

NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN INSPECTION REPORT ON DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

AUTUMN 2009



**The Priory Catholic Primary School,
Eastwood
NOTTINGHAM
NG16 3GT**

Date of Inspection: 11th December 2009

(Section 48, 2005 Education Act)

SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

Name and address of School:	The Priory Catholic Primary School Raglan Street Eastwood Nottinghamshire NG16 3GT
Headteacher:	Mr Anthony Harrison
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Kate Holmes
Date of Inspection:	11th December 2009
Inspection Team:	Mrs Joan Stannard Mr John Honey
URN & DCSF Numbers:	URN 122815 DCSF 891 3763
Overall Grade Awarded:	2

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

The Priory Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average sized school. It serves the children living in the parish of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Eastwood. Of the 171 children on roll, 63% are baptised Catholics, 29% are from other Christian backgrounds and 8% come from other World Faith backgrounds. The children have a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds. Academic attainment on first admission to school is broadly in line with national norms. The number of children identified with additional educational need is average while the number with an entitlement to a free school meal is below the national average.

B. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?

The overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school is good with several aspects of its work that are outstanding. The children benefit from very high quality care whatever their individual needs may be. Each child is known personally. The Priory. The impetus to maintain this environment is provided by the excellent leadership of the Headteacher. He is very well supported by all staff. Relationships with other key groups, including parents and the parish, are outstandingly good. The children respond wonderfully well to this and share with each other the

excellent care and concern that they have received. The school is a harmonious and happy place. In order to improve provision still further there are some areas to develop though none is a serious problem.

Teaching and learning at The Priory is good. The RE co-ordinators have vision and are committed to improvement. In the last year they have set up a sound system for monitoring which informs school development. Children enjoy learning in RE and standards are high compared with their starting point. They are reflective and are encouraged to think about key characters in the Bible and how they would react and feel. The quality of marking enables children to make improvements in RE and assesses work against learning objectives. The development of teaching about other faiths would improve the curriculum.

Following the last inspection, there were four areas to address. Not all of these have been fully accomplished.

GRADE:2

C. The capacity of the school to make further improvements and why.

The new Headteacher has been in post for just over a year. The Section 48 Self Evaluation Form has not been reviewed since May 2007 and is therefore out of date. This means that no comment can be made about its accuracy as a tool to support continuing development. It should be a priority for the school to fully complete this important document but also to be aware that the recommended template may change shortly.

There is however very good evidence to assert that the school has an excellent capacity to achieve further improvement. The main evidence is in the passion for improvement that is so evident in both the Headteacher and his colleagues. They don't feel that they have all of the answers themselves, but they are happy to take advice and to develop their levels of expertise when necessary.

GRADE:1

D What steps need to be taken to improve the provision further?

The Priory is a successful school and it has many strengths. Nevertheless, like all good schools, it is determined to continue improving provision. We recommend it focus on the following targets.

- Develop opportunities to support children in creating and leading acts of worship resulting in their gradual and growing independence.
- Develop structures to effectively monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school.
- Instigate contacts with other cultural and faith groups and consider opportunities, where appropriate, to make use of some of their prayers
- Further develop the monitoring of attainment through moderation of standards and the tracking of progress.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and Management

1. How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?

The governing body of the school is fully committed to the continuing development of the school's Catholic life. It is actively involved on a regular basis and each governor is allocated an area of special interest. One of them focuses on Religious Education, but it is not explicit that the Catholic life of the school is also included in that remit.

Leadership within the school is outstandingly successful in setting clear direction which promotes very high quality care of each child. This extends to the wonderfully sensitive management of a continuing special needs situation.

Relationships with parents and parish are very well promoted. Much time is committed to this, but care must be taken that it does not make unreasonable demands on the Senior Management Team. Parents are routinely invited into school, and in particular to the weekly Celebration Assembly. They respond enthusiastically, recognising and appreciating the excellent work done by the school.

