

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST STEPHEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
GARGRAVE ROAD SKIPTON BD23 1PJ

School URN	121640
School DfE Number	8153375
E-mail address	headteacher@st-stephens.n-yorks.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Mrs. Sheila Gregory
Headteacher	Mr. Peter Thompson
RE Subject Leader	Mrs. Carmel Heckman
Date of Inspection	11 th - 12 th October 2012
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs. Barbara Ford

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St. Stephen's Catholic Primary School was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Bishop of Leeds. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule follows the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA 2010).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- the extent to which the pupils contribute to the Catholic life of the school;
- the effectiveness of the use of assessment to support learning in RE;
- the quality of Collective Worship provided by the school;
- the overall effectiveness of leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school.

She shared in Key Stages 1 and 2 acts of Collective Worship led by Years 1 and 3. She observed Religious Education (RE) lessons in FS, Years 2 and 6. She held meetings with the Chair of Governors, the headteacher and RE Subject Leader, members of staff, school council and Parish Priest. She examined school documentation, including the school's Self Evaluation Form (SEF48), the School Development Plan, monitoring, assessment and tracking records, samples of teacher planning and pupils' RE books.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Stephen's voluntary aided Catholic primary school, Skipton (founded in 1854) serves the newly enlarged parish of St. Stephen's. The school is popular and many year groups are over-subscribed. Currently 81% of the 232 pupils on roll, are baptised Catholics, taught in eight classes, including 31 children in the Nursery. Pupils are from every socio-economic background and several ethnic groups, coming from fifteen different nationalities. 25 pupils are on the SEN register (of these, five have a statement). The number with more complex SEN is rising (presently 25%). Attainment on entry to the Nursery class is below that typical of children of this age and well below for children's social and language development. Wrap around care is available. In 2004 St Stephen's moved in to brand new accommodation. 7 of the 9.8 f.t.e teachers are Catholic, and all teach RE. The school has achieved Healthy School status, the Activemark (Bronze) and the North Yorkshire Inclusion Quality Mark.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 is Satisfactory, 4 is Inadequate

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

This is a summative judgement based on the 2 judgements below: Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils, provision for Catholic education (includes effectiveness of leaders and managers) and capacity for sustained improvement.

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS, PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

1

The senior leadership, priest and governors inspire the school community to work as a team towards sustaining an ambitious vision. Morale is very high and belief in the school's success runs through all levels of staff.

Main findings

St Stephen's Skipton is an outstanding Catholic Primary school. There is unequivocal and explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is a priority along with the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers recognise and acknowledge the importance of the Mission Statement 'Love one another as I have loved you' in all that they do as a school community. The Mission tree is personalised by each class and drives the Catholic vision and ethos. Its deep roots are embedded in the rich Catholic history and tradition of the Skipton area. St Stephen's is an inter-generational success story. As the demography changes, the diverse community are welcomed and appreciated in this learning and faith-based community. This is illustrated by a governor's pronouncement, "There are no cultural nor language barriers with God."

Behaviour is exceptional and pupils play well together across age groups, demonstrating an awareness of the needs of others. Teaching is consistently extremely good with many outstanding lessons, providing challenging learning opportunities that are well-matched to pupils' needs. Pupils have the opportunity to be enthusiastic and highly motivated learners and benefit from excellent opportunities to improve their spiritual and moral development.

The provision for Collective Worship is a significant strength of the school. It is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. Leadership, management and governance are all outstanding.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

Set and record challenging, end of year targets in RE, in order to raise the levels of attainment of all pupils, whilst further developing tracking systems, and embedding the whole-school use of the 'I can ...' targets.

Embed the new whole school programme for EPR (Education in Personal Relationships) and in consultation with all stakeholders, implement the new SRE (Sex and Relationships Education) policy, in line with diocesan advice, training support and guidance.

PUPILS

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

1

From a starting point, upon joining Nursery, which is below national expectations, pupils make good progress in RE. Their attainment is in-line with national expectations in knowledge and understanding of religion (AT1) and an ability to reflect on meaning (AT2). Pupils are keen to succeed and grasp opportunities to extend their learning. Most pupils concentrate very well, for extended periods of time and have developed perseverance when faced with challenging activities. Rigorous assessment shows that pupils with particular learning difficulties, those from overseas and those with disabilities make particularly strong progress over time.

Pupils recognise and acknowledge the importance of the Mission Statement 'Love one another as I have loved you' in all that they do as a school community. The Mission Tree is personalised by each class and drives the Catholic vision and ethos. By taking on specific responsibilities such as the 'Discipleship group', (serving tea and cakes, singing and playing games with elderly parishioners), altar servers and school council, they have good opportunities to develop their social skills, sense of responsibility and service to others. Behaviour is exceptional and pupils play well together across age groups, demonstrating an awareness of the needs of others. Pupils have an advanced understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues. They are alert to the needs of others and seek justice for all within and beyond the school community. For example the school and parish are committed to supporting a community in East Timor.

