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# **The Diocese of Hallam Section 48 Report**

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## **The Catholic Life of the School and Religious Education**

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### **Our Lady of Sorrows Primary School**

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## Diocese of Hallam



### SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

#### THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION Our Lady of Sorrows Primary School, a Catholic Voluntary Academy

<b>School URN</b>	106774
<b>Name of Chair of Governors</b>	Diane Reeve
<b>Name of Executive Head teacher</b>	Fiona Rigby
<b>Head of School</b>	Lucy Saxton
<b>Date of inspection</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2017
<b>Section 48 Inspector</b>	Alan Dewhurst

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

## Introduction

The Inspection of Our Lady of Sorrows 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

Our Lady of Sorrows Primary School is a smaller than average primary school which is slowly expanding in order to serve the needs of the local community. Since September 2016 the school has 166 pupils on roll which has grown from 134 in September 2015. The School Serves the Parish of Our Lady of Sorrows and St Francis in Armthorpe, St Thomas of Canterbury in Kirk Sandall. 66% of the children in school are Catholic.

Our Lady of Sorrows became an Academy on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2017 under The Hallam Schools' Partnership Academy Trust, as a result of the school being placed in Special Measures following a Section 5 Ofsted Inspection in October 2016.

Currently the school has an Executive Headteacher in post 2 days per week and a Head of School in place, although difficulties in staffing have meant that the Head of School has had to take on full time responsibility for Class 6. The Deputy Head Teacher is currently on Maternity Leave and due to return in July 2017.

The school is in close proximity to Our Lady of Sorrows Church. The vast majority of the pupils of White British heritage (64%), 28% of pupils speak English as an additional language and 15% are BME. A small number of children come from traveller families. The proportion of children with SEND remain below that found nationally although it is increasing and is currently 11.5%.

Attainment on entry to school is low in comparison to attainment nationally.

<b>Type of School</b>	Catholic Voluntary Academy
<b>Age profile of students</b>	4-11
<b>Number on roll</b>	166
<b>Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register</b>	
<b>Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs</b>	5
<b>Number of Catholics on roll</b>	118
<b>Number of Other Christian Denominations</b>	3
<b>Number of other Faiths</b>	4
<b>No religious affiliation</b>	
<b>School Address</b>	Mere Lane, Armthorpe DN3 2DB
<b>Telephone Number</b>	01302 833941
<b>Email</b>	head@ourlady sorrows.doncaster.sch.uk
<b>School Website</b>	<a href="http://www.ourlady sorrows.doncaster.sch.uk">www.ourlady sorrows.doncaster.sch.uk</a>

## SUMMARY JUDGEMENTS

**OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS**

**2**

**THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

**2**

**LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

**2**

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

**2**

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.	2
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship	2

## **The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good**

- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities within school and to contribute fully in promoting its Catholic Life. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to play a voluntary role through the school council, peer mentoring, reading partners, liturgy squad or as 'buddies' to younger children, for example.
- They enjoy opportunities to be reflective, and are fully aware that religious belief and spiritual values are important, and must be respected. They have a good understanding about key celebrations within the school's year and that of the church.
- They particularly gain from learning about other world faiths and traditions, and have benefitted from whole school acknowledgement of significant dates such as Eid, Diwali and the feast of St Nicholas.
- They enjoy expressing their own views and beliefs in a variety of settings, and are confident that their opinions will be accepted. They feel proud of their school, regarding it as a united community, accepting of many differences, but recognising everyone's unique nature: "We see each other as their own special person", as one pupil remarked. The school's own motto – "We are all unique, yet we share the same heart" – is evidently embedded in their consciousness.
- Pupils are generally considerate and caring. This can be seen in the strenuous efforts they put in to supporting and leading charity activities. Recently CAFOD, MacMillan Cancer Care and the Good Shepherd Appeal have benefitted from the generosity of the community, and pupils were about to embark on the Race for Life soon after the inspection visit. Pupils are also supportive of their peers in school: "We care for each other; we never leave anyone out", was a typical view.
- Vulnerable pupils benefit significantly from the Rainbows programme which runs for groups throughout the year, giving support to those who have experienced bereavement, loss or any kind of difficulty.

- An outstanding contribution to the wider community can be seen in the weekly visits by groups of pupils to Charles Court, where they chat, make craft items and play games with people suffering from dementia.