The promotion of the children's spiritual and moral development is good. It helps to create the harmonious environment that pervades the whole school. The local clergy have a positive impact. Both parish priest and deacon are frequent and welcome visitors. An area for governors and school to develop is more formal monitoring and evaluation of the school's Catholic life. Greater confidence is needed in this process as it will enable more incisive information to be gathered and ultimately lead to yet higher standards.

Grade: 2

Collective Worship

2. How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The quality of provision for Collective Worship at The Priory School is good. The Eucharist is celebrated regularly for various groups with the children very much involved in preparation and readings. Acts of Worship when Mass is not celebrated are also good. There is very effective use of music to help create the right mood and a well arranged focus point. Children gather calmly with very 'light touch' management. This indicates that it always happens this way and that these are occasions the children really enjoy.

The children's response to Acts of Worship is in fact excellent. In one instance, a child gave an outstandingly perceptive response to a question about the Prodigal Son parable and its connection to the school's Statement for the Week. Children are not yet starting to take on roles as leaders or creators of Acts of Worship, but they do have the potential to begin the process.

Planning for liturgies and worship are extremely thorough although the assessments afterwards are not so well established.

Taken together, the various styles of worship have a good impact on children's spiritual and moral development. Some children are able to identify how their learning has had a positive effect on their relationships at home.

Grade: 2

3. Community Cohesion

How effectively the school promotes community cohesion:

inwardly (within the school);

within the local faith community (parish and education communities);

and the wider social, cultural and educational communities.

The Priory is an extremely harmonious school and the children enjoy attending. They say they feel safe and that staff always have a smile. That situation exists because leadership at every level is constantly working to ensure that the school community is inclusive of everyone and respectful of the dignity of each individual. All staff are outstandingly successful in that endeavour and the children themselves reflect those same qualities. Relationships with parents, parish, partner Catholic schools and Diocese are very well promoted. The Priory School works effectively with the local civic community. The children participate in a range of sporting and musical initiatives. Links with Beauvale Priory are very good. The local community however cannot supply suitable resources to enable the school to develop its links with other cultural groups. It is already in the school's planning to address this issue. The school is very successful with its charitable work.

The inclusive nature of the provision for prayer is good but there is the potential for extending the range of prayer formats being used. The Religious Education curriculum promotes Community Cohesion well, although there is scope for work on other World Faiths to be enhanced.

Grade: 2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards

4. How well do learners achieve?

The children enjoy learning and their behaviour is outstanding. Few learners under-perform and attitude to work in Religious Education is very positive. Children work well in pairs, small

groups and independently. They are reflective and describe the feelings of people in the Nativity stories with sensitivity.

Given the starting point of the children, achievement is high and standards in RE compare favourably to those in English. Progress is seen across all year groups, although it is more rapid in some. Achievements are celebrated in the school during the Friday assembly. Attitude, behaviour and academic achievements are rewarded.

There is no significant difference between groups of learners. Spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Children are involved in supporting one another in class, in the dining room and on the playground and they make children new to the school feel welcome. Cultural development needs a higher profile in the school to strengthen understanding of the cultures and faiths of the wider community and our world.

Grade: ... 2 ...

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

5. How effective are teaching and learning?

The teachers' knowledge of the RE curriculum is good and the Headteacher and staff are committed to RE being a central part of school life. As a result children make good progress and their learning extended. Prayer corners and displays reflect the importance of the subject in school.

Pupils with additional learning needs are supported well, Where best practice is seen, differentiated activities are given. Teachers challenge learners to think spiritually and theologically. Children are aware of the importance of living out their faith in everyday action. Assessment is good and children's work is marked well, indicating key objectives and areas for improvement. Formal assessments at the end of topics are carried out. The moderation of attainment levels given needs to be carried out. This will affirm that standards are tracked with accuracy and teachers are confident in their assessments. Parents are supportive of teaching and learning, including the talking homework programme based around the 'statements of belief' scheme.

Grade: ... 2 ...

