

# DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM INSPECTION SERVICE



## SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

(Section 48, Education Act 2005)

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary/Secondary School  
The Drove  
Sleaford  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 7AT

12<sup>th</sup> December 2011  
(Autumn Term 2011)

**URN: 120609**

## SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

<b>School:</b>	<b>Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School The Drove Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 7AT</b>
<b>Headteacher:</b>	<b>Mrs Sarah Weldon</b>
<b>Chair of Governors:</b>	<b>Mrs Judy Saunders</b>
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	<b>12 December 2011</b>
<b>Inspection Team:</b>	<b>Mrs Mary Hirst Mrs Anne Recchia</b>
<b>URN:</b>	<b>120609</b>
<b>Overall Grade Awarded:</b>	<b>2 Good</b>

### Description of the school

Our Lady of Good Counsel is a smaller than average primary school situated on the edge of Sleaford, approximately one mile from the parish church of Our Lady of Good Counsel. At the time of the inspection there are 154 pupils on roll. 51% of pupils are baptised Catholics, 43% are from other Christian denominations and the remaining 6% have no religious affiliation. The majority of pupils are of White British origin with a small minority (6%) from different ethnic backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. However, there has been an increased occurrence since the last inspection of pupils joining the school in year groups other than in the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class. This has led to a dip in attainment and progress in Religious Education in some year groups as the pupils have needed time to acquire knowledge and skills commensurate with their peers. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. Due primarily to distance, no pupils transferred to a Catholic Secondary School in the last academic year.

## Overall effectiveness

Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School is a good school with a strong sense of its Catholic identity. It is well led by its headteacher and newly established senior leadership team who have a positive and challenging vision for the school's future. The headteacher and leadership team use a range of monitoring activities to determine the strengths and areas for development of the school. They formulate appropriate and achievable targets to move the school forward. The Governing Body is supportive and knowledgeable. It has begun to monitor and evaluate both the Catholic Life of the school and the Religious Education curriculum. In this way it is becoming more of a critical friend to the school

Outcomes for pupils are satisfactory. Pupils' verbal skills indicate that they have the ability to achieve at a higher level than the current assessment data suggest. Teachers' confidence in assessing pupils' attainment in Religious Education is growing and their good knowledge of the subject and good teaching skills are beginning to have an impact on levels of attainment.

The school provides a good Religious Education curriculum. Teachers plan lessons well, catering for the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils are well behaved and keen to learn in the stimulating and creative environment provided by the school.

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Grade: 2</b>
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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

The headteacher, senior leadership team and staff have a good insight into the strengths and areas for development for the school. The school's own self-evaluation is generally in line with the findings of this inspection. The headteacher, staff and governors should continue to focus on the following:

- Develop robust systems for evaluating assessment information in order for it to aid strategic planning and impact positively on the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- Develop links with other schools and communities both nationally and internationally, to allow pupils the opportunity to work with people from other ethnic and cultural backgrounds.
- Develop a more robust system for governors to monitor and evaluate the impact of initiatives to raise standards further in Religious Education and improve the Catholic Life of the school.

## The school's capacity for sustained improvement

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The headteacher and leadership team have the skills and expertise to accurately monitor and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the school and plan for improvements. The headteacher is confident in tackling areas of underperformance especially in the quality of teaching. She should begin to delegate responsibilities now that she has developed a good senior

leadership team that has the capacity to support her in driving through improvements and raising standards.

The well qualified and experienced Religious Education coordinator manages professional development opportunities effectively which have led to a more rigorous assessment system and a growing staff confidence in the teaching and assessing of Religious Education. Diocesan support and training has been used well to share good practice and to introduce new initiatives.

Since the last inspection, the headteacher has received the appropriate training to become well established in the school and this has had an impact on her ability to effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education and the Catholic Life of the school. She is focused and determined to raise standards and become effective to an outstanding level as a Catholic School. The profile of the school has been raised in the parish and the local community. Good links have been made with other schools within the family of Catholic schools in the Lincolnshire area. This has led to constructive dialogue amongst the headteachers and the sharing of expertise and good practice.

Governors have developed their knowledge and understanding of the school and have begun to make some inroads into developing their role as critical friends. Further training in the effective use of monitoring and evaluating the Religious Education curriculum and outcomes for pupils should now be undertaken in order to challenge underperformance more effectively.

<b>The school's capacity for sustained improvement</b>	<b>Grade: 2</b>
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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PUPILS</b> <b>How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</b></p>
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Outcomes for pupils at Our Lady of Good Counsel are satisfactory.

Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average in all areas. As there is no baseline assessment for Religious Education on entry, it is difficult to assess how much progress has been made, although by the end of their first term in the Reception class the pupils are showing knowledge and skills that are age appropriate. By the end of key stage two, attainment is satisfactory with 55% of pupils reaching the expected level in July 2011. It was observed during the inspection that pupils' verbal skills indicate that they have the ability to achieve at a higher level than the assessment data suggest. Most groups of pupils make expected levels of progress, however, high achieving pupils are not making the accelerated progress expected and should be given a greater degree of challenge in their work in some year groups. Progress is satisfactory but could be accelerated once the newly adopted tracking system for Religious Education becomes embedded and confidence in levelling of work in Religious Education is developed further.

Most children are actively engaged in their lessons and show a positive attitude to their work. They are keen to do well and they enjoy their work in Religious Education. Work in the Reception class is well planned and allows children to investigate and understand

through play, drama, art and social interaction. Older pupils show a good understanding of the differences in St Luke and St Matthew's Gospels when looking at the birth of Jesus. Pupils are eager to produce good work, knowing that it will be recognised and celebrated in class and with the whole school.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is good. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities in school such as the school council and playground buddies. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of belonging to the school community and have good relationships with their peers. As one pupil shared during the inspection 'This school gives you something special which will be with us long after we leave here'.

Quality prayer time happens throughout the school day with focal points in each classroom encouraging all members of the school community to pray. Pupils understand the importance of key celebrations in school throughout the liturgical year. The Parish Priest and parishioners welcome the school at the termly school-led parish Mass. They are always complimentary about the children and welcome the little gift of a prayer card on the theme of the Mass.

Pupils at Our Lady of Good Counsel respond to and participate in the school's collective worship to a good standard. Acts of collective worship are given high profile and the pupils take part confidently. Class based and whole school worship engages the pupils' interest and they engage fully with opportunities for individual prayer. Children sing enthusiastically and are given time to reflect and join in community prayers. Pupils are encouraged to pray openly for their own intentions and are beginning to develop the skills to plan and lead their own acts of worship.

<b>How good outcomes are for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups</b>	<b>Grade: 3</b>
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## **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**

Our Lady of Good Counsel is an inclusive school where the headteacher and staff work hard to ensure that every pupil feels valued whatever their background or ability. Leaders and managers promote the work of this Catholic school to a good standard. They are very committed to the mission of the Church to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils and in so doing make their spiritual and moral development a high priority

The headteacher and Religious Education coordinator are clearly focused on improving standards in Religious Education and the Catholic Life of the school. They use a range of monitoring activities that give them a clear picture of the strengths in teaching and the impact that this has on learning. More rigorous assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in Religious Education has recently been established and teachers are gaining confidence in levelling pupils' work. The assessment information collected is beginning to allow teachers to tailor lessons to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. As more data is collected the leadership team will have a clearer picture of the impact that whole school initiatives have on teaching and learning. The inclusion of more accurate

and meaningful data relating to pupils' attainment and progress will further strengthen the evidence base on which to make sound judgements on how to raise standards for individuals and groups of pupils in Religious Education.

The school development plan is based on the 'Every Child Matters Agenda' with the addition of a section on the spiritual development of pupils. Information and discussion with staff, governors, pupils and parents have ensured it is well developed and focused on meeting the needs of all the pupils in the school.

Staff induction and in service training is good. New teachers to the school are well informed and supported by the headteacher and senior leadership team. The highly experienced Religious Education coordinator provides excellent opportunities to share good practice and promotes the development of Religious Education well.

The headteacher, staff and governors are used to monitor acts of collective worship and their views are used to develop provision. The headteacher takes very seriously the views of pupils and parents and responds appropriately to any concerns that arise. She ensures that the religious identity and strong Catholic traditions and values of the school are a prominent feature of any school developments, policies, communications and school literature. As a consequence, staff and pupils are able to articulate the school's distinctive nature and mission with understanding and appreciation.

Leaders and managers promote community cohesion to a good standard. Pupils are encouraged to take an active role in the running of the school. The school council are confident ambassadors and speak very highly of the teachers and support staff. The weekly 'statement to live by' is shared with the children and parents and has a very positive impact on behaviour and relationships within the school. As a result pupils work cooperatively with each other and the staff and have the skills to resolve conflict through forgiveness and reconciliation. Charitable giving is a strong feature of the school and enables the children to understand and become more aware of the needs of others less fortunate. Pupils are encouraged to take part in local activities with other schools and the local community. Leaders and managers have a clear view of what is needed to develop the religious literacy of pupils in light of the school's geographic position in the country and lack of religious and cultural diversity both in the school and locally. Plans to enrich the pupils' religious perspective with visits to other places of worship and visits from people of different faith backgrounds, is commendable. Links with the local parish of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Sleaford are good. Mass is celebrated at least once per month in school and there is a growing parental involvement in this. The school also celebrates a Sunday Mass in the parish church at least three times a year which is well attended by the pupils and their families. Parishioners are welcome visitors to the school with some providing support in the Reception and key stage 1 classes. The headteacher ensures that the school has a high profile in the parish through regular articles in the parish newsletter and displays in the church. The school's involvement in the 'Help for Heroes' charity and their prayers for the soldiers and chaplains in Afghanistan are particularly valued by the parishioners in the local area.

