

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

HOLY SPIRIT CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Bath Road, Heckmondwike WF16 9EA

School URN	107748
School DfE Number	382-3336
E-mail address	head.holyspirit@kirklees-schools.org.uk
Chair of Governors	Mr. Peter Moreland
Headteacher	Mr. John Cooper
RE Subject Leader	Mrs. Louise Jefferson
Date of Inspection	1 st December & 9 th December 2010
Section 48 Inspector	Mr. Mark Brennan

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School was carried out by one Inspector over a period of approximately 1½ days 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.

The inspector visited each class group to observe either Religious Education teaching or Collective Worship. He held meetings with the Headteacher, RE subject leader, staff, Parish Priest, governors, pupils, Catholic Care worker and parents. He examined school documentation including the RE subject leader's file, planning and assessment files, monitoring and evaluation records, meeting minutes, questionnaires, pupil books and work etc. He also shared in the celebration of Mass with the school community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School serves the two parishes of The Holy Spirit, Heckmondwike and Our Lady of Unfailing Help and St Paul of The Cross, Cleckheaton. Pupils are drawn from a wide surrounding area including Heckmondwike, Liversedge, Gomersal, Cleckheaton, Batley West, and Dewsbury.

The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher (SLT) started in their roles in September 2008, though both of them have been working in the school in other capacities for a number of years. This factor has ensured a very smooth and successful transfer of responsibilities from the previous SLT to the new. Six of the eight teachers hold a CCRS qualification and are Catholics. The other teachers are practicing Christians.

Approximately 72% of the 207 pupils attending the school are Catholics. Of the remaining children approximately 10% are described as Christian whilst 5% come from other faith backgrounds. The rest declare themselves as having no faith. The school has approximately 6% EAL and 9% Ethnic Minority pupils.

Various adaptations and improvements have been made to the building and to provision generally since the last inspection, including the addition of a new ICT Suite, staffroom and administration offices. The school is set in its own grounds, enjoying the benefits of a large field and secure fencing on all boundaries. The building has been well looked after over the years and provides a good learning environment.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 is Satisfactory, 4 is Inadequate

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

2

Main findings

The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School is providing a good Catholic education for the pupils it serves. Some features of provision are outstanding especially Collective Worship and elements of Leadership and Management. The capacity for the school to sustain improvement into the future is very strong. The school's caring ethos and tangible sense of renewed purpose amongst staff and pupils are a credit to the leadership team and governors. This school knows itself and knows where it wants to go. As one of the governors commented, "We are always looking for ways to improve."

Since the last inspection there has been a drive to increase the roles and responsibilities of the governing body so that they can provide more strategic direction, constructive challenge and informed support to the Headteacher and his staff. This significant achievement is already having an impact on provision and impact for pupils. The school has also improved its monitoring and assessment procedures largely through the focused and dedicated commitment of the RE Coordinator. At the same time, there is recognition that more development is needed in this area so that teachers and senior managers can be clear about the progress and attainment of pupils – especially once the new Religious Education scheme (The Way, The Truth and The Life) is embedded from September 2011.

Pupils make good progress within RE given their starting points. In some classes progress is outstanding. Pupils leave the school with a good understanding of their faith and a positive and well-informed attitude towards the faith of others. Pupils facing challenging family circumstances or those with particular learning needs also make good progress as a consequence of good planning and teaching by dedicated staff, including support staff and outside agencies. The small number of children from other faith backgrounds is supported well and on occasion their experiences of faith are actively used to enhance learning. The school has a small number of pupils for whom English is not their home language. Provision for these pupils has been made successfully so that they can be included in all the school has to offer.

Parents and pupils say how much they enjoy the RE and faith life of the school. They are appreciative of the Friday Assemblies which include the celebration of pupil achievement and a focused liturgy based on the key values the school is promoting. They appreciate the 'Wednesday Word' newsletter though the school is considering producing its own version of this publication. Parents speak about the staff at Holy Spirit as, "Brilliant." They appreciate the visibility of the Headteacher and the approachability of all the adults working in the school. The Parish Priest actively promotes and supports the faith life of the school. Pupils are outstanding in their response to and participation in the school's Collective Worship. Links with the parish are excellent. The school welcomes parishioners and friends into school and children visit the Church as often as once a week at some times in the year.