6. How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?

The RE curriculum engages children well. They particularly enjoy drama activities and sharing ideas in groups. Y6 children have opportunity for meditation and reflection built in to fast-paced lessons. The children in Priory school are enthusiastic and responsive. The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the *Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools*, although for Year 3 children, sacramental preparation encroaches too much on Religious Education time. This is not in accordance with Diocesan policy. The Here I Am syllabus is followed and enriched with the use of the resources from the Frank McDermott scheme 'Statements to Live By'. Links into CAFOD materials, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning and circle times are valuably explored in topics.

ICT is used in teaching. Literacy skills are developed through Religious Education, for example in writing diaries, interviews, poems etc. The curriculum also makes a very significant contribution to children's spiritual and moral development and teaches them to respect one another.

The curriculum is built around the Church's year and the teaching of Jesus in such a way that pupils make progress in their knowledge and understanding. The Christmas story is covered in an interesting way with children thinking carefully about the feelings and emotions of key characters. The opportunity for children to think and reflect is being well developed and is a strength of the school. They have taken part in a large number of fundraising projects including Shoe Boxes, NSPCC and the Harvest CAFOD link with the church.

Grade: ... 2 ...

Leadership and Management

7. How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?

The leadership of the RE co-ordinators (Headteacher and Deputy) is outstanding. They effectively lead the staff, monitor teaching and learning and have clear plans for monitoring work and assessments. This drives the school improvement plan and developments in RE and Liturgy. Their good practice and ambition for the school will support all members of staff to improve standards even further and hopefully to become good middle managers who can take on the role of core subject co-ordinators in the future.

Professional Development is given to all staff through staff meetings, attendance at Diocesan Co-ordinator meetings and two days of training for a Newly Qualified Teaching. A substantial budget supports the RE curriculum. Very good links exist with the Diocese. There is a good and growing link with the parish.

The Headteacher and Deputy are strongly focused on the Catholic Mission of the school. They are passionate about their work and have a clear vision which has led to high morale amongst all staff. Inclusion of all learners is seen as a priority. The impact of this has been the good progress made by most children.

Resources are well used and there are plans to extend these further. Accommodation has been greatly improved in the last twelve months and includes an attractive prayer corner in the entrance hall.

Governors are very loyal to the school and work hard to support it. There is now greater involvement in the school life through meetings with co-ordinators. These need to be clearly focused and to continue in the future.

Grade: ... 1 ...

Common grading scale for all inspection judgements

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school and its provision for community cohesion; 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic Religious Education curriculum, its main strengths and areas for development 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the capacity to make further improvements 	1

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction which promotes high quality care and education and leads to improvement 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of the leadership of the Headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes learners' spiritual and moral development 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of the involvement of the local priests on the work of the school 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the leadership promotes relationships and communication with key partners in education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated 	3
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school and its frequency 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners' response to the school's provision 	1

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how effectively the provision is planned, monitored and evaluated 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well the liturgical life, prayer and Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners 	2
How effectively the school promotes Community Cohesion?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how effectively leadership at all levels promote community cohesion within the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the efforts of the school to promote community cohesion with the wider Catholic faith and education communities 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how well does the school work in partnership with the wider education, cultural and social communities 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the inclusive nature of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and the liturgical life of the school 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how far the Religious Education curriculum promotes community cohesion 	2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners' success in achieving challenging targets including qualifications and learning goals, with trends over time and any significant variations between groups of learners 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the standards of learners' work 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential, with any significant variations between groups of learners 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which learners enjoy their work 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the behaviour of learners 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which learners' contribute positively to the school and broader community in the school 	1
How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well teaching is used to meet learners' needs and curriculum requirements 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the suitability and rigour of assessment in planning, monitoring and informing learners' progress 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the diagnosis of, and provision for, additional learning needs 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning and development 	1
How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum matches learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how far the Religious Education curriculum meets external requirements and is responsive to local circumstances 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the curriculum in Religious Education contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum contributes to learners' enjoyment and achievement 	1
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively whole school and subject leadership in Religious Education lead and support their staff 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively performance in Religious Education is monitored and improved through quality assurance and self-assessment 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve their potential 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are well taught 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the adequacy and suitability of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve high standards 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which governors discharge their responsibilities 	2