

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTION

# SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST. COLUMBA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
TONG STREET  
BRADFORD BD4 9PY

School URN	107326
School DfE Number	380 3335
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Chair of Governors	Mr. Bob Burton
Headteacher	Mr. Peter Spillane
RE Subject Leader	Mrs. Diane Todd
Date of Inspection	6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> October, 2010
Section 48 Inspector/s	Mr. David Gott

## INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Columba's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Bishop of Leeds. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self - evaluation.

The inspection schedule follows criteria set by the National Board of Advisers and Inspectors.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Columba's Catholic School Bradford is a larger than average primary school in the Diocese of Leeds. The school serves the recently reorganised parish of St. Mary which incorporates the two churches of St. Peter's and St. Columba's – the latter being situated immediately adjacent to the school.

Currently 332 pupils aged 3-11 are on roll (320 in 2006). The majority of pupils (75% ) are baptised Catholics. (80% in 2006).

The school is located in an area of high social and economic deprivation where 87% of pupils come from neighbourhoods classed as being in the lowest 30% of the deprivation index.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (44%) and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (31%) is above national average.

The majority of pupils (87%) are from a white British heritage (95% in 2006). A growing number of pupils for whom English is an additional language have joined the school since the last inspection.

The school employs 17 full time equivalent (fte) teachers. 13 (fte) are Catholic. (2006 14.5 fte teachers 14.5 Catholic). 14 teachers (fte) teach RE. 3 teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) or equivalent. (7 in 2006). 1 teacher is currently undertaking CCRS.

The school maintains very close home, school, parish links. The school is developing productive links with the two Bradford Catholic High Schools of St. Bede's and St. Joseph's.

The school has achieved "Healthy School's and "Sports Activemark" status and is currently working towards achieving the "Inclusion Charter Mark".

## OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

## CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

1

## OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS, PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

2

### Key:

- Grade 1:** Outstanding/Excellent in all or most respects  
**Grade 2:** Very Good/Good overall; may have some excellent features or some which are only satisfactory  
**Grade 3:** Satisfactory; may have some good or some less than satisfactory features  
**Grade 4:** Inadequate

## MAIN FINDINGS

St. Columba's Catholic Primary School provides a good Catholic education with a number of outstanding features. Outcomes for pupils and the provision for Catholic education are all good. The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. The pursuit of excellence in Catholic education has led to exceptional improvement since the last RE inspection (Section 48). The higher grades achieved in this inspection reflect this. St. Columba's is a school which knows itself very well, as evidenced by the production of a comprehensive and accurate Religious Education (RE) Self Evaluation Form (SEF) collated by the RE co-ordinator and corporately updated at regular intervals during staff training days. The school has worked very hard despite a number of staffing changes to improve standards in RE. From a low RE baseline on entry into the nursery, pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in RE as they move up through the school. Pupils generally enjoy and achieve above average standards of attainment in RE by the time they leave Year 6. Pupils with learning needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress as a consequence of good planning and good teaching by dedicated teaching and support staff.

St Columba's is a very warm, welcoming, "family friendly" school which lives out its mission statement: "Making Christ the inspiration for all we do in our school". There is a calm and purposeful learning environment throughout the school and pupil behaviour is very good. Home, school, parish links are very good. Parents and pupils say how much they enjoy the RE life of the school. They appreciate the "Wednesday Word" newsletter and the seasonal calendars, travelling cribs and prayer books which the school sends home at appropriate liturgical seasons. The governor with responsibility for RE (parish priest) is a frequent and popular visitor in the school who actively promotes strong home, school, parish links. Pupils are outstanding in their response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship and seasonal parish liturgies.

Pupil success in RE is celebrated at "rocket assemblies" with certificates and incentive stickers. All pupils are valued and respected.

The school's experienced leaders and managers (including governors) are outstanding in developing and adequately resourcing the Catholic life of the school and in the way they promote, monitor and evaluate this provision.

The senior leadership team (SLT), the governors, the parish priest and other leaders inspire the whole school/parish community to work together for the common good.

The school works in outstanding partnership with the local community in which it is located and with others in the area to promote community cohesion. The school actively supports “The Bradford Faith Trail” and The Bradford Interfaith Centre.

