

# NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN INSPECTION REPORT ON DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

**Autumn 2010**



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School  
Mere Close,  
Mere Road,  
Leicester.  
LE5 3HH

**Date of Inspection:** 12<sup>th</sup> October 2010.

**(Section 48, 2005 Education Act)**

## SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

<b>Name and address of School:</b>	<b>Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Mere Close, Mere Road, Leicester. LE5 3HH</b>
<b>Headteacher:</b>	<b>Mr. G Hirst</b>
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	<b>Rev. Mgr. J Lally</b>
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> October 2010</b>
<b>Inspection Team:</b>	<b>Mrs Anne Recchia &amp; Mrs Helen Booton</b>
<b>URN &amp; DfE Number:</b>	<b>120222      856 3422</b>
<b>Overall Grade Awarded:</b>	<b>2</b>

### A. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart is a larger than average primary school in the Highfields area of Leicester within the Catholic Diocese of Nottingham. This part of Leicester is recognised as being one of high social and economic deprivation. This is reflected in the profile of the school with pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and for whom English is an additional language being higher than national figures. By the same token, the percentage of pupils eligible to take a free school meal is also higher than the national average.

The current number on roll is 356 with 52.8% baptised Catholics. 25% of pupils are from other Christian backgrounds and 8.9% of pupils are from other faith backgrounds with 12.9% having no religious affiliation. The numbers of pupils with a statement of special educational need is in line with the national figure, as is the proportion of pupils overall with special needs and/or disabilities namely 17%.

Due to the ever-changing population dynamics in the area, a high number of children enter and/or leave the school at various times throughout the academic year. Despite this, considerable efforts are made to ensure that school attendance data is in line with national statistics. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Reception class and part-time time Nursery provision. The local community is supported by the neighbouring Children's Centre which maintains close links with the school.

# INSPECTION SCHEDULE

## B. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

### GRADE: 2

Sacred Heart provides good quality Catholic Education for its pupils.

Leaders at all levels have a very strong sense of the Church's mission in Education and to that end they actively seek to create and maintain a truly Catholic environment in which the children learn. The children are worthy representatives of the school's values, demonstrating very good relationships both with each other and with the staff. They respond eagerly to the needs of those experiencing hardship.

Pupils thrive in a safe, secure environment which is bright, stimulating and well-ordered. On display there are reminders of the shared values (posters, icons, artefacts and pupils' work). Prayer Life and Acts of Collective Worship are good and sometimes outstanding; these aspects of school life make a difference to the lives of the pupils. Behaviour in and around school is exemplary and effective strategies are in place to resolve promptly any issues should they arise. The Religious Education curriculum meets the needs and interests of the children very well. Children work with enthusiasm and in the majority of lessons make good progress. Therefore, outcomes for pupils are good.

The senior leadership team has recently been re-structured following staff promotion but remain focused on continuing to bring about improvements and raising attainment. The rigour being applied to achieve this, now needs to be directed systematically towards monitoring and evaluating Religious Education so that identified priorities influence future school development. The monitoring of the Catholic Life of the school is developing well. Leaders and managers recognise that the information gathered now needs to be evaluated more systematically and form part of the strategic planning of the school.

### C. What does the school need to do to improve further?

At The Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, the strengths of the school far outweigh the areas for improvement. However, all good schools recognise the need for further improvement. Therefore, we recommend that leaders at all levels, including governors, focus on improving:

- strategic planning in order to bring about further developments in Religious Education and the Catholic Life of the school
- standards of attainment in Religious Education by
  - developing more thoroughly detailed medium and short term planning systems
  - identifying groups of learners through the tracking of assessment data
  - more careful differentiation in lessons so that pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenged
- collective worship by ensuring pupils acquire the relevant skills for planning, leading and delivering acts of collective worship

## **D. The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

### **GRADE: 2**

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is good. Leaders and managers are extremely motivated. Since the last inspection, all associated with the school have worked tirelessly to address areas of concern and bring about significant progress. This has been recognised by Ofsted, which has judged that the school has moved from 'notice to improve' to 'good'. The steps taken to promote improvement since the last section 48 inspection in December 2005 are satisfactory but some of the recommendations are still relevant.

