
The Diocese of Hallam Section 48 Report

The Catholic Life of the School and Religious Education

Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School

Diocese of Hallam



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary School

School URN	141569
Name of Chair of Governors	Father Peter McGuire
Name of Head teacher	Mrs Mary Emmott
Date of inspection	Wednesday 14th June 2017
Section 48 Inspector	Mr Peter Davison

“ 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, average sized primary school with 228 pupils. It is a Catholic Voluntary Academy and is part of the Hallam Diocese.

The school serves the parishes of The Immaculate Conception, Spinkhill and The Sacred Heart, Clowne in North East Derbyshire, but pupils come from a wide geographical area, including areas of high deprivation. Relatively few pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals and few are of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.

Type of School	Primary Voluntary Academy
Age profile of students	4-11
Number on roll	228
Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register	21
Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	5
Number of Catholics on roll	176
Number of Other Christian Denominations	22
Number of other Faiths	4
No religious affiliation	26
School Address	College Road, Spinkhill, Sheffield, S21 3YB
Telephone Number	01246 432916
Email	mary.emmott@immaculate-derbyshire.co.uk
School Website	www.immaculate-derbyshire.co.uk

SUMMARY JUDGEMENTS

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

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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

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 contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school to an outstanding degree. They have a deep sense of belonging to their school and wider community. As one child reported: "This school is a nice safe environment and you learn something new every day." Another said: "In this school they help raise our self-esteem and self-belief by making us try our best all the time." All pupils interviewed expressed delight in reciting the school motto "Believe, achieve and be the best you can."
- They express their own views and feelings with confidence and show they understand their responsibility to be fair, just and forgiving of others. This, together with very high standards of behaviour, leads to there being a happy, secure and inclusive environment in which to learn and where pupils thrive.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. It is given the highest priority which is reflected in the mission statement. There is a tangible sense that the mission of the school is an inspiring statement that is lived out in the everyday lives of all.
- The school is a prayerful and joyful community and its Catholic character is reflected in the high quality learning environment seen in the corridors and classrooms.
- There is a tangible sense of family in all aspects of school life which is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between all members of the school community. They show respect and tolerance for one another, their teachers, support staff and visitors to school.
- The setting up of the Nurture Group is of great benefit in supporting children affected by bereavement, separation or experiencing emotional difficulties.
- The parish and school links are exceptional. Excellent relationships between the two ensure a shared vision and commitment to school improvement. The parish priest is a regular

presence in the school, knows the pupils well and they recognise his important role in the school community.

- Parents speak very positively about the school. They appreciate the approachability of the staff and the warm, friendly atmosphere they experience. They feel, in a very profound way, that they have no worries sending their children to school as it is such a happy, caring, safe environment where children exhibit compassion and responsibility. They all said their children love school, indeed, one parent of a child in Reception reported that their child was so enthused every day that they regularly came home saying: “This day was the best day of my life!”

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

- Pupils clearly enjoy their Religious Education lessons: “Teachers are really kind and their lessons are really fun”, “Even lessons that could be boring, the teachers make them exciting with a variety of activities so they are never dull or boring”.
- Pupils acquire knowledge quickly and are secure in their understanding. They develop a range of skills well, including the ability to engage with religious ideas and integrate them into their lives.
- The work in their books is of a very high standard and they take a pride in the quality of presentation. Achievement in Religious Education is high and in line with attainment in other core curriculum subjects.
- The well-established marking strategy is fully understood by pupils and they value the teacher comments which affirm what they have done well and make suggestions of how they can improve. This helps them to think more deeply about their work and gives them guidance on the next steps for learning.
- Pupils’ engagement in and enjoyment of their learning is evident by their interest, enthusiasm and excellent behaviour. They are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively through, for example, talking partners and group work. Visual presentation, drama, song and story effectively reinforce learning.
- Assessment procedures are well established and through moderation exercises staff are accurate in keeping records of attainment. Tracking systems and formal assessments enable staff to plan work carefully to ensure that all children make rapid progress.
- Pupils are developing the skills that enable them to reflect spiritually, think ethically and theologically and how this has relevance to their everyday lives.