The Holy Spirit is an active member of the local Catholic pyramid of schools and works closely with St John Fisher Catholic High School to ensure that the overwhelming majority of pupils choose to transfer there when they leave. The school also works closely with other local schools. These links help to ensure that pupils have a good sense of their place within a faith and civil community and can benefit from additional opportunities such as musical events and sporting activities.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

In order to improve on what the school already does the leadership team and governors should:

- ◆ Continue with existing plans to introduce the new Religious Education scheme 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' from September 2011.
- ◆ In line with the above, embed rigorous systems of marking, monitoring and evaluation, including target setting, moderated assessments of pupil RE work and whole school tracking.
- ◆ Given that the school has introduced the new International Primary Curriculum, and is working hard to identify key learning skills, consider engaging the school community in the creation of an over-arching statement of mission or motto which could be placed on letterheads, newsletters, notice-boards etc. to help focus on the key faith objectives of the school.
- ◆ Consider the possible benefits of introducing a structured EPR (Education in Personal Relationships) programme supported by guidance from the Diocesan Education Service.

PUPILS

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

2

Children at the Holy Spirit make good progress in Religious Education. Attainment is in line with national averages, which is good considering their starting points. Children's behaviour is very impressive. Most of them readily concentrate for extended periods of time in their lessons. Pupils are keen to participate in the learning activities and in more successful lessons they are involved in very practical and creative tasks; they are encouraged to work as teams and to discuss learning tasks with peers. Stronger lessons also feature pace, humour, challenge, role play and thoughtful differentiation. Where lessons are less successful teaching is always at least satisfactory and is usually good.

Pupils benefit from generally positive and thoughtful feedback from teachers in their marking. However, there is a need for teachers' comments to be more consistently focused on specific learning objectives and next steps for success rather than punctuation or presentation.

At the time of the inspection the whole school was marking the season of Advent and children were learning through the theme of Gifts. In the Foundation Stage they shared with each other the special gifts (mostly cuddly toys) that they had been given by people they love. In Year 1 the children spent some very reflective and reverent time thinking about the promises they could make to God as gifts during Advent. Year 2 enjoyed interviewing a shepherd, played by their teacher and in Year 6 the children took part in an

inspiring lesson where they had to work out the theme they would be studying from 6 photographs they had been given. During this lesson the children came up with the words: Gifts, Life, Creation, Respect, Peace and Love.... all very valid suggestions given the photographs they had been given and perhaps also a perfect illustration of the spiritual understanding these children gain during their time at the school. Children from other faith backgrounds are encouraged to contribute their own experiences and knowledge to discussions. A boy in Y6 was asked about the giving of gifts at Divali and a girl in Year 1 was able to recognise that the Muslim word for God is Allah.

Pupils take on responsibilities very enthusiastically and confidently. Older children who are Prefects help to supervise younger pupils during playtimes. Team Captains ensure that the Reward system works efficiently and fairly and children are trusted to behave sensibly even when adults are not with them. The inspector enjoyed speaking to various individuals and small groups of older and younger children in unplanned and planned encounters on corridors and at lunchtime. These conversations were mostly with children who were happy, confident, eloquent, knowledgeable and very polite. Children are used to the expression of their spirituality and the inspector observed that they were generally reflective, reverent and respectful during times of prayer and worship. This is especially evident when teachers and adults are confident in doing the same, for example by sharing personal experiences, thoughts and feelings with their pupils. The inspector particularly enjoyed his interview with the School Council. The children were able to express their views and ideas with confidence and enthusiasm.

Display around the school is good. All classes have prayer corners/focal points and children's work features prominently. Correct liturgical colours are evident throughout the school to help children understand the changing seasons of the Church calendar. Advent wreaths were a consistent feature of Collective Worship and classroom display. Symbols intrinsic to the Catholic faith, such as the Crucifix and statues of Our Lady and Christ are placed in strategic locations throughout the school.

The decision has recently been made to prepare children for First Confession and First Communion within school. This decision was taken following consultation with parents and the Parish Priest. The children will be using the Year 3 booklet from 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' as part of the programme.