Further improvements in Religious Education will emerge with the development of assessment procedures and a more rigorous approach to the tracking of pupil progress. The school should now focus on identifying trends over time and ensuring that the needs of different groups, especially the more able pupils, are provided for. This will serve to inform and improve the planning of teaching and learning and thus raise attainment in Religious Education.

All governors must continue to share the vision and ambition of the chair and senior leaders. In so doing, they can support the school's drive for improvement, influence the strategic direction of the school and make a significant contribution so that future developments build on the successes achieved thus far.

## **PUPILS**

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

#### **GRADE: 2**

The majority of pupils at Sacred Heart begin their life at school with little or no knowledge or understanding of the Catholic faith. In the main they make good progress throughout the school and achieve standards in line with National expectations by the end of Key Stage 2.

Pupils in the Foundation Stage are confident in the use of simple prayers and rituals of the church. In a lesson observed pupils were able to demonstrate their basic knowledge and understanding of the key elements of the sacrament of Baptism through drama and directed play.

By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is still a little below the levels expected, but progress is good. The low starting point of the children however, is obvious in both lessons and in written work. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 maintain this good progress. Pupils at the end of this Key Stage are able to analyse, understand and interpret Biblical passages so that they have a significance in their own lives.

Where good progress is evident pupils engage fully in the lesson, understand the learning objectives and enthusiastically direct their work to achieve challenging targets. Pupils with learning and emotional needs are well catered for with intervention groups and support from adults. Teaching assistants are well managed and ably support pupils in their learning, ensuring those less able make progress at the same rate as other groups.

Where progress is less evident, pupils are not clear about the learning objective and the steps they need to take to achieve this. Generally there are no significant variations

between groups of learners. However, in some classes, high achieving pupils are not sufficiently challenged to achieve high standards. Care must also be taken to ensure work in parallel year groups is well planned in order to ensure every child has the same entitlement.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good. Since the last inspection the school's population has changed considerably. Pupils from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe have been welcomed into the school and their rich diversity is celebrated by all. (Over 26 languages are spoken in the school). Pupils quickly settle and make good progress both in the Foundation Stage and further up the school. Celebrations throughout the year offer opportunities for pupils to engage in their own Catholic faith and the faith and traditions of others. Pupils respond enthusiastically to these. Religious Education lessons play a significant part in the moral, spiritual cultural and social development of the children. There is a real sense of belonging to the Catholic community at Sacred Heart School. Pupils, from a very early age, develop skills and attitudes that demonstrate they understand the Gospel values of love, respect, forgiveness and reconciliation. They are able to work cooperatively in groups, in pairs and independently. They develop strong and supportive relationships with one another and with the staff.

Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities, such as class monitors and School Council members. Plans to introduce a chaplaincy team would further develop pupil involvement in the running of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves and give generously to local, National and International charities.

Pupils take full advantage of opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development. The numerous intervention strategies and emotional support and care offered, ensures every child really does matter in Sacred Heart School. Further opportunities now need to be developed for the children to evaluate both this and the Catholic life of the school so that they have a clear voice in its future development.

Pupils respond and participate well in Acts of Collective Worship. They are reverent and prayerful, responding well to different forms of prayer and worship. From a very early age they learn traditional prayers of the church and can participate at their own level in regular prayer services. In a whole school act of collective worship observed during the inspection, pupils were able to engage with the theme of giving, through prayers, bible readings, drama, music and song. Class based worship tends to be more informal but none the less the response of the children is still reverent and respectful. Opportunities for the pupils to prepare and lead their own Acts of Collective Worship would further develop their skills and support both their private and their public prayer life.