Pupils take full responsibility for themselves and their actions, referring regularly to the green part of the behaviour code. The oldest pupils sign a personal pledge: 'I agree to always follow our mission statement, our school rules and our weekly SEAL statement'.

Each class has a 'feelings' board, where pupils indicate their mood each day – 'excited' was a popular choice and they really enjoy the new 'creative' curriculum. Older pupils take 'e' safety seriously with their 'Crucial Crew' and enrich their Catholic life by experiencing two retreat-based residential trips to Myddelton Grange (in Year 5) and The Briars (Year 6).

The life-enhancing trip, by Year 5/6 to the Paralympics, illustrated the school's desire to enable pupils to experience wonderful events which are in line with the aims of the school. They loved trying wheelchair tennis for themselves in the Olympic Park, and a pupil commented, "It was an amazing experience to see what people without the full use of their limbs can achieve."

Pupils are confident to plan and deliver thoughtful and meaningful Collective Worship for their peers and the school, for example during a Key Stage 1 Collective Worship on 'The least among you is the greatest' illustrated by the life of the 'Little Flower' St. Therese, pupils dramatised the gospel, sang and prayed. The service concluded with a rose petal each, to remind us that we can do little things to praise God. Pupils use a variety of methods to support prayer, and are comfortable and act with reverence when praying. They enjoy planning and participating in a range of different forms of Liturgy and Worship, having their feet washed and carrying the cross they made from the Christmas Tree in the Lenten service.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
• the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
• the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
• pupils' attainment in Religious Education	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1

PROVISION

How effective the provision is for Catholic education.

1

Teaching is consistently extremely good with many outstanding lessons, providing challenging learning opportunities that are well-matched to pupils' needs.

Two teachers of RE have the CCRS or equivalent. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge (enriched by pre-topic staff meetings, including theological reflection led by the priest) pervades the classrooms. Driver words and detailed planning are consistently in use throughout school, and all classes have provision maps and specific action plans to drive improvements, considering the needs of the individual, whilst ensuring inclusivity.

Very young children feel secure and respond well to class routines, in the excellent Foundation Stage, and were enthralled with the story of creation and enjoyed making picture cards to play 'God's World' games indoors and out. Those who needed more personal attention, enjoyed singing 'I love the Sun', talking about the CAFOD poster and illustrating a day during creation, using SPLOSH on the computers, in a small group.

During an outstanding lesson, young pupils were taught to understand that Daniel had to be brave and have faith, because he was chosen, by asking and responding to questions. For example pupils asked, "Why did God send an angel?" and

responded, "To give the good news, like he did with Mary." Another commented "When no-one else is left to turn to, God is there for us."

Differentiated learning opportunities, included using key word cards, making a video, finding chapter and verse in the Bible, writing a prayer thanking God for a time when they needed to be brave: 'For the time I went in an ambulance, I thank you Lord for being there' and a small world session with Daniel in the lion's den.

The oldest pupils were challenged to 'show how some decisions are informed by Kingdom values'. In this outstanding lesson they enjoyed 'active' learning, including videoing role play, freeze framing, hot seating, discussions, going outdoors to hide their 'talent', talk partners and reflection. They know how the parables tell us what the 'Kingdom of God' is like and that we are invited to be part of it, by receiving the sacraments.

Attainment on entry to the Nursery class is below that typical of children of this age and well below for children's social and language development. In Foundation Stage, key persons regularly observe and record significant development and talk to the children about the 'next steps' in their learning, helping them to understand more challenging concepts through role-play and structured play across all areas of learning. All teachers systematically check pupils understanding during RE lessons through high quality questioning. Driver words are displayed, used consistently and can be seen in marking and feedback comments. The 'I can ...' target sheets are available in pupils' books, but not yet consistently referred to across school. Target-setting in RE needs to be included more formally in the school's pupil-tracking processes, as planned.

The curriculum effectively provides pupils with a deep insight into their Catholic faith and helps pupils see it in relation to other faiths. It enables pupils to relate to other faiths via 'World Faith' weeks and visits to synagogues and mosques.

The youngest children made Rosh Hashanah buns during Judaism week and baked bread, after the 'Harvest' Mass. Year 3 baked the unleavened bread, to be consecrated, by Fr. Andrew during the Mass. (They eagerly anticipate being able to taste their school-baked bread, when they receive Jesus, next year). Pupils have the opportunity to be enthusiastic and highly motivated learners and benefit from excellent opportunities to improve their spiritual and moral development.

