

# DIOCESE OF LEEDS



## DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

### CANON LAW 806 FINAL INSPECTION REPORT INCORPORATING SECTION 48

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

ST ROBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL  
AINSTY ROAD, HARROGATE,  
NORTH YORKSHIRE HG1 4AP

School URN

121642

Date of S48 inspection and  
OE grade

4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> April 2019  
Outstanding

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Chair of Governors

Helen Mills

Headteacher

Jill Collins

RE Subject Leader

Maggie Newby

Date and grade of last S48  
Inspection

July 2014  
Outstanding

Section 48 Inspector/s

Patricia Ainge

## INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 Requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:** how effective is the school in providing Catholic Education.

1

*The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:*

**CATHOLIC LIFE**

1

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

1

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

1

### Summary of key findings:

#### **This is an outstanding school**

- All leaders have a shared, clear vision for the school. They are passionate in their desire to achieve the best for each child and are highly committed in their mission to promote Catholic education in the school and in the wider community.
- A clear sense of mission is evident throughout the school. This is expressed in the newly reviewed mission statement which begins with a quote from St Mark, *Everything is possible if you believe*, and which is owned by all stakeholders.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She was appointed in 2016 following a period of instability in the school and has led the school forward rapidly to achieve the current outstanding outcomes. She leads by example and values all stakeholders. This, together with the example set by the rest of the leadership team, has resulted in a strong sense of community within the school and a clear sense of vocation where all staff work together to achieve a common goal.
- The senior leadership team, which includes the Religious Education (RE) coordinator, is highly effective. Each member brings different skills to the team and they work together tirelessly to ensure that a wealth of opportunities are offered to all pupils.
- The governing body have a thorough understanding of their role as a critical friend to the school and offer both challenge and support. They are a visible presence within the school.
- The highest priority is given to all aspects of the Catholic nature of the school. When approaching any item for discussion, governors always ask the question, 'Where is the Catholicity in this?'

- Catholic social teaching is evident throughout the school. Pupils take their responsibilities to themselves and others very seriously and are involved in a wide variety of roles of responsibility and outreach.
- The environment speaks clearly of the Catholic ethos. Displays are of a high quality and give excellent witness to the Catholic nature of the school. A prayer garden is established and pupils are able to access this independently.
- RE leadership is excellent. The RE coordinator was appointed as part of the headteacher's drive to improve standards and her appointment has been a great success.
- Teaching is never less than good and in some cases is outstanding. Lessons show variety and pupils are always engaged and enthusiastic about what they are learning.
- Assessment is now well embedded within the school and moderation takes place within school and with other Catholic schools in the Bishop Wheeler family.
- Leaders and governors are thorough in their monitoring and evaluation of the standards in the school and use their findings to inform plans for improvement.
- Attainment is good to outstanding with Key Stage 1 (KS1) showing most children achieving at expected levels in 2018 and Key Stage 2 (KS2) showing almost all children achieving either at or above expected levels. Current attainment is very high.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are courteous and friendly and show respect both for themselves and for others.
- Collective Worship is excellent with pupils' planning and leading of worship being well embedded within the school. Pupils are exposed to a variety of worship and engage with respect and reverence.
- Pastoral care is a high priority for the school and is extremely effective.
- The school works productively with other schools and with outside agencies for the benefit of all pupils and staff. School leaders and governors have recently made the decision to join the Bishop Wheeler Multi Academy Trust and are currently beginning this process.
- Parents are highly appreciative of all that the school does and feel both valued and supported by the staff and governors. They particularly appreciate the approachability of the headteacher and the way they are kept informed of school events and news.
- All areas from the last Section 48 inspection have been addressed and the school has made significant progress in addressing those of the latest Canonical return.
- All canonical and statutory duties are fulfilled.

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

- Continue to ensure improving progress by
  - Developing differentiation further so that pupils who show greater aptitude are given greater challenge in all classes.
  - Sharing the excellent practice that is present within the school to help achieve more lessons that are outstanding.
- Develop the high standard of pupil-planned worship further by encouraging pupils to introduce more creativity in their acts of worship

## **Information about this inspection**

The Inspection of St Robert's, Harrogate, 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 and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2017).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- How successfully the school has addressed the points for improvement arising from the last inspection and the latest canonical review.
- The provision made by the school for Catholic Life, RE and Collective Worship.
- How children contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their RE.
- The quality of teaching in RE and how well pupils respond to this.
- The RE curriculum and how well it promotes pupils' learning.
- How well children contribute to and benefit from Collective Worship in the school.
- Leadership and management and how well they promote and monitor the provision for Catholic Education at this school.