# LEADERS AND MANAGERS

**How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils**

**GRADE: 2**

At Sacred Heart School, leaders and managers are developing the Catholic Life of the school to a good standard. The head teacher is passionate about Catholic education and is a major driving force. He encourages his colleagues in the Catholic fraternity to come together under a 'soft' federation, so that the Catholic presence is sustained and developed within the local area. He is ably supported by his senior colleagues on the recently re-structured leadership team. Together they have worked tirelessly to bring about significant improvements and raise attainment.

All leaders and managers have a strong commitment to the mission of the church. This is clearly evident in the way in which they fulfil their respective roles. They have engaged with a range of monitoring activities and so can identify accurately the strengths and weaknesses of their school. The monitoring the Catholic Life of the school is developing well. The chaplain, who serves as a link governor for Religious Education, supports the spiritual needs of both staff and children. In spending the day as a teaching assistant, he has gained valuable insight into the Catholic Life of the school. He regularly monitors acts of collective worship and provides written and oral feedback.

Leaders and managers are now well-placed to undertake a thorough evaluation of this information. They recognise the need to formulate the way forward into an over-arching, cohesive, strategic plan to ensure that on-going searching analysis and self-challenge continues. Implementing such a strategic plan will serve to energise and further inspire the whole community to build on their recent successes. Those associated with the school acknowledge that there is much to celebrate and this now needs to be communicated with the wider community.

Community Cohesion is promoted to a good standard. The school serves a mainly Muslim area. The school community consists of a highly multi-ethnic mix. Twenty six different languages are spoken. This diversity is respected and valued and every effort is made to promote a common sense of belonging. Relationships among the pupils are positive and there is no evidence of inappropriate behaviour. Parents are actively encouraged and supported to engage with the school. The parents hold the school in high regard and many attend school services held in the neighbouring parish church. Leaders and managers may wish to consider developing further the inclusivity of prayer provision by accommodating rites and rituals of other world faiths into their liturgical programme.

The family of Catholic schools affirm each other and there is evidence of working collaboratively to promote shared initiatives and transition arrangements. Having recently been involved in the appointment of a coordinator for the soft federation, the school has recognised that the Catholic vision within this local community needs to be nurtured. The role of the coordinator includes supporting staff in their commitment to the Church's mission in education.

By the same token, the school works in partnership with its neighbouring local schools organising mutual visits and enabling interactions between both children and staff. The school community at Sacred Heart is mindful of how it can support the poor and needy, promoting the

work of CAFOD and other charitable works. As a result of the Comenius project, the older pupils are communicating with their counterparts in other countries across the world including Italy and Poland. Future developments for this work include e-twinning and a programme of reciprocal visits.

The provision for Religious Education is monitored and evaluated to a satisfactory standard. Leaders and managers at all levels are engaged with a programme of monitoring. However, more robust and formalised mechanisms are required with regard to Religious Education. Assessment data needs to be tracked systematically and pupil progress analysed. This information, together with the evaluation of other monitoring activities, can influence the future strategic planning and impact on pupil outcomes in terms of provision and developing the Catholic identity of the school.

The governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school. It has a committee structure and works hard to ensure all statutory and canonical responsibilities are met. It has taken decisive action so that previous areas of concern have been addressed and current improvements are developing further.

In recent years, there has been some degree of turbulence; clearly noticeable in the fluctuating attendance at governors' meetings. However, the chair has been proactive to address this and recruit governors of appropriate calibre and expertise. Consequently, the governing body is more securely established and in a position to develop robust and systematic mechanisms for identifying strategic priorities for the school.

The spiritual well-being of both pupils and staff remains a priority. The chair and head teacher are aware of the need to support the staff in their personal and professional growth as they fulfil their vocation in Catholic education. Hence, personnel are encouraged to engage with innovative staff development, diocesan initiatives and national qualifications.

Members of the governing body are increasingly gaining first-hand experience of the day-to-day life of the school. They meet with key personnel; engage with focused monitoring activities (e.g. learning walks and scrutinising pupils' work ) as well as availing themselves of the opportunity to visit the school on a more informal basis. Governors are starting to share written reports of their visits into school with their colleagues on the Board. They are aware of the changing dynamics of their community, the impact it has on the school and seek to preserve the Catholic identity of their school.

