NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN INSPECTION REPORT ON DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School, Loughborough LE11 2BG

Date of Inspection: 20th January 2010

(Section 48, 2005 Education Act)

SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

Name and address of School:	Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Beacon Road Loughborough Leicestershire LE11 2BG
Headteacher:	Mr. Peter Giorgio
Chair of Governors:	Mrs. Maire Feeley
Date of Inspection:	20th January 2010
Inspection Team:	Miss Christine Reilly Mrs. Anne Recchia
URN & DCSF Numbers:	120215 855 3341
Overall Grade Awarded:	2 GOOD

A.   DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

Sacred Heart School is situated in a residential area on the south west side of the university town of Loughborough in Leicestershire. It is a relatively new building but has had some recent building work done to enlarge and enhance space for pupils and teachers. The school serves the parishes of Sacred Heart Loughborough, St. Gregory's Sileby and The Divine Infant of Prague, Syton. The number on roll at the school is 210, of which 91% are baptised Catholic children, 6% are from other Christian denominations, 1% from other world faiths and 2% not affiliated to any faith tradition. The proportion of children from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average, as is the number whose first language is not English.

Pupils come to the school from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds and attainment on entry is broadly average. 12% are on the school's record of special educational need with 1.5% having a Statement of Special Need. These figures are below the average nationally.

2% of the school population receive a free school meal, which is considerably lower than national average.

INSPECTION SCHEDULE

B.   OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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

GRADE: 2 Good

Sacred Heart Catholic School is a good school with many outstanding features. The strong ethos is highly effective in promoting Catholic values, beliefs and traditions. Prayer and liturgy are central to the life of the school encouraging pupils to think spiritually and morally. The school has a strong sense of community and is well led and managed by the enthusiastic Headteacher and Governors. Good relationships are a strong feature of the school. They ensure its smooth and efficient running. The further development of cultural links with other schools and communities both locally and internationally will provide added opportunities for pupils to work with and meet people from different backgrounds.

The provision for the Catholic Education curriculum is good. Teachers are well qualified to teach the subject and have been well supported by the Religious Education Coordinator. Teaching is generally good with some outstanding practice, which leads to good standards and the needs of the children being met. The dissemination of outstanding practice across the school would enable standards to improve still further. The monitoring of Religious Education is rigorous and aids development of the teaching and learning in the school. Plans to track pupils' progress through assessment will further inform planning.
The school has successfully addressed all the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection.

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

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

Sacred Heart Catholic School has an outstanding capacity to make further improvements. The Headteacher and Governors very carefully monitor the Catholic Life of the school and the Religious Education curriculum. As a consequence, new initiatives are carefully planned, implemented and monitored. The school has a very clear view of its strengths and areas for improvement and has both the determination and resources to continue to improve as a Catholic learning community**.**

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

The School's many strengths outweigh areas for development. To build on this strong position the school should:

- Link the assessment and levelling of pupils' work to a whole school tracking system, in line with other core subjects, to give an overview of pupils' attainment and progress in religious Education.
- Develop links with other schools and communities both locally and internationally, to allow pupils the opportunity to work with people from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and Management

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

Grade 1 Outstanding

The Leadership and Management of the school are outstanding in terms of developing its Catholic life.

Sacred Heart is a friendly school with a welcoming environment. The Mission Statement – *'we strive for excellence in all we do **b**y following the teachings of Jesus in our worship, learning and play,'* is evident and is a lived experience across the whole community.

The highly focused Governing Body sees the sustaining and the development of the Catholic ethos of the school as central to its role. Leaders at all levels monitor the Catholic life of the school.

The governors have a wide array of skills and experience, and are extremely committed to supporting the leadership team. They are supportive, challenging and evaluative. They work with the Headteacher – who keeps them very well informed through reports and weekly meetings with the Chair of Governors. The Strategic Development, Curriculum and Standards Committee play an active role in reviewing and writing the School Development Plan. They have developed their skills through attending both Diocesan and LA run courses.

The Headteacher has a clear vision for the school and provides strong leadership. He is keen to ensure that standards continue to be raised; he is well supported by two Assistant Headteachers. The Catholic life of the school is high on the agenda of meetings; it is regularly monitored and evaluated. Openness is encouraged and staff have the opportunity to evaluate both their own performance and that of colleagues at all liturgical celebrations.

The positive contribution made by the recently appointed Chaplain (September 2009) is having a significant impact on the liturgical life of the school, she has created more opportunities for prayer and worship, for example, introducing a prayer focus – these normally take place at lunchtimes and are well attended by the pupils. The school has plans to further enhance this provision, through the development of a chaplaincy team.