Teachers develop very good links with literacy, science, art, music and drama in RE, making very effective use of high quality resources, including technology, together with the targeted support provided by adults, who are trained and experienced in helping those who are struggling, using differentiated work, where appropriate, to optimise learning.

Work in PSICHE and EPR are integral to the life in school, including circle time, SEAL, feelings boards, choosing the 'special person', showing commitment to caring for the needs of the whole child. Individual programmes with 'good choice' charts, rewards and detailed action plans for intervention, involve parents and carers in ensuring the best outcomes for their child.

A variety of themed events take place each year, for example, CAFOD days, Harvest, Lent and Advent liturgies. The 'Wednesday Word', travelling cribs and crucifixes are taken home by pupils, to share with their families and prove to be very popular.

The provision for Collective Worship is a significant strength of the school. It is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. The themes, chosen by pupils and staff, reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission and stimulating acts of worship enthuse all pupils and motivate them to think deeply. During October, a voluntary Rosary is prayed one lunch-time each week. A Key Stage 2 Collective Worship prayed the first Luminous mystery 'The Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan river'. The pupils acted out each reflection between 'Hail Marys', forming a human Rosary with PE cones. Their mission was to say what you can do to share Jesus' message in your daily life.

Sacramental preparation is a partnership between the school and the parish and valued greatly by pupils, parents and carers. The Parish Priest says a children's Mass every week and on special feast days and celebrations (such as the truly inclusive international Mass around the time of Pentecost at Utopia Broughton Hall, in the pouring rain, with the readings in several languages and national dress and food to enhance the celebration). He facilitates pupils' understanding and involvement in worship by explaining what is happening, using 'driver' words and using child-friendly Mass parts and is proud of the remarkable job staff do in caring for and educating the pupils so well, giving them the tools to engage in Mass so appropriately. The inclusive, age-appropriate 'Harvest' Mass was a joyful celebration, for the school and parish, accompanied by parish musicians, involving enthusiastic singing, percussion, poetry, (making key words like SHARE, EAT, SAVE from HARVEST) posters and prayers. The huge display of God's harvest was shared with those in need, organised by the SVP.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching in Religious Education.	1
The use of assessment to support learning in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the School

1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is well-thought of and visionary, with a wonderful ability to embody faith, peace, spirituality and a warm welcome to all, ensuring a whole team commitment to the pursuit of excellence and enjoyment. The dedicated RE leader determinedly ensures that all staff follow whole-school procedures for planning, delivery and assessing outcomes. The dynamic Parish Priest offers theological development for staff, parents and carers. There is unequivocal and explicit evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is a priority along with the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Every September staff and governors spend a day evaluating the previous year's performance and reviewing the 'Mission Tree'. Self-evaluation is outstanding, leading to very effective strategic and succession planning and leaders are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education, being excellent role models, ensuring that improvements to the Catholic life of the school and RE, are integral to the School Development Plan. Governors are well-informed and hands-on, keen to make a difference to outcomes

for pupils. They have high levels of expertise, are extremely well-organised and thorough in their approach.

The 'RE and ethos' committee makes a significant contribution to the Catholic life of the school, and the development of the 'mission statement', giving clear direction to the work of the school and all who are part of its community. All governor committees are dedicated to furthering the mission of this Catholic school. Father Andrew, in his capacity as RE governor, also practises innovative strategies extending the learning in class, to the worship he leads with pupils.

The Foundation Stage provides parents and carers with a daily digital photo frame, illustrating children's learning in all areas including RE. Parents and carers are actively involved, consulted and responded to, via a suggestion box, in person and in the 'Parent Forum'. They can come into lessons for the final half-hour, the last Thursday in the month. A parent commented, "This school welcomes children of many nationalities, cultures and abilities which helps them to appreciate differences, be tolerant and broadens their outlook."

A grandparent praised the professional, genuinely supportive measures put in place to help their recently-bereaved family keep the children grounded and feeling able to ask difficult questions.

The school has strong partnerships with other providers, organisations and services including the parish children's liturgy group who provide information at parent-teacher meetings, the SVP, health and other professionals, Leeds Trinity University College and Craven College. Pupils benefit significantly and develop exceptionally well in a number of areas which the school alone could not provide. For example, the link with an East London school provided accommodation to enable the life-changing Paralympics visit to be afforded.

At St Stephen's, community cohesion begins with celebrating the diversity of the many cultures, languages and traditions integral to the school, for example, Polish and French lessons, African drumming and Indian dancing. A governor proclaimed, "There are no cultural nor language barriers with God."

The school actively promotes pupils' initiative in learning about and supporting charities at local, national and global levels, particularly those charities which promote greater international understanding, social justice, peace, love for the poor, and respect for the integrity of creation through care and improvement of the environment. Pupils take part in many locally held events and sporting competitions

These are the grades for leadership and management

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
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.	1
How well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being.	1
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	1