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship is outstanding

- In an observed whole-school assembly, the story of Pentecost was presented in an exceptional way with a beautifully choreographed dance sequence. Together with two-part harmony, spiritual music and confident speaking all contributed to a liturgy that had a truly powerful and dramatic impact.
- Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in all aspects of worship; they are able to answer questions confidently and demonstrate good religious vocabulary.
- Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence both in class and in larger groups throughout the school. The school offers opportunities for all forms of prayer including spontaneous prayer and traditional prayer. Adults provide excellent role models in their response and participation in liturgy.
- Pupils have an excellent sense of respect for other faiths aware that religious beliefs are important. Reception children, in their study of Islam, were observed preparing and dressing up for an Eid party. They worked together in teams and the tasks set were appropriate and challenging. The children were highly motivated and keen to learn about significant celebrations of another world faith.
- In Year 6, a very moving, thoughtful and reflective act of worship was observed. On the theme of 'Christians have a responsibility to care for the sick', each child wrote their own personal prayer and petition on a star and all floated them in a water feature in the centre of the classroom display. Gathered in a circle they passed around a cross and were given the opportunity to articulate how we can follow Jesus' teaching in helping others in need.
- Classroom prayer tables and displays are imaginative, stimulating and well cared for.

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

- Teachers use their confident subject knowledge well. Teaching observed was at least good with much of it outstanding and was highly effective in enthusing pupils. Use of cross-curricular links ensured lessons were relevant and engaging. Music, role play, hot-seating, video, and drama were observed on the day of inspection. Pupils say that teachers make a lot of effort in providing them with interesting and exciting lessons. School leaders recognise that making greater use of technology to enhance learning should be explored.
- Teachers differentiate tasks well in order to meet a variety of pupil needs. Support staff are highly skilled and provide excellent care and support to pupils. They are deployed effectively and show sensitivity to pupils' needs.
- As a result of good assessment procedures, staff have a good awareness of their pupils' prior learning, making progress easier to plan for. Good open-ended questioning was observed in all classes. This enables pupils of all abilities to be challenged in their thinking and helps them acquire a deeper understanding of their work in Religious Education.
- Through a very effective marking system, pupils are involved in evaluating how well they achieve and are made aware of how to improve their work.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent religious literacy from Early Years through to Year 6 appropriate for their age and development.
- Teachers in all key stages have high expectations and plan challenging and focused learning activities. They ensure that a range of teaching styles are used and this, with good quality resources, results in a very good learning experience.
- All observed lessons were well planned and paced skilfully to maintain and engage the children's interest. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and respond with enthusiasm.

The extent to which the Religious Education Curriculum promotes pupils' learning is outstanding

- The *Come and See* programme of study is followed with supporting resources. This provides a robust structured plan that staff can follow and adapt to the needs of their individual classes.
- Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education fulfilling the requirements of the Bishops' Conference for England and Wales
- Many imaginative and well planned strategies are deployed to enrich pupils' learning. Activities such as role play, drama, music, art and ICT all have a positive impact on the curriculum.

- The Religious Education curriculum provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development. This was seen being undertaken in an outstanding manner in the work on the theme of Pentecost.
- Pupils explore the beliefs, values and customs of other faiths such as Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. This helps them to show tolerance and respect for all members of society.
- Children understand the need to help people locally, nationally and internationally raising money to support charities such as: The Good Shepherd, Mission Together, CAFOD, Build a Village, Children in Need, Fairtrade, British Heart Foundation, NSPCC, YMCA and Yorkshire Air Ambulance.
- The newly constructed 'Peace Garden', a collaborative venture by parents and the wider community, is an exciting resource to encourage tranquil reflection.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school is outstanding

- Staff and pupils regularly pray together and this is part of almost all school celebrations. The quality of communal prayer and joyful singing is an indication of their interest and engagement in liturgy.
- Vibrant displays and outstanding relationships evident in the classrooms and around the school illustrate powerfully the school's Catholic mission.
- Teachers are skilled in helping pupils to plan and lead liturgies and understand how this draws the school community together.
- Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned, with a wealth of prayer and worship opportunities taking place in the daily life of the school throughout the academic year. They are familiar with the traditional prayers of the Church and also contribute their own prayers to liturgical celebrations.
- The parish priest, headteacher and Religious Education coordinator work together to strengthen home, school and parish links and value school Collective Worship as a vital part of this partnership.
- The parish priest is the designated Religious Education curriculum governor and his liturgical expertise benefits the school greatly.
- Parents speak very positively about their experiences of liturgy in school and say they are given many opportunities to join pupils and staff in acts of worship. The weekly celebration of Holy Mass each Friday is well attended.