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good**

- Pupils' attainment on entry at the age of 4 is low. However, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average in comparison with all schools in the Diocese, indicating that good progress is made.
- Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons, and are keen to do well across the range of learning activities presented. They generally apply themselves well and work diligently.
- They display confidence within role-play activities, and tackle written, creative and designing tasks with enthusiasm. They enjoy presenting work with a degree of independence. Occasionally, pupils can lose focus or become restless when expectations are not set clearly or tasks are not pitched appropriately.
- They collaborate well with each other, in group or paired activities, and enjoy feeding back to the class when they have undertaken a specific task.
- They are encouraged to relate what they learn from scripture to their own lives, applying their understanding, for instance, in poetry, prayer, or through taking on the role of a religious figure from the bible in their writing.
- Opportunities offered through Circle Time, or in the use of Prayer Journals or Mandalas give pupils regular chance to reflect, or consider situations and ideas. They benefit most from these activities when given clear direction as to their purpose.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship is good**

- Pupils act with reverence and respect during Acts of Collective Worship. They are very willing to participate, as demonstrated in their joyful and enthusiastic singing during a whole school assembly observed during the inspection, and their keenness to volunteer for special tasks or to engage in dialogue with the liturgy leader.
- Children have a good understanding of the seasons of the liturgical year, and the importance of key feasts and celebrations. Their involvement is evidenced in the school's record of such events as Remembrance in November, the Passion in Holy Week and the blessing of Advent Wreaths. Parents too recorded their positive views of how well the pupils responded to liturgical services in school.
- The 'Liturgy Squad', formed from pupils in all classes from Year 1 to Year 6, take a lead in organising classroom liturgies which occur at least weekly. They are becoming more skilled

in the use of scripture, ritual, and religious symbols and artefacts. Further modelling of the planning and leadership of classroom worship is included in the school's developmental plans.

- There has been a significant input from the visits of the 'In Reality' team from the diocesan Youth Service. Pupils, parents and staff have been energised by the enthusiasm conveyed by the team at various points in the year, increasing pupils' participation and engagement.
- Children are at ease when praying within their own community. They know how important it is to their spiritual development, and they all benefit, irrespective of their ability or faith background.

## PROVISION

### How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	<b>2</b>
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning.	<b>2</b>
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	<b>2</b>

### The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education is good

- Teaching is generally good in Religious Education lessons, enabling most pupils to make good progress as learners. Teachers generally have strong subject knowledge which aids them in planning appropriately to meet the needs of their pupils.
- They utilise a wide variety of approaches in order to maximise the engagement of pupils. Resources are used imaginatively to aid learning, so that music, drama, art, design and information technology all contribute to pupils' understanding.
- Where teaching demonstrates best practice, there are high expectations of pupils, their attention, their learning behaviours, and their potential levels of achievement. Lessons have pace and are carefully structured so as to introduce themes in a measured way, firstly inciting pupils' curiosity and interest, giving them the chance to discuss with each other before embarking on challenging tasks, set within time limits. The lesson objectives are clear, and the 'Driver' words are used to pitch lessons at the right level. This approach results in high quality work, presented with care.
- In contrast, there are some instances where teaching focuses more on the engagement of pupils in an imaginative activity rather than on the specifics of what pupils are to learn. In these examples, expectations are not high enough, and pupils' restlessness becomes

apparent. An increased focus on the 'Driver' words in the delivery of the lesson, the expectation of the quality of work produced alongside firm guidance of learning behaviours will reap further improvements in pupils' progress.

- Marking and feedback is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Teachers' comments are formative and affirming, and pupils have quickly taken to extending their learning through answering teachers' questions or requests for further information.
- Teaching assistants support pupils skilfully in Religious Education lessons. Their unobtrusive and helpful promptings keep individuals and groups focussed and involved.

### **The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is good**

- The school utilises the diocesan recommended programme for Religious Education – 'Come and See' – as its foundation for the curriculum. It is used imaginatively, and is supported by other materials, such as those provided by CAFOD to enrich the topics covered.
- The curriculum is also enhanced by special themed weeks, visits to local churches, use of the prayer garden and the outside environment.
- World faiths are given due prominence in the programme, with a visit for every child planned during their time in school to a synagogue, a mosque and the Holocaust centre in Newark.
- The curriculum draws on the expertise of the Head of School, in her role as Lead Religious Education teacher within the Diocese, to ensure that good practice from other schools and current Religious Education developments is shared with staff.
- The curriculum is customised to meet the needs of those pupils who cannot access it easily, with teaching assistants playing a prominent role in this regard.
- There are good opportunities provided to promote pupils' spiritual, cultural and moral development, and extra-curricular activities also lend richness to what is on offer.
- One outstanding opportunity is the Year 6 residential visit to The Briars Retreat Centre at Crich. Here the children's development during their time at Our Lady's is celebrated through meaningful experiences and a deepening of children's beliefs and commitment to their faith.
- The school meets the Bishops' Conference requirements of devoting 10% of curriculum time to Religious Education.



- Since the last inspection, the school has successfully embedded the Sex and Relationships Education programme 'Journey in Love' into its teaching, in consultation with parents.

