

Diocese of Hallam



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

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

**ST HELEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
HOYLAND, BARNSELY**

School URN	106640
Name of Chair of Governors	Mr E Goddard
Name of Head teacher	Mr S P Harrison
Date of inspection	28th June 2012
Section 48 Inspector	John Greenwood

“ An enthusiasm for the things of God”

Introduction

The Inspection of St Helen'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 Helen's is a small Catholic primary school in Hoyland, a former mining village near Barnsley, within the Diocese of Hallam. The school is federated with two other Catholic primary schools, namely, St Michael & All Angels, Wombwell, and Sacred Heart, Goldthorpe. All three share a single governing body. The school is served by the parish of St Helen's and Sacred Heart and the Parish Priest is responsible for three parishes. The federation of the three parishes is known as Corpus Christi.

The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, those from a minority ethnic heritage and those who speak English as an additional language are below average. The proportion of children with special needs at School Action Plus or with statements is average. There is above average deprivation within the school community.

Fewer than 25% of the children are members of the Catholic Church but strong links are maintained with the parish and local community. Excellent acts of collective worship in school and in the church led by the Headteacher give all pupils, whatever their faith, valuable experiences of worship in the Catholic Tradition.

Type of School	Voluntary Aided Primary
Age profile of students	4-11
Number on roll	149
Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register	20
Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	3
Number of Catholics on roll	36
Number of Other Christian Denominations	85
Number of other Faiths	3
School Address	West Street, Hoyland, S74 9DL
Telephone Number	01226 742172
Fax Number	01226 742172

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education
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The overall effectiveness of Catholic education at St Helen's School is outstanding. The school has a caring environment where all members of the school community are nurtured and supported. Its distinctive nature as a Catholic school is clearly apparent in the displays around the school with each classroom devoting a special area to the current work and celebrations in Religious Education. The Headteacher, the two joint Religious Education Co-ordinators, Governors and staff, identify and address areas for development in the Catholic life of the school. The children are very well taught and cared for; they enjoy excellent liturgies and develop spiritually and morally whilst acquiring appropriate religious knowledge, skills and attitudes.

The behaviour of the children is outstanding. Children contribute to a variety of high quality acts of worship and a weekly liturgy in the church.

Teaching and learning in the school is outstanding overall with many examples of excellent 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 Parish Sister is a regular visitor to the school and her contributions to liturgies and the prayer life of the school is highly valued. Through the Religious Education teaching and visits, the children learn about other faiths and further enrich their knowledge of the world through supporting various charities. The school's link with Kenya has enabled all the children to have a real practical dimension to their fundraising efforts.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement
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The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. The development of the Catholic life of the school is clear both in the School Development Plan and Religious Education action plan. This is monitored regularly by the headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinators. The long-serving headteacher is totally dedicated to the school and provides dynamic and committed leadership to promote school improvement while at the same time never losing sight of meeting the emotional and developmental needs of all the children in a very caring way. The Federation governors are currently exploring ways forward to oversee the work of the three federated schools and manage the forthcoming staff changes and organisation. There are appropriate policies covering teaching and learning in Religious Education, Collective Worship and Sex and Relationships Education. The Religious Education Co-ordinators support colleagues and monitor teaching effectively through evaluating the children's learning accurately and providing effective support for colleagues. As joint Literacy and Religious Education Co-ordinators, they have an excellent overview of the standards achieved by the children throughout the school and consequently succeed in ensuring that there is an outstanding capacity to improve the school further. The school views the forthcoming publication and

implementation of a new programme for Religious Education very positively and has begun to use the 'Come and See' materials to good effect.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Involve Governors more in overseeing the work of the school
- Extend the work of the School Council to promote greater pupil voice in the life of the school
- Provide further opportunities for children to plan and lead worship
- Plan effectively for the implementation of the new 'Come and See' Religious Education programme to include new assessment arrangements

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils taking particular account of variations between different groups	1
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The outcomes for the children are outstanding as children of all abilities make excellent progress. The children obviously enjoy their Religious Education lessons and respond with enthusiasm. One year 6 child remarked that he particularly enjoyed Religious Education lessons as they were relaxed and he felt free to say just what he thought. Generally, the children think carefully during their lessons; they listen attentively, behave in a very respectful way and demonstrate a strong desire to do their best.

The collective worship assemblies enable children from Reception through to Year 6 to actively participate, and children of all ages are confident enough to contribute ideas and answers in front of the whole school. The older children could build on their work with the Parish Sister by being given more opportunities to have a greater responsibility in planning and leading liturgies. The children work very well together and cooperated very effectively in a Reception Religious Education Drama lesson based on the story of the Good Samaritan, and in other lessons to produce shared work in the form of posters, writing and ICT presentations. Visits to a synagogue and a Mosque, alongside their work on other world faiths, have enabled the children to gain a very good appreciation of the beliefs and practices of other faith groups.

The standard of written work in Religious Education is very good. Teachers provide differentiated activities for children of varying abilities and have begun to use the new 'Come and See' materials. In all classes the children enjoyed the PowerPoint presentations accompanying this new programme, but teachers are rightly aware that lessons will have a greater degree of variety as the programme is fully implemented. 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. Parents feel that this ethos helps their lives at home by the fact that the school gives their children a clear direction enabling them to make right choices.