"Statements to Live By" impact daily on the life of the children and are shared with parents by way of the weekly newsletter. Pupils from the school council speak very positively about the school. It is evident that the children make an outstanding contribution both to the school and to the wider community.

Effective working partnerships are in place with parents, parishes and other outside agencies to support the work of the school.

Good relationships are at the heart of this Catholic school. Children, staff, governors, parents and priests work together to create a community with a sense of common purpose.

Collective Worship

2.   How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

Grade: 1 Outstanding

The provision for prayer, Collective Worship and the liturgical life of the school is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school and has a very positive impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school policy on Collective Worship is very clear and thorough. It is regularly updated, used and shared with the staff. Collective Worship is well planned and resourced using both the liturgical calendar and the Here I Am programme as its basis. The Headteacher has laid great emphasis on developing the liturgical life of the school through appropriate staff training. This has resulted in good use being made of dance, drama, music and ICT, in class, across Key Stages and in whole school liturgies. Liturgies are monitored and evaluated very effectively and frequently result in positive developments that augment the spiritual and moral impact for all learners.

Pupils have had the opportunity during Mass Focus Weeks to study the parts of the Mass at an appropriate level to their age and ability. As a consequence they are able to participate more fully in the celebration of the Eucharist. The introduction of PowerPoint displays during Mass has further developed their involvement.

Pupils respond to Liturgies in a prayerful and reverent way. They say that they enjoy the peacefulness and quiet prayer during worship; this was very evident in the Acts of Collective Worship observed during the inspection. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate class liturgies and their thoughtful comments have led to further improvements in provision. Greater emphasis has been placed over the last academic year on involving the pupils more in the planning and development of class based liturgies. Appropriate resources and training have been provided to ensure pupils feel confident to explore their own ideas. Pupils are now beginning to lead prayer and worship especially in Key Stage 2. Plans to develop this further would further enhance provision.

Community Cohesion

**3.   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.**

Grade: 2 Good

The school promotes Community Cohesion to a good standard. Within the school community it is obvious that very good relationships exist. This creates an excellent environment for children's learning and a strong sense of mission. Outstanding care and guidance is given to pupils by the staff. As a consequence pupils feel valued, secure and safe in this loving environment. The staff work closely together supporting one another. Prayer and worship punctuate the school day and play an integral part in the daily life of both adults and children. "Other Faith Weeks" are organised. The pupils enjoy visitors to the school and visits to places of worship. Experiences of other faiths and cultures could be developed further through the virtual world and more first hand experiences.

Beyond the school good links exist within the wider Catholic faith and education communities. Diocesan and Local Authority training has been effectively used by staff and governors and good links exist with other professional bodies.

Links with the parishes and the local convent are good. Parishioners are welcomed at Masses and other liturgies. The Sacramental programmes in the parishes are well supported by the school. Further links with the parish community through notice boards and displays are planned for the future.

The extended schools' agenda has been effectively addressed through collaboration and a pooling of resources with local schools. This has ensured both parents and pupils have access to a family support worker. Before and after school facilities are successfully shared and the school is able to effectively signpost parents to other services.

Cultural and sporting links are made with other schools in the Loughborough area and opportunities to engage with the local civic community have been successful in promoting the school locally. The school is well thought of by parents and the local community. The school communicates very effectively with parents through weekly newsletters. Information evenings are regularly offered to parents to increase their knowledge and understanding of the curriculum.

There are few opportunities for pupils from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds to work together given the high intake of Catholic children into the school. Efforts to address this through links with other schools have been limited and need to be developed further. Pupils are encouraged to think both nationally and globally in their charitable giving which is highly commendable. Opportunities to develop more tangible links with other countries are planned.

The Headteacher and Governing Body are keen to promote community cohesion; they have drafted a policy and set targets to develop this aspect of the school further. Their own   self-evaluation   has   accurately   identified   areas   for   development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards

**4.	How well do learners achieve?**

Grade: 2 Good

A large majority of the pupils enter school with little or no church background. They make good progress throughout the school and as a consequence reach expected levels, by the end of Key Stage 2. Rapid progress is particularly noticeable in the Reception Class, where children very quickly grasp prayers of the church and are aware of a loving God. The building blocks of faith are developed well throughout the school after this firm foundation.