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one and a half days:

- The inspector was given a tour of school by the headteacher. This included a visit to the prayer garden.
- Teaching and learning was observed in all classes over both key stages
- Interviews were held with the headteacher, the RE leader and the Collective Worship leader, the senior leadership team, several governors including the chair of governors, the parish priest and youth minister, staff including support staff, a group of parents, the head boy and head girl and a group of pupils, some of whom were Mini Vinnies and some of whom were prefects.
- A range of Collective Worship was observed, including several acts of collective worship prepared and led by the pupils, a whole school act of worship prepared and led by the Year 6 prayer group, a whole school assembly and class worship led by different members of staff.
- A sample of work was scrutinised from all classes and three books were closely examined to view progress.
- A comprehensive set of documentation was scrutinised including the Diocesan Self-Evaluation form (DSEF), the RE leader's file, monitoring records, governors' minutes, action plans, canonical returns for the last three years and a moderation folder.
- Other evidence was noted during the inspection, for example displays, classroom environments and pupil behaviour.

## **Information about this school**

- St Robert's is a slightly larger than average primary school which serves the 2 parishes of St Robert's and St Aelred's. These cover a very large and diverse socio-economic area of Harrogate.

- There are 279 pupils in the school at present, of which 84% are Catholics. 9% are of another Christian faith, 1% have another faith background and 5% have no religious affiliation. Pupils are taught in 10 classes.
- 35% of pupils have English as an additional language and in total, 21 languages are spoken by the pupils. This number is higher than the national average
- There are 13 teachers including 4 who are part time and of these, 12 teach RE. 7.3 (f.t.e) of those teaching RE are Catholic. 3 of the teachers currently have the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.
- 8% of pupils are eligible for Pupil Premium Funding, 12% are registered as Special Educational needs and Disability (SEND) and 7 pupils have an education and health care plan.
- There have been no exclusions in the last academic year.
- The school has well established partnerships with other Catholic primary school and are currently beginning the process of joining the Bishop Wheeler Multi Academy Trust.
- Since the last Inspection the school leadership team has completely changed. After an interim Head in spring and summer 2016, a new head joined the school in September 2016 and a new senior leadership team was formed. This included appointing a new RE coordinator.

## Full report - inspection judgements

### CATHOLIC LIFE

#### The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	<b>1</b>
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	<b>1</b>
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	<b>1</b>

- The Catholic life of the school is given extremely high priority by all stakeholders. One of the actions of the current headteacher was to create a new mission statement for the school and all stakeholders have been involved in this. The inspiring strapline, *“Everything is possible if you believe,”* a quote from the gospel of St Mark, has helped raise expectations for all and pupils and staff have dedicated a lot of time to exploring this mission and what it means to each of them. Parents commented on how sometimes pupils quote the mission statement when at home.
- Pupils take responsibility for living out this mission in many ways, both in their daily interaction with each other and in their willingness to take on roles such as prefects, Mini Vinnies, School Council, Prayer Group and Eco Group.

- They demonstrate a clear understanding of the need to care for others and they embrace many opportunities for outreach by supporting charities and those in need, for example Harrogate Homeless, Catholic Care at Christmas and Cafod.
- The school has recently taken part in Kids Aloud, a charity movement organised by the Rotary club in Harrogate. They hosted a visit by children from Nepal as part of this project to support them. A large group of pupils then took part in a concert at the Royal Hall in Harrogate, performing with other local schools and the Nepalese children.
- The establishment of the Mini Vinnies has been one of the positive moves made by the school to enable pupils to be proactive in their care for people beyond the school community. One of the themes the Mini Vinnies chose to explore was the plight of refugees. As part of this they undertook a walk of refugees, walking around the playground and stopping to reflect at different points, on the journeys that refugees are forced to make. Pupils confidently explained that not only do they raise money but they also raise awareness of issues within their community. Together with the School Council, the Mini Vinnies are widening the opportunity for pupils to evaluate the Catholic Life of the school.
- Living in a Catholic community has a strong impact on the pupils and they can articulate how the gospel message impacts their lives. All pupils, from the youngest to the oldest, follow the 3 golden rules which underpin their mission statement - *Be Ready, Be Safe, Be Respectful*.
- Christian virtues are a focus in school and all pupils and staff are enthusiastic in their ownership of these. Staff, pupils and parents all spoke confidently about the need for respect which was the most recent virtue explored. Parents praised the impact that the virtues were having on the pupils.
- The school is currently reviewing the whole curriculum so that it is underpinned by Catholic Character Values. There is great enthusiasm for this among school leaders and a trial topic has already been studied in Year 6 (Y6).
- All stakeholders are very proud of the school and there is a clear sense of belonging among them. Staff, governors, pupils and parents all spoke of the feeling of community they experienced within the school and how highly they valued this. An example of how this is promoted is found in the way Y6 become special friends to Reception when pupils first join the school, friendships being formed which last throughout the year and often beyond.
- Pupils are offered many other opportunities for responsibility and they embrace these enthusiastically. These include the opportunity to be prefects as well as to be part of the Eco group or the prayer group. Two pupils are selected to be head boy and head girl.
- All pupils display a reverent and respectful attitude to Collective Worship whether it is led by adults or pupils. They join in readily and with enthusiasm whether in class or in the hall. From their very early days in Foundation Stage they take part in helping with worship, preparing the focus or lighting the candle. This is built on each year until by Y6 they are planning and leading acts of worship for the whole school.
- The behaviour of the pupils is excellent both in and outside the classroom. They have excellent role models in the staff and older pupils set a very good example to younger ones.