The school has put a great deal of effort into making Collective Worship a strength. Staff training has taken place and the Deputy Headteacher, who is also the RE Coordinator, is a leading exemplar of excellent practice. Liturgies are well planned, monitored and recorded. Staff pray together whenever they meet. They also enjoy formal liturgies at the beginning of term and for important events such as Remembrance Day or the beginning of a new RE topic. Children are always active participants in liturgies. They play music, sing, read scripture out loud (even in the youngest classes), clap hands, create displays or focal points, dress up and dance. When offered the opportunity children respond with impressive maturity to moments of prayer and silent contemplation. 'Godly Play' is a strength in Year 5 where pupils show a deep and tangible sense of spirituality and respect for others. The school would benefit from using the expertise it has to ensure that it takes place in younger classes as well.

The inspector attended a school Mass in the Parish Church, which is next door to the school. The response, reverence and concentration demonstrated by the children, from the youngest to the oldest were very good. The children are encouraged to attend Mass on Sunday and they are actively involved in the proceedings of the Parish Mass once

every month. The school judged itself to be good on Collective Worship. The inspector believes it to be outstanding.

Children are taught to empathise with each other's needs and emotions. They know what is right and wrong... One child in Foundation Stage told his teacher just before lunch, "If we remember to say please and thank you to the dinner ladies they will love us." In Year 5 a child showed exceptional sensitivity in a conversation with the teacher about respect for other people's beliefs.

Children in the school have a good understanding of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. Since September 2009 they have raised over £2,250 towards causes as diverse as the Haiti Earthquake, CAFOD, Catholic Care, The Samaritans, Mission together and Mary's Meals. The school has a direct link with a Mission in Peru through a former Parish Priest.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
• the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
• the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
• pupils' attainment in Religious Education	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

2

The provision made for Catholic Education at the Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School is good. Teaching is good overall but there are some outstanding elements. Most children including those who find it more difficult to learn, have made good progress in Religious Education by the time they leave the school. Children enjoy their lessons and concentrate very well. All teachers and adults enjoy very good relationships with children. They care for them and listen to them. Teaching strategies vary across the school but better examples use imaginative and creative ideas, high quality resources, differentiation and a variety of assessment for learning techniques. Teachers are supported well by the RE Coordinator with advice and resources, some of which have been produced by the Diocese. ICT is used in RE across the school to good effect. It is used to illustrate teaching points, to confirm understanding – for example through the designing of power-point presentations and the illustration of learning outcomes. The school has effective assessment and monitoring arrangements in place to give adequate information on the standards reached by children though there is a need for this area to be further improved when the new RE scheme is introduced. The school would improve the quality of learning and assessment by ensuring that lessons always have a clear learning objective linked to short and medium term assessment opportunities and if learning was explicitly placed within the context of previous learning and future learning.

The school has started using the International Primary Curriculum this September. It is hoped that children will be able to enjoy more lively, exciting and memorable learning experiences through this initiative. Children are taught to respect and understand the traditions and beliefs of other faith groups. The school recognizes and celebrates the feasts and traditions of other faiths at an appropriate level. Children have been involved in the making of miniature Prayer Mats and the celebration of Eid. They know about the Jewish festivals of Hanukkah and Passover. At the same time they know about central and important traditions and feasts of Catholicism. They pray to Our Lady in October and May, they fast in Lent, they took a very active part in celebrating the visit of Pope Benedict, they participate in role play activities to illustrate the Sacrament of Baptism and they have a clear understanding of the difference between Advent and Christmas. The children in KS1 were rehearsing for their Nativity Play during the inspection and KS2 were preparing a performance of Babushka. Children in KS2 have the opportunity to go to Confession in Lent and Easter and Pentecost (a special time for the school because of the name it holds) are celebrated throughout the school in a variety of ways.

The leadership of the school has given appropriate priority to expenditure on the RE and faith life of the school. £700 was spent during 2009-10 and £500 has currently been allocated to RE for 2010-11. As a result of the purchase of the new RE scheme, spending will be approximately £2000 in 2011-12.