Morale is high at St. Columba’s and belief in the school’s success runs through all levels of staff and the governing body.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further:**

In line with the 2010/2011 School Development Plan (SDP) the school has correctly identified the following objectives to improve the effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic education:

- Continue to develop staff confidence in the use of the recently introduced new RE scheme: “The Way, The Truth and The Life”.
- In line with the above, continue to embed rigorous systems of monitoring and evaluation, including target setting and moderated assessments of pupil RE work, to ensure ongoing security of staff judgements of pupil work based on the new RE scheme.
- Continue to further enhance the variety and types of Collective Worship appropriate for each key stage – particularly in the area of dance/drama.
- Maintain and promote staff/governor training and development in RE as part of ongoing Continuous Professional Development (CPD) incorporating succession management planning.
- To raise the profile of evangelism in the home/school/parish relationship through exploring diocesan initiatives such as “Catholic Foundation Stones”.
- Consider incorporating the development of a “prayer garden” into any future planned improvements to the building and grounds.
- Familiarise recently appointed staff with the use of the school’s “Godly Play” RE resources in a future planned in-service training day.

## PUPILS

### How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups

2

Outcomes for pupils at St. Columba's School are good, taking particular account of variations between different groups of pupils.

The quality of pupils' learning and their progress in RE is good. Most groups of pupils make at least good progress. The quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress is outstanding. Pupils at St. Columba's are keen to do well, generally apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace. They generally seek to produce their best work and are interested and enthusiastic about their learning. Pupils' standards of attainment in RE for the final key stage are mostly above average. (75% level 4+).

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is good. Pupils take on responsibilities and participate constructively in the Catholic life of the school beyond routine lessons and activities including evaluating their Catholic education. Pupils show interest in the religious life of others and show care and respect for religious objects in the school. They understand the importance of key celebrations in the school throughout the liturgical year and in the parish community. Pupils are considerate to others and caring to anyone in apparent need. They actively respond to the needs of others beyond the school. Through fundraising in support of charities such as The Good Shepherd Fund and CAFOD pupils enjoy shaping the life of the school as active members of the school council. They show understanding of the need to forgive, be forgiven and have a good understanding of right and wrong.

The extent to which pupils respond to and participate in the schools CW is outstanding. A wide variety of vibrant acts of worship engage all pupils' interest and inspire in them deep thought and heartfelt response. Pupils regularly prepare and lead worship with confidence and enthusiasm from their earliest years in a variety of gatherings. Pupils are at ease and act with integrity when praying with others who have different beliefs and attitudes to spirituality.

# PROVISION

## How effective the provision is for Catholic education

2

The provision for Catholic education at St. Columba's School is good, with some outstanding aspects. The quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning in RE is good. The extent to which the RE curriculum meets the pupils' needs is outstanding. The quality of collective worship provided by St. Columba's is outstanding.

The quality of teaching in RE evidenced across all three key stages, is consistently effective in ensuring that pupils are motivated and engaged. RE lessons have high expectations. Learning objectives are made explicit. "Quick Guides" have been produced to support newly qualified teachers (NQT's), supply and support staff in the teaching of RE and in the provision of high quality Collective Worship. The school makes full use of diocesan RE support materials and advice. As a result of good assessment procedures, teachers and other adults plan well together to meet the needs of all pupils. Support provided by the other adults is well focused and makes a significant contribution to the quality of learning.- particularly for those pupils with learning needs and/or disabilities. Teachers generally have strong subject knowledge which inspires and challenges the more able pupils and contributes to their good progress. As a result, in most lessons, pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well and make good progress. Good and imaginative use is made of the plentiful RE resources, including technology to maximise learning. Over the last financial year (2009-2010) a total of £5642 was approved by governors for expenditure on RE resources. This included £2000 for the purchase of the new RE scheme for the whole school. All classrooms (14) were visited during the inspection, and all had prominent, vibrant prayer corners with high quality RE displays incorporating pupil work reflecting the current RE topic. High quality RE artefacts including the Bible and seasonal liturgical objects to assist reflective prayer, were evidenced. Pupils are provided with detailed feedback, on their RE work both orally and through marking. As a consequence, pupils know how well they have done and can discuss what they need to do next in order to sustain good progress. Teachers listen to, observe and question groups of pupils during lessons in order to reshape tasks and explanations to improve learning. The RE curriculum effectively provides pupils with a deep insight into their Catholic Faith and helps pupils see it in relation to other World Faiths. Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and is a key part of every school celebration. Prayer opportunities for staff and pupils are planned in a manner that attracts parents and parishioners to attend seasonal liturgies in the school. Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned, appropriate to their faith backgrounds and shows progression. The themes, chosen by pupils and staff, reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission and include the spiritual aspirations of all pupils.