There are no marked gender differences in pupils' achievement and progress. In lessons observed where teaching was judged to be outstanding, pupils achieve very well. This is because they understand clearly what is expected of them, and are presented with a wide variety of stimulating learning experiences. Children with learning difficulties make good progress relative to their prior learning due to the support they receive both from the class teachers and teaching assistants. Higher achieving pupils are effectively challenged. This is demonstrated through the expectation of the class teacher, the level of understanding displayed by the pupils, their participation in class discussion and in the work that they produce.

The work of the children is in the main presented beautifully and demonstrates good levels of literacy. The pupils obviously enjoy their work in Religious Education especially when they can demonstrate their knowledge and understanding through drama, art, music and ICT. The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is outstanding. They show care and concern for each other and are happy to engage with their peers in paired and group work. The spiritual, social and moral development of the children is actively nurtured both through their work in Religious Education and in their involvement in the local community. They have a good sense of justice and fairness. This can be observed in the way they treat their peers and those less fortunate than themselves.

Pupils respond well to the strong role models in the school community.

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

**5.	How effective are teaching and learning?**

Grade: 2 Good

Overall, teaching and learning is good. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. Where outstanding teaching occurs, pupils are clear about the learning objectives and tasks are suitably challenging and creative to move learning forward. Teachers plan thoroughly and effectively to address the particular needs of their pupils, who in turn are given a range of opportunities to demonstrate their learning. This variety of approach ensures a rich diet of activities appropriate to the abilities and

interests of all learners. This approach now needs to be fully embedded throughout the school. Teachers manage pupils well, and insist on high standards of behaviour. In most of the lessons observed, tasks were pitched in such a way that pupils are challenged in their learning. A variety of media and resources are utilised to very good effect, including ICT applications, drama, art, music and written materials.

Pupils demonstrate confidence in applying their understanding to a variety of situations. The teachers have created an ethos which helps the children to be supportive of each other and skilled in co-operative tasks and independent learning. Teaching assistants are utilised effectively to guide both individuals and groups.

Teachers communicate the learning objectives clearly so that, in most classes, pupils understand very well how they can be successful. Pupils are also encouraged to assess their own learning.

Marking of pupils' work is generally supportive and encouraging. In most classes teachers are using a more developmental approach to marking and giving pupils pointers to the next step in their learning. Good practice is evident through the use of personalised encouragement and reference to the learning objectives being addressed. This should now be shared across the school. It would ensure that there is a thorough and accurate assessment for learning, and lead to children knowing and working towards their Religious Education Targets.

Termly levelling of work would ensure a more rigorous tracking of pupil progress and identify areas for development more quickly.

The monitoring of teaching is very good; it celebrates good practice and identifies development issues. The Leadership Team has already identified the need to apply this rigour to developing a system for tracking pupil progress in Religious Education.

Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and course requirements. They have currently trialled the new Religious Education Scheme, "Come and See", and have insightful views on the subject.

Very good use is made of interactive white boards to enhance teaching and make a wider resource available to the children. Good relationships exist throughout the school between teachers and pupils. This enables the children to have the confidence to learn in a safe and supportive environment. They work well individually, in pairs and in groups.

The school actively encourages parents and carers to be part of their children's learning. They are invited to attend assemblies and collective acts of worship. Formal feedback takes place through parents' evenings.

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

Grade: 2 Good

The curriculum provision in Religious Education is planned systematically and fulfils all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference "Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools". It is relevant to, and rooted in, the daily lives of the children. It meets the Diocesan recommendation of 10% of curriculum time being devoted to the subject.

Progression within and between year groups is evident and appropriate to the experience and prior attainment of the learners. Children are encouraged to investigate, reflect and develop appropriate skills and attitudes, and to respond to God's call in everyday life. Pupils are given a voice through a dedicated School Council which influences decisions at a variety of levels.

Pupils gain knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures through celebrations, visits, visiting speakers and specific topics.

All learners are able to make good progress. In classes where the teaching matches pupils' aspiration and the work has sufficient challenge to engage and inspire learners, outstanding progress is made. Knowledge, skills and understanding are improved at a good rate, enabling the children to think ethically, spiritually and theologically. Pupils show commitment to their growing faith in charitable works, in their relationships with adults and peers and in their outstanding behaviour throughout the school.

The whole approach to Religious Education, linked to the strong ethos of the school, has a very positive impact on the pupils.

Leadership and Management

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

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Both the leadership and the management of Religious Education in Sacred Heart School are outstanding. The school demonstrates a strong sense of its mission.

The leadership team and the governors work collaboratively on self-evaluation to ensure that the school's Mission Statement is at the very heart of the school community.