The children's contribution to the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The children support the charitable activities enthusiastically and the Christmas Shoebox appeal is one that whole families get involved in. They also support Mission Together and Cafod. Through grandparents of one of St Helen's children the school has an excellent link with a school and particular pupil in Kenya. The children were very

interested to see the real difference their fund-raising was making to their neighbours thousands of miles away. Some children on the School Council would welcome the opportunity to have a greater say in the life of the school.

PROVISION:

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	1
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Overall, the quality of teaching is outstanding. Lessons are well planned and the teachers are looking forward to the forthcoming publication of the new 'Come and See' Religious Education programme. They have enjoyed using the available materials and report that the children have responded positively. Children's work is presented in a variety of ways such as pictures, PowerPoint, video and drama. There are strong links with ICT and podcasts and animations have been produced by the children as part of their Religious Education work. Lessons are well paced and encourage the children to use these other curriculum skills within a Religious Education lesson. Excellent support from teaching assistants is a significant contributory factor towards the success of Religious Education teaching and learning.

Effective assessment procedures have been put into place and teachers have become more confident in assessing the children's Religious Education work. The Religious Education Co-ordinators have played a particularly supportive role to implement and monitor how these assessments are carried out. Marking of children's work is good and is now linked with level descriptors for Religious Education standards. As assessment procedures with the 'Come and See' programme become more embedded, the criteria could be shared with the children (especially the older pupils) so that they can assess their own work.

The Religious Education curriculum is outstanding in meeting the needs of the pupils with the 'Here I Am' programme being used effectively up to the publication of the new programme. At least 10% of teaching time is devoted to Religious Education and through the use of whole school and class based collective worship, school liturgies and many other events the Catholic life of the school is made real and celebrated. There is an effective Sex and Relationships Education programme throughout the school with age appropriate lessons and very supportive work by the school nurse with the older children.

Provision for Collective Worship is outstanding. The Friday liturgy in church is a highlight of the week when all the children experience prayer and worship within the setting of the church building. The headteacher leads a daily whole school act of worship which the children clearly enjoy, singing with great enthusiasm and leading prayers and readings. 'Sharing Assemblies' make excellent links with the children's Religious Education work and the liturgical seasons. The support and input by the Parish Sister is valued highly by the school. One of the school's federation Governors, supported by catechists, leads a programme of sacramental preparation in all three federated schools which makes a very good contribution to home/school/parish links.

Federating with two other schools has given St Helen's children further opportunities to experience links with other communities. Most recently, a joint Olympic style sports event brought the children together and as the Federation becomes more

established links between the schools will promote Community Cohesion further. An excellent link with St Helen's School in Newham, London enabled the children to experience a wider, more diverse community. Children from Hoyland visited their new friends in London and a reciprocal visit is planned. Each year the children raise money and join the other Barnsley Catholic schools to celebrate the work of Mission Together. The links with a school in Kenya gives opportunities for the children to appreciate first hand the impact their charitable support has.

The school provides 'Rainbows' sessions for those children experiencing bereavement or loss of some kind. This programme has proved most worthwhile in supporting children feeling vulnerable and some parents were particularly appreciative of this special work of the school.

Parents are very proud of their school. One explained that the school welcomed all children irrespective of background or ability. 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	1
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The Headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinators, together with all staff and governors, develop the Catholic life of the school in an outstanding way. This is accomplished through the Headteacher's clear vision, high expectations and aims for the school which are understood and shared by all. All work to ensure that the Catholic faith is at the very centre of everything that happens. The Federation mission statement is lived out on a daily basis and its emphasis on nurturing individuals, reflecting gospel values, can be clearly seen in how children and parents are welcomed and cared for at St Helen's. Ideas from sabbatical experiences have had a positive impact on practice in the school. Celebrating Holy Week in school is a significant example of the status given to promoting the Catholic life of the school.

The joint role of the two Religious Education Co-ordinators has impacted positively on Religious Education provision. They both attend Co-ordinators' training and ensure that work in Religious Education is at the same high level as in other core subjects through guidance, support, work scrutiny and moderation. This could be extended to include lesson observations, perhaps including colleagues across the Federation. The development of the Catholic life of the school has a high priority in the School Development Plan and also has its own specific action plan, as well as appropriate policies which are reviewed regularly. As the Federation further develops, the governors could consider how best to act as key critical friends to the school, to gain further insight into Religious Education provision in order to effectively oversee the work of the school.

Monitoring of provision within school is carried out by the headteacher and Religious Education Co-ordinators and could be extended to include planned lesson observations and greater involvement of the children in assessment. All staff willingly 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 headteacher, through his 23 years of dedicated service, has led St Helen's to become a highly respected and much loved school where love and happiness abound.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

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

Overall effectiveness	1
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	1
<input type="checkbox"/> how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	1
the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<input type="checkbox"/> pupils' attainment in Religious Education	1
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	2
<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	1
<input type="checkbox"/> the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	1
<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	1
<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	1
<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	1
<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	1
<input type="checkbox"/> how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	1

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St Helen'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.