Pupils are given the opportunity to attend The Briars for a residential experience in Year 6. On these occasions they are able to work with pupils from a different school. The headteacher and leadership team are aware that opportunities to broaden pupils'

experience of working with pupils from backgrounds very different to their own are important and plan to improve provision for this in the future.

The Governing Body is very supportive of the school and governors regularly visit classrooms, attend acts of collective worship and meet with staff. The headteacher keeps them well informed and they have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of the Catholic Life of the school. They are actively involved in reviewing the mission of the school and the school development plan. However, the monitoring of pupils' standards in Religious Education is not as rigorous as other core subjects. Governors now need to focus on developing a more robust system of monitoring and evaluating the impact of plans to improve outcomes for pupils. In this way, they will be able to challenge underperformance and support the school even more effectively as critical friends.

Governors understand the barriers to developing Our Lady of Good Counsel Primary School and have actively tried to overcome these especially in the case of appointments and admissions. They seek the help and advice of the Diocesan Education Service and are keen to engage with governor training.

<b>How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school</b>	<b>Grade: 2</b>
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<b>PROVISION</b> <b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic Education</b>
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The provision of Catholic Education at Our Lady of Good Counsel Catholic Primary School is good. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is good. All lessons seen were judged to be either good or better. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and plan creative lessons that engage the children. Excellent use is made of technology to interest the pupils and to develop their knowledge and understanding. This was seen in a lesson in key stage two where microphones were used to record pupils' work. Teachers adapt their teaching styles effectively in order to sustain pupils' concentration and motivation. Teaching Assistants and other adults are very well directed and are skilled at focusing and helping children to learn.

Assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education is beginning to be used to improve outcomes for pupils. Baseline assessment on entry for Religious Education needs to be developed so that progress can be measured accurately. Progress could be accelerated once the newly adopted tracking system for Religious Education becomes embedded and confidence in levelling of work in Religious Education is developed further.

The Religious Education curriculum meets the external requirements of the Bishops' Conference and the school ensures full coverage of the 'Here I Am' programme through careful long, medium and short term planning. The creative skills of teachers and support staff are maximised to ensure that pupils gain knowledge and skills appropriate to their age and abilities and that they enjoy and are stimulated by discussions and

activities which take place in lessons. The curriculum is well customised to meet the needs of all pupils especially groups or individuals who need extra support to maximise learning. As a consequence of more accurate assessment, teachers are beginning to also challenge more able pupils with tasks and questions that extend their understanding and knowledge. This now needs to be firmly embedded throughout the school. Pupils are very capable of attaining higher standards than the current data indicates. Teachers should take into account both the written and verbal skills of pupils when assessing levels of attainment and provide those pupils showing higher levels of attainment with opportunities to record their knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. The recent introduction of target cards in some classes has ensured that pupils have a good understanding of the level of attainment they have achieved and are aware of the next steps in their learning. This now needs to be more firmly established throughout the school.

The Religious Education curriculum and acts of collective worship provide good opportunities for spiritual and moral growth. Evidence of the impact of this can be seen in the positive relationships within the classrooms and in and around the school. Pupils' behaviour is very good; they show a real concern and care for each other and report that they feel part of a loving, faith community.

Acts of collective worship are given a high profile, they reflect the Catholic identity of the school and the pupils are very confident participants. The school provides many opportunities for personal and communal prayer. Pupils are encouraged to pray openly for their own intentions and are beginning to develop the skills to plan and lead their own acts of worship. The school is continuing to develop this aspect of provision and has plans to use the Briars outreach team to work with Year 6 pupils in the current academic year. Staff and pupils regularly review the provision for prayer and worship and plan improvements. Opportunities to celebrate key festivals and holy days in the liturgical calendar and festivals in other faiths are well planned. As a consequence, pupils understand their own faith and have an insight into the faith of others despite the lack of cultural and faith diversity within the school.

<b>How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education</b>	<b>Grade: 2</b>
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<b>Common grading scale for all inspection judgements</b>	
<b>Grade 1</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Grade 2</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>
<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>

## Inspection Judgements Summary

<b>Overall effectiveness – How effective the school is in providing Catholic education.</b>	<b>2</b>
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	<b>3</b>
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	<b>2</b>
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education.	<b>2</b>
<b>How good OUTCOMES are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How well pupils progress and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
<i>pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education;</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress;</i>	<b>3</b>
<i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress.</i>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How effective LEADERS AND MANAGERS are in developing the Catholic life of the school.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>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.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met.</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>How effective the PROVISION is in promoting Catholic education.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education.</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.</b>	<b>2</b>