# PROVISION

## How effective is the provision in promoting Catholic Education?

### GRADE: 2

Teaching at Sacred Heart School ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. The majority is good. It is effective in ensuring that pupils are almost always interested in their learning and that they are making good progress. The teachers have concentrated recently on ensuring that objectives are clear at the start of lessons and that pupils are aware of the success criteria for the task. This has resulted in much more focused approach to teaching and learning.

Teachers use medium term planning provided by the Diocese and personalise it for their own particular circumstances. This gives a good overview for the topic but needs to be developed further into more rigorous planning that takes into account the individual learning needs of the pupils and challenges all of the children in the class groupings and across the year groups. Differentiation in lessons tends to be by outcome and in some cases support from additional adults for pupils with specific learning needs. Care needs to be taken to ensure the most able pupils are reaching their full potential in every lesson.

Teachers generally have good subject knowledge. They make good use of recent training and have developed a creative curriculum which ensures pupils enjoy and are committed to Religious Education. Teachers enable pupils to communicate their knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. They encourage independent learning through these activities and as a consequence pupils develop a confidence to voice their ideas freely and without prejudice. Where teaching is good or outstanding, teachers use time well, practise a range of teaching styles to engage the pupils in their learning and effectively monitor pupils' progress through assessment to provide them with clear detailed steps for improvement. In order to improve standards and raise expectations this needs to be consistent practice throughout the school.

Interactive white boards are present in each classroom and are used effectively to enhance learning. More use could be made of technology by the pupils to record work, research topics and enter into the virtual world and so discover and understand more about other faiths and their own.

Assessment for learning in Religious Education is at an early stage. Teachers are gaining confidence in applying the level descriptors to children's work but there is currently no system in place to track pupil progress over time. Effective marking is not consistent across all classes and therefore some pupils are unsure about the next step in their learning. Where marking is good or better, pupils know what they have done right and are given clear guidelines for improving their work. This good practice should now be shared across the Key Stages both through written and verbal feedback.

The Religious Education Curriculum meets the needs and circumstances of the school to a good standard. Cross curricular links with Drama, Music and Art enhance the provision. It ensures that pupils enjoy Religious Education lessons and can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of scripture, moral theology and the central beliefs of the Catholic Church through a variety of mediums. Parents of other World Faiths visit the school and share their faith background with the children. Visits to other places of worship have taken place in the past and plans to reintroduce this practice would enrich the curriculum further. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' moral and spiritual development.

The overall quality of collective worship at Sacred Heart is good and in some aspects it is outstanding. The Eucharist is central to the life of the school and is celebrated regularly both in

school and in the church. Collective Acts of Worship are well planned, consistent with the Catholic character of the school and are responsive to the religious diversity amongst the pupils. The school benefits from the work of the chaplain to the school who leads prayer and worship both with staff and with pupils. The Head teacher and staff are skilled in leading worship and provide a wide range of opportunities for formal and informal prayer. The school has identified the need to monitor the provision for Collective Worship to ensure that standards are high and that pupils have the appropriate skills to plan and lead worship.

Lack of space in the school prevents parents and parishioners attending whole school acts of worship but they are very supportive of the school and attend when space allows or when worship takes place in the church.

### 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 is the school in providing Catholic education ?	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how good are the outcomes for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how effective is the provision in promoting Catholic education</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>

### PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) how well pupils progress and enjoy their learning in Religious Education</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2) <i>the pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education</i></li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3) <i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</i></li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4) <i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and / or disabilities and their progress</i></li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5) the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6) <i>how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship</i></li> </ul>	<b>2</b>

### LEADERS AND MANAGERS

<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) how well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2) how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3) how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education for improvement to outcomes for pupils</li> </ul>	<b>3</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4) the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that areas for development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities are met</li> </ul>	<b>2</b>

### PROVISION

<b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>1) The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2) <i>the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious education</i></b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3) the extent to which the religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>4) the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>