There is considerable evidence that Religious Education is monitored to a high standard through portfolios, work scrutiny and governor feedback. The monitoring of teaching is good, and good practice is celebrated. The standard of display in the entrance and hall is good. In each classroom there is a display of religious material, this would be enhanced if in all classes a more prominent prayer focus was displayed.

Plans to introduce a more rigorous approach to the tracking of progress will further enhance provision and drive up standards. The Religious Education Co-ordinator and leadership team have a good grasp of the development needs of the subject through effective self- evaluation systems. Areas for development are followed through and support given.

The teaching staff are well qualified and trained to deliver the curriculum. "Before You Begin" sessions are effectively used to share ideas and plan topics. Good use has been made of continuing professional development. This has been instrumental in the introduction throughout the school of assessment for learning, the levelling of pupils' work and "Statements to Live By". Further training is planned to fully embed these into the Religious Education Curriculum.

There is very good support for less experienced staff to help them to access suitable resources and build subject knowledge. The Headteacher and RE co-ordinator ensure that they themselves are fully cognisant of developments in Religious Education through attendance at Diocesan training events. They ensure that these are interpreted appropriately and communicated to staff.

Resources are well managed and are used very effectively to engage pupils and raise standards. ICT is employed very successfully to widen pupils' knowledge and understanding of God's word and its meaning in their everyday lives. The children in Year 6 confidently use Power-Point presentations to enhance topics. The use of ICT in Religious Education is being developed successfully throughout the school.

The school leadership is particularly pro-active in ensuring the inclusion of all learners. This is evident in the support for those with particular needs. The more able pupils are being challenged to perform at the same level as they do in literacy. This is having a very positive effect on learning.

Sacred Heart School is a community where pupils thrive in a safe and happy environment.

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**
• **the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school and its provision for community cohesion;**	**2**
• **the overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic Religious Education curriculum, its main strengths and areas for development**	**2**
• **the effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection**	**1**
• **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?	**1**
• **how well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation**	**1**
• **how effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction which promotes high quality care and education and leads to improvement**	**1**
• **the quality of the leadership of the Headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school**	**1**
• **how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes learners' spiritual and moral development**	**1**
• **the impact of the involvement of the local priests on the work of the school**	**2**
• **how effectively the leadership promotes relationships and communication with key partners in education**	**1**
• **how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated**	**1**
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	**1**
• **the quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school and its frequency**	**1**
• **learners' response to the school's provision**	**1**
• **how effectively the provision is planned, monitored and evaluated**	**1**
• **how well the liturgical life, prayer and Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners**	**1**
How effectively the school promotes Community Cohesion?	**2**
• **how effectively leadership at all levels promote community cohesion within the school**	**1**
• **the efforts of the school to promote community cohesion with the wider Catholic faith and education communities**	**2**
• **how well does the school work in partnership with the wider education, cultural and social communities**	**2**
• **the inclusive nature of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and the liturgical life of the school**	**2**
• **how far the Religious Education curriculum promotes community cohesion**	**2**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?	**2**
• **learners' success in achieving challenging targets including qualifications and learning goals, with trends over time and any significant variations between groups of learners**	**2**
• **the standards of learners' work**	**2**
• **learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential, with any significant variations between groups of learners**	**2**
• **the extent to which learners enjoy their work**	**2**
• **the behaviour of learners**	**1**
• **learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**	**1**
• **the extent to which learners' contribute positively to the school and broader community in the school**	**2**
How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?	**2**
• **how well teaching is used to meet learners' needs and curriculum requirements**	**2**
• **the suitability and rigour of assessment in planning, monitoring and informing learners' progress**	**2**
• **the diagnosis of, and provision for, additional learning needs**	**2**
• **the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning and development**	**2**
How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	**2**
• **the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum matches learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience**	**2**
• **how far the Religious Education curriculum meets external requirements and is responsive to local circumstances**	**1**
• **the extent to which the curriculum in Religious Education contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners**	**1**
• **the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum contributes to learners' enjoyment and achievement**	**2**
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	**1**
• **how effectively whole school and subject leadership in Religious Education lead and support their staff**	**1**
• **how effectively performance in Religious Education is monitored and improved through quality assurance and self-assessment**	**1**
• **how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve their potential**	**2**
• **the adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are well taught**	**2**
• **the adequacy and suitability of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation**	**2**
• **how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve high standards**	**1**
• **The extent to which governors discharge their responsibilities**	**1**