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
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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 highly effective leader. She is ably supported by a very good senior leadership team who share her vision and together they strive to make it a reality. Parents comment on how well all the staff get on with each other and this collegiate spirit has a highly positive effect on the atmosphere in school.
- The provision for the Catholic Life of the school is given high priority by leaders in the school's self-evaluation cycle. All leaders take the development and nurturing of an authentic Catholic ethos seriously. They conduct a range of monitoring activities relating to the provision and outcomes for the Catholic Life of the school leading to searching analysis and self-challenge. Parent and pupil surveys are used and appropriate action taken to address issues raised. Parents appreciate that any issues of concern are resolved very quickly and sensitively.
- The governing body are well informed and committed. Every class has a designated governor and they are known by the children through their visits and invitations to class celebrations. Governors carry out their duties extremely well in shaping strategic developments through the many key decisions they make.
- Teaching and support staff are highly valued. The Religious Education coordinator provides excellent support and guidance to all staff, particularly those who are not Catholic or are new to the school, to enable them to participate fully in the school's Catholic life.
- The headteacher values the role of the parish priest and together they play an active role in the Catholic Life of the school. Parents welcome this and appreciate the presence of the parish priest in school. Regular Holy Mass and special celebrations during Advent, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and at the beginning and end of the school year are particularly praised by parents.

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 outstanding

- Due to strong leadership in Religious Education, there is a shared common purpose amongst those involved in its teaching.
- Religious Education is recognised as a core priority for continued development and plays a prominent part in the school’s written improvement plan.
- The Religious Education governor, who is the parish priest and chair of governors, is supportive in his role and has an established relationship with the subject leader, staff and pupils. He plays a significant part in continued school improvement.
- Data analysis, Religious Education portfolios, lesson observations and work scrutiny ensures leaders have the information they need to maintain standards and work out strategies for future developments.
- The deputy headteacher, who is also the Religious Education Co-ordinator, manages the subject extremely well. Through enthusiastic commitment, good subject knowledge, excellent organisational and strategic skills and highly effective training and mentoring she has been outstanding in raising achievement and standards in Religious Education.

The 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 Immaculate Conception School in providing Catholic Education is outstanding

- Immaculate Conception Primary is an inspirational school providing exemplary provision for its pupils. The distinctive Catholic ethos is strongly evident in all aspects of school life. Pupils are extremely well cared for and they are well supported in their learning, development and wider well-being.
- Through excellent leadership and highly effective teaching, standards of attainment and pupil progress are outstanding. Teaching is at least good and much of it is outstanding. Well

established marking strategies, assessment and tracking of pupils' progress have led to high quality teaching and learning.

- The leadership of the school is strongly focused on the mission and ethos of Catholic Education as well as on raising standards. The headteacher is dedicated to the school and provides strong and effective leadership. She is well supported by a committed and skilled deputy head/Religious Education coordinator and a very knowledgeable governing body. They know the school well, its strengths and areas for improvement and so are well placed to steer its future development.
- The provision offered by the school is outstanding in developing Religious Education through a well-planned and relevant curriculum. This plays an important part in the moral, social, spiritual and social development of the pupils.
- Pupils have a strong sense of identity. Parents and visitors comment on how pupils are able to speak articulately about why they are proud to belong to the school. Pupil behaviour is excellent.
- Pastoral care is a strength. All members of the school community are valued, their uniqueness celebrated and their contribution to the life and work of the school is appreciated.
- The school has successfully met the recommendations from the previous inspection and Diocesan monitoring report with a notable impact on outcomes for individual and groups of pupils.
- Parents are very proud of the school and highly value its very distinct nature. There is a self-evident sense of a very unified school community all working together to make the school a safe, vibrant, exciting and highly successful place of learning.

Recommendations:

- Further raise the quality of teaching through the sharing of identified outstanding practice.
- Seek ways of informing parents and carers of what themes are being studied in Religious Education together with ideas of how they can support their children at home.
- Increase the use of interactive features of ICT to support and enhance teaching and learning.