The school actively co-operates with the parish family. Effective and productive links exist between the school and the parish. Parishioners are invited to attend school masses. Similarly pupils enjoy attending seasonal liturgies in St. Columba's Church (eg " Harvest Mass"). The school and the church choirs frequently combine for special events such as the recent 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary mass to celebrate the opening of the church. Many pupils are altar servers and staff often read at parish masses.

# LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

Leaders and managers are outstanding in developing the Catholic life of St. Columba's School. They are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. This is reflected in the School Development Plan, Self Evaluation Form and other RE policy documentation.

Self evaluation at all levels within the school is a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, searching analysis and self challenge. This leads on to well targeted planning and actions taken by the school often creatively conceived with key partners. As a result pupils have highly sophisticated understanding of the school's mission, share its purpose, are keenly and actively involved in shaping and supporting it. Pupils are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community.

The way leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for RE, plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils is outstanding. As a result, outcomes in RE for most pupils are good and some are exceptionally high.

The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school is outstanding. Weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities are met. Governors make a highly significant contribution to the work and the Catholic dimension of the school - especially the very experienced chair of governors and the governor with the responsibility for RE (parish priest). In discharging their statutory and canonical responsibilities, governors have robust systems for evaluating the effectiveness of their implementation, keeping the work of the school under review and acting upon their findings. Governors are innovative, flexible and adapt to new ideas quickly, supporting the work of the staff in improving outcomes for all pupils. Governors are confident in providing high levels of professional challenge for its Religious Education to hold the school to account. The governor with responsibility for RE (parish priest), is a very familiar and well respected figure in the school. Pupils, staff and parents very much enjoy his regular visits. The headteacher provides governors with regular reports and answers questions posed by the governing body. Governors engage very effectively with parents, pupils and the staff as a whole and are well informed about users' views of the school. Governors use these views to inform their strategic priorities for inclusion within the School Development Plan.

The extent to which leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupils well being is outstanding. St. Columba's participates fully and actively in developing and implementing a variety of partnership activities. For example year 6 attend the diocesan Vocations Day event. A joint retreat day is planned with a partner school at Myddelton Grange. During advent, a visiting Christian dance/drama company (St. Barnabas) worked throughout the school on the RE theme of "light" These activities themselves, and/or the resulting improvements in the school's provision and leadership and management, make an excellent contribution to pupils' good and often outstanding achievement and well-being. Pupils benefit significantly and develop exceptionally well in a number of areas which the school alone could not provide. For example pupils benefit from the support of Bradford Education and diocesan music staff in choral singing. As a consequence, pupils were invited to take part in events surrounding the recent Pope's visit.

The extent to which leaders and managers promote community cohesion is outstanding. Leaders and managers work with others beyond the school to ensure that pupils are given

opportunities to enter into dialogue and collaborate with people from different backgrounds. In the context of the distinctive identity of the Catholic school the inclusion of all is a central goal and a shared vision. Pupils have visited places of worship such as temples (Hindu and Sikh), a mosque and Bradford Anglican Cathedral. Speakers and performers from different cultural and religious backgrounds have been invited into the school. The school actively promotes pupils' initiative in learning about and supporting charities at local, national and global levels. For example Catholic Care and CAFOD. St Columba's School is an active member of the Localities Area Partnership (LAP). Within the school, there is concern, respect and hospitality shown towards others. Pupils' friendship bonds cross cultural/faith/social and economic boundaries. Acts of Collective Worship leave room for the other person's spiritual identity, their modes of expression and their values. Pupils participate in neighbourhood and religious community activities, which bring them close to people on the margins of society and those who suffer. For example the school fund raisers for the Padre Pio Centre for homeless people in Bradford

**INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS SUMMARY**
**Grade<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Overall effectiveness</b> – How effective the school is in providing Catholic education.	<b>2</b>
<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</b> <i>Taking into account:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</li> <li>❖ the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress</li> <li>❖ pupils' attainment in Religious Education</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>2</b>  <b>2</b>  <b>1</b>  <b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school</b></li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship</b></li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<b>How effective the provision is for Catholic education</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The quality of teaching in Religious Education</b></li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The use of assessment to support learning in Religious Education</b></li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs</b></li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The quality of collective worship provided by the school</b></li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School</b>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How well leaders 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></li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils</b></li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met</b></li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being</b></li> </ul>	<b>1</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion</b></li> </ul>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1: Outstanding/Excellent in all or most respects; Grade 2: Very Good/Good overall; may have some excellent features or some which are only satisfactory; Grade 3: Satisfactory; may have some good or some less than satisfactory features; Grade 4: Inadequate