of Students	5-11.
Number on roll	210
Number of Students on Special Educational Needs Register	32
Number of Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	4
Number of Catholics on roll	185
Number of Other Christian Denominations	24
Number of other Faiths	1
School address	St Mary's Primary, Herringthorpe Valley Road, Rotherham. S65 2NU.
Telephone Number	01709 361502
Fax Number	
Email	stmarysherringthorpe@rotherham.gov.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?	Good
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?	Outstanding
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