### **The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is good**

- Prayer plays a central part in the daily life of the school for pupils and staff. Acts of Worship are given a high profile in the school and a range of good quality resources are employed to augment the provision.
- A programme of Collective Worship is planned and delivered each term, selecting themes that relate to the seasons of the Church's year, the current Come and See topics, particular feast days or national and international celebrations.
- A range of gatherings take place in each week – whole school, key stage or class based – and all members of staff are fully involved in supporting these. A number of senior staff members lead the larger gatherings; there are plans to grow the confidence of each member of staff to take on this role.
- Pupils are also involved in different aspects of preparing and leading worship. Each class has a regular opportunity to present a liturgy to the rest of the school, and these are prepared and presented with great care. Lent and Advent are two special times in the year when children gather each day to lead reflection with their peers.
- The ordained deacon from the parish is a regular visitor to school, and his contributions to acts of worship and children's understanding is valued. Governors too make time to join in liturgical celebrations. The school extends an invitation to all parents to its special liturgical celebrations.
- Staff are seeking to ensure that pupils are skilled in, and equipped to, lead worship, with some success. Further embedding of these skills would encourage a wider range of pupils to take the lead in this area.

## **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.	<b>2</b>
How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	<b>2</b>

## **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 good**

- During a recent period of turmoil and change, the Executive Headteacher, the Head of School and the staff have ensured that the Catholic mission of the school has retained its central prominence despite many other demands. The commitment of the staff to succeeding in providing the best possible Catholic education to the pupils is recognised within the school community and is a tribute to their dedication. Staff and pupils thus have a high regard for the Catholic Life of the school.
- With several changes within the governing body and leadership, the programme for monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school has proved difficult to implement. However, the governing body is now rebuilding, with outside expertise, and has started to organise its structure so that it can address again this important area.
- A key factor in ensuring that the Catholic Life of the school is monitored and evaluated effectively will be the agreed protocol and timetable for carrying out the evaluation cycle along with the implementation of strategic planning.
- The school's partnership activities, with local Catholic schools and with St Catherine's Catholic Voluntary Academy, is resulting in improvements in the school's provision and leadership and management, making a strong contribution to the achievement and wellbeing of pupils. Other outside agencies, such as the 'In Reality' team are also impacting positively on the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school's capacity for sustained improvement is now very good, with continued support from partners, and the establishment of a Head of School without classroom responsibilities from September.
- The positive impact of the leadership of the Catholic Life of the school can be evidenced in the views of parents and visitors who attend its liturgies: One visitor praised "a school which has depth and truly nurtures human wholeness".
- All canonical and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled.

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

- The subject leader for Religious Education brings extraordinary passion and expertise to the leadership of the subject. She has managed to ensure the support of the delivery of the

Religious Education curriculum in the school very effectively and to keep its development as a priority despite heavy additional responsibilities since the turn of the year.

- Over time, she has carried out a range of professional development and monitoring activities, such as presenting staff meetings, lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' workbooks, learning walks and pupil consultations.
- Standards of achievement have been supported through increasing staff confidence in formal assessment tasks and the moderation of assessment levels. A Religious Education action plan has had impact in a number of areas.
- There is now the opportunity to renew and refresh governor involvement in the monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education, best served by planned interventions and dialogue around careful strategic planning to address priorities.

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

## **OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS**

<b>How effective the school is in providing Catholic education</b>	<b>2</b>
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**The overall effectiveness of Our Lady of Sorrows School in providing Catholic education is good.**

- Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Primary School is providing a good Catholic education for its pupils, based around its powerful mission statement, displayed so effectively in the entrance to the school. The display shows a lighthouse – the 'Light of Christ' – guiding seven boats, six packed with pictures of a class of pupils and one with other members of the school community, as they make their faith journey through the school.
- The commitment of the current leadership of the school and all the staff has been a key factor in maintaining the priority given to Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Catholic Life of the school during recent months.
- The governing body is rebuilding and is urgently redeveloping its structures and roles in order to provide effective support and challenge and influence the strategic direction of the school.

- Pupils make significant contributions to and benefit greatly from the Catholic provision that the school offers. They enjoy their learning, and participating in the school's programme for Collective Worship, which is inspirational and well planned.
- Teaching in Religious Education is generally good, with much imagination brought to the provision of learning activities. There is scope for the high expectations seen in some areas to be made more consistent in all practice, along with clearer identification of the objectives that will keep pupils making progress.

## Recommendations

In order to continue to improve standards and provision in the school, leaders and governors should:

- Continue to recognise, research and share best practice in the teaching of Religious Education in order to provide for consistently outstanding quality, focussing on:
  - High expectations of pupils' achievement in all aspects of their learning
  - Developing the use of the 'Driver' words in all Religious Education lessons
  - Ensuring that learning activities deliver the clear objectives that target progress
- Continue to develop Collective Worship that is planned and led by pupils in order to increase their skill and confidence, and thereby supporting their public and private prayer.
- Develop the role of the governing body in promoting, monitoring and evaluating the school's Catholic education through agreed protocols and effective cycles that lead to whole school strategic planning.