- The personal social and health education of the pupils is of a high standard. All pupils were very positive about feeling safe and secure and knew to whom they should go if there was a problem. They were confident that these would be sorted out. The school places great emphasis on the personal development of each pupil and employs the Fish philosophy to underpin this, pupils being encouraged to follow the four Fish principles – *have fun, be present, change your attitude and make someone's day*. There was great excitement in the celebration assembly when the names of the Big Fish and the Little Fish for the week were announced.
- Relationships are excellent between all stakeholders. The culture of respect and of potential fostered by the Mission statement gives everybody the feeling of being valued. Parents commented with appreciation on the way any problems would be sorted out immediately and said how much they valued the openness and approachability of all staff
- The chaplaincy provision is excellent. The headteacher is supported in her role as chaplain by the parish youth minister who is a great asset to the school. She is a regular visitor and brings many opportunities to the pupils. For example, Y6 have begun working towards Faith Awards.
- The environment speaks of the Catholic ethos. From the moment you enter the school it is clear that this is a Catholic school. Displays are varied and high quality. Each classroom has a dedicated RE display which reflects the liturgical year and also a prayer focus.
- All leaders and governors are involved in monitoring and promoting the Catholic Life of the school. Comprehensive strategic planning documents are in place such as the DSEF and the School Development Plan, which gives RE a high priority. Further documentation evidences the monitoring and drive for improvement, such as the subject leader's file on RE, canonical returns, action plans and a new moderation portfolio.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Religious Education is outstanding

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	<b>1</b>
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	<b>2</b>
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	<b>1</b>

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning in RE. They take an active part in lessons and listen attentively to staff and to each other during discussions. They are encouraged to question and to comment on each other's ideas. As a result of all of this, the standard of their work, both oral and written, is high.

- A period of instability several years ago has resulted in historic data being inaccurate but it is clear from work scrutinies and lesson observations that current progress in both KS1 and KS2 is very good. Progress from KS1 to KS2 is outstanding.
- Different groups of pupils perform exceptionally well in KS2 and most of them achieve well in KS1. Current data shows an improving pattern.
- Teaching is good with some being outstanding. A revised planning sheet has been introduced which has enabled staff to focus on learning points more readily. Driver words are used in all classes, learning objectives are shared and I Can statements are used to track attainment and progress.
- Deeper questioning is enabling pupils to think more deeply but pupils of a higher ability would benefit from more challenging tasks from time to time.
- Pupils show a high level of religious literacy appropriate to their age. They are able to show how the gospel has a message for today and what impact this has upon their lives and the lives of others.
- Behaviour in lessons is outstanding. All pupils observed remained on task and enthusiastic regardless of whether an adult was working with them or not.
- Teacher knowledge and expertise is never less than good and some is outstanding. All teachers have access to Continuing Professional Development (CPD), which ensures that this continues to improve.
- Staff have very high expectations of pupils and this is reflected in the quality of their work and their attentiveness in class. It has a very positive impact upon the pupils in that they too have high expectations of themselves.
- Support staff are well deployed throughout the school and are effectively used in RE lessons to enhance the learning. Although they are often designated as one to one support for specific pupils, they use their own initiative, moving to help other pupils as necessary. They always meet with the relevant teacher at the beginning and end of the day to discuss the work to be done and the achievement made.
- Marking follows the school policy and pupils are encouraged to review and redraft their work where appropriate. A new marking plan is being implemented which includes evaluation lessons, where a focused amount of time is allowed for pupils to discuss and share their work before redrafting it. Pupils explained how they really appreciated this and enjoyed getting new ideas from their peers. They felt it had a very positive impact on their learning.
- Pupil conferencing also takes place where sample groups of pupils discuss RE with senior leaders. The information gathered from these discussions is then used to inform planning.
- In most cases, the pace of lessons is good and in some, it is outstanding. In a small minority of classes, time management could be improved.
- RE is well resourced and teachers make very good use of resources during lessons. These vary from visual aids to technology. In Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), a child confidently went to get an iPad and took a photograph of the cross she had just made.
- Achievement is regularly celebrated throughout the school. All classes have recognition boards where pupils are invited to add their name if they have achieved something in particular. Celebration assembly is held each week during which a Star of the Week is chosen from each class and using the Fish philosophy criteria, a big fish is chosen from KS2 and a little fish from KS1.
- The school uses the Way, the Truth and the Life as the core RE curriculum but teachers supplement this with other resources and ideas, enhancing the learning for all pupils.