Parents are increasingly encouraged to contribute what they can to the school and the leadership team conduct surveys and seek views on key ideas for change. The Parents' Association raises large amounts of money for the school through the dedicated work of a number of very committed people.

The school is served to a high standard by the caretaker and cleaners. The building is clean, tidy and well maintained. Leaders and managers have ensured that there is a good quality learning environment and good learning and working facilities for children and adults. The school is secure and is a safe place for children to be. There are plans to improve disabled access to the building during 2010-11.

Children enjoy a residential retreat experience in Year 6 annually. This takes place at Myddleton Grange in Ilkley. Children have great fun on the walks and undertaking team building exercises but they also spend an appropriate amount of time in periods of reflection and prayer.

Children facing challenging family situations gain support from a well qualified and highly experienced student support worker from Catholic Care. This enables these children to access the opportunities the school provides to reach their full potential academically, physically, socially, spiritually and morally. Parents greatly appreciate this provision. Catholic Care also works with the whole school community as required.

The school currently has no systematic programme for the teaching of EPR. Parents were unsure about the need for this, but the inspector would recommend that the school could usefully look at this issue within the guidelines recommended by the Diocese.

Collective Worship is outstanding at Holy Spirit. It is a feature of school life which is a central but normal part of every school day. Staff, pupils, parents and parishioners enjoy frequent opportunities for prayer. Pupils demonstrate very spiritual and thoughtful responses to liturgy from the youngest to the oldest. The school has a strength in singing and music and this is helped through links with the Catholic High School, Catholic pyramid

and the involvement of the Diocesan choral training service. The success of Collective Worship is of course due to the developing expertise of all staff and that is the result of the commitment, vision and leadership of the RE Coordinator and Headteacher.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching in Religious Education.	2
The use of assessment to support learning in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

2

The extent to which leaders and managers are developing the Catholic life of the school is good, with some outstanding features. Leaders and managers have developed effective systems for ensuring that all stakeholders' views are included in the consultative process of reviewing and creating the School Improvement Plan. The Headteacher supported by the governing body demonstrates a clear commitment to the mission of the Church by providing an increasingly rich, broad and balanced curriculum with spiritual and moral development a priority.

The Headteacher has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of his school and knows where it has to improve in the future. He has achieved a good balance between driving an agenda of change and recognising the need to celebrate the existing good features of the school.

The Headteacher and Deputy headteacher have adopted a number of systematic monitoring procedures to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the school. The vision demonstrated by the governors and Headteacher bode well for the future continued success of the school.

The membership of the governing body has changed significantly in the last few years. However, this has produced a stronger and more active body and led by the dedicated and experienced Chair of Governors they have established a good balance of challenge, support and strategic direction for the headteacher whilst accurately understanding the limits of their responsibilities. The governors know what is going on in the school and they work effectively with the Headteacher to identify the next steps for further improvement. Most of the governors are in the school regularly and because many of them are parents they have a keen interest in the activities and policies it pursues. The governing body has improved its performance since the last inspection and this aspect is now very good.

The school has developed a good relationship with its neighbouring Catholic Schools and works within an active partnership contributing to events such as an annual choral performance at the High School, a variety of CPD opportunities and numerous sporting fixtures and tournaments. The well developed link with Catholic Care contributes greatly to the provision the school can make that would normally be beyond the capabilities of similar schools. The school makes a positive and valuable contribution towards the

cohesion of the community, especially between the parish, parents and itself. Children respond very positively to the needs and sufferings of others, both locally, nationally and internationally. They are also able to respond spontaneously when given the chance – one group of older children picked blackberries and sold them to raise money for Children in Need.

The school has only a very small number of children from other faith or cultural backgrounds and EAL children are also few in number. However, the school takes active steps to ensure that all faiths and cultures are respected and included in the curricular and extra-curricular life of the school. Parents report that, “No group is left out and all pupils and families feel welcome and included.”

The Parish Priest, when asked to sum up the school’s strengths said, “Every child is helped to understand the worth, value and dignity of every human being.” The school should continue to strive towards this higher purpose. It certainly has the capacity to do it.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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.	1
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
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.	2
How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being.	1
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	2