- RE is clearly a core subject at the school, teaching time being in line with and often exceeding statutory time.
- Curriculum RE benefits from the leadership of a highly skilled and committed member of staff. She was appointed to this post as part of the newly created senior leadership team by the current headteacher and has had a significant impact on the teaching of RE. She has a thorough understanding of the subject and of the staff and their capabilities. She offers both formal and informal support for teachers and provides an excellent role model.
- Leaders and governors have a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that standards are high. Work scrutinies, lesson observations and learning walks form part of this and written records are kept. The findings are always used to inform future plans and improvement.
- CPD in RE and the Catholic life of the school is ongoing, the school sourcing external support as well as in-school support to help their teachers develop.

## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

### Collective Worship is outstanding

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	1
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and the quality of worship is excellent. Pupils experience a range of liturgies throughout the year from simple class prayer to Mass. They are reverent and prayerful in both whole school and class based acts of worship and join in prayers and hymns with enthusiasm.
- Pupil planning and leading of Collective Worship is well established within the school. The school has in place a clear set of expectations for each year group and all classes follow these. In EYFS the children helped prepare the focus during a simple act of worship. This is built on in KS1 where pupils prepare the focus themselves, often choose the prayers and readings and then lead the whole act of worship for their classmates. In KS2, this is developed even further and pupils take it in turns to regularly plan and lead whole acts of worship for their classmates until, by Y6, they are planning and leading whole school worship with great success.
- Pupils' attitude and response to their own classmates planning and leading worship is excellent. They are reverent and thoughtful, reflective and enthusiastic as appropriate. They join in hymns and prayers wholeheartedly.
- Pupils confidently use artefacts and technology to support their planning and leading of worship. In an act of worship in Y6 with the theme of 'faith', an image on the Smart Board had the sentence "Sometimes the only transportation available is a leap of faith." The worship then explored this. Lower down the school pupils passed

round prayer stones while they reflected in silence and all classes could explain the artefacts chosen in an age appropriate way.

- All acts of worship demonstrate the pupils' thorough understanding of the Church's liturgical year, themes, prayers, readings and colours being chosen appropriately by them.
- All worship includes exploring what the message of the chosen reading is for the pupils today and ends with a mission for the pupils to follow. In pupil-planned worship this exploration of the Bible reading is done by the pupils themselves. This daily reflection on the message the gospel holds for them today is having a clear impact upon their personal development.
- The purpose and direction of the Collective Worship offered is clear. Themes of worship follow the liturgical year and also support other themes and occasions important to the school such as the work being done on virtues.
- The Collective Worship coordinator is a source of strength and support for other staff. She is supported in her role by all leaders who provide good role models for the pupils and less experienced *staff when planning and leading Collective Worship. They all have a thorough understanding* of the liturgical year and always ensure that the worship is suited to the age of the participants. A highly effective whole school act of worship focusing on the first three Stations of the Cross engaged all pupils by making the message very simple and clear and offering opportunities for reflection and participation. Despite the adult nature of the theme, the whole act of worship was geared towards the pupils' own lives and how they today could live the gospel.
- Parents and other stakeholders are offered many opportunities to attend Collective Worship and the response is very good. Parents are highly enthusiastic about the strong teaching of the faith that the pupils receive, believing that the focus on virtues is having a strong impact. One parent commented, 'The mission statement drives everything.'
- Leaders and governors are highly effective in prioritising Collective Worship and they perform regular monitoring and evaluation. This is both formal and informal. Records are kept of formal monitoring and informal monitoring is followed by verbal feedback and discussion.
- Leaders ensure that staff have access to good quality CPD in order to develop skills and understanding and expose them to new ideas.
- The school has strong links with the parish. The parish priest is a frequent visitor to school to celebrate Mass and the youth minister is a great asset, supporting liturgy and providing an excellent link with the parish. The school strongly supports the sacramental preparation, which is done in the parish.