

NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN INSPECTION REPORT ON DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

Summer 2009



SAINT FRANCIS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
DALBY ROAD
MELTON MOWBRAY
LEICESTERSHIRE
LE13 0BP

Date of Inspection: 6th JULY 2009

(Section 48, 2005 Education Act)

SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

Name and address of School:	St Francis Catholic Primary School, Melton Mowbray Leicestershire LE13 OBD
Headteacher:	Mrs Denise Shipstone
Chair of Governors:	Mr Simon Curley
Date of Inspection:	6.7.09
Inspection Team:	Mrs Anne Recchia and Mrs Pat Snowdon
URN & DCSF Numbers:	120216 855 / 3342
Overall Grade Awarded:	1

A. DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

Saint Francis Catholic Primary School is situated in the Leicestershire market town of Melton Mowbray. It serves the parishes of St John the Baptist and St Peter, and also the Polish parish of Our Lady of Czestochowa. The Franciscan Minoreesses built the school, and the order continues to share the Trusteeship of the school with the Diocese of Nottingham. The convent chapel is adjacent, and is regularly used by the school.

The pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds, with some living in very deprived wards. The Leicestershire deprivation indices data rank the area as 137th in the county. There are 266 children on roll of which 3% take up their entitlement to Free School Meals. 8% of pupils are on the special needs register. 65% of pupils are baptised Catholics and 26% are from other Christian Denominations. A small minority are from other World Faith backgrounds.

30% of pupils are from ethnic groups other than White British representing a wide ethnic mix. 8% of pupils on role have arrived recently from Eastern Europe. Many of these are children at the early stages of learning English.

Children are assessed shortly after they arrive in school and are broadly average in attainment which has been the trend for the last few years.

INSPECTION SCHEDULE

B. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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

The overall effectiveness of St Francis is outstanding. Its contribution to Catholic life and community cohesion is exemplary. The Governing Body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation very effectively. Values of honesty, tolerance, co-operation and respecting others are energetically promoted and are at the heart of this school community. The Religious Education curriculum provides the pupils with stimulating opportunities to develop their moral, social, spiritual and cultural learning.

The school has significantly improved since the last inspection. The developmental issues raised at the time have been successfully addressed.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

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

The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development, as expressed in its self-evaluation document. In addition, the Headteacher and Religious Education co-ordinator are well supported by an able governing body which has effective systems in place to ensure that high standards are maintained.

GRADE: 1 Outstanding

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

St. Francis is an outstanding school. We recommend that the Leadership Team and governors focus on the following to improve even further:

- Monitor and evaluate the coverage of curriculum Religious Education and the progress of pupils with more rigour to ensure areas for development are successfully identified and good practice is celebrated and shared.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and Management

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

St Francis Catholic School is an outstanding school, which, to a high degree, fulfils its mission of bringing Christ's love to everyone associated with it.. It is well supported by the Franciscan Minoreesses who are Trustees of the school in conjunction with the Diocese of Nottingham.

The Head Teacher plays a pivotal role in successfully leading this outstanding school supported by an able religious education co-ordinator and governing body. The Catholic life of the school is monitored by leaders at all levels. This has led to further improvements especially in the quality of classroom worship.

The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is given a high priority within the school, with a wide range of opportunities for all children. Collective acts of worship and Masses ensure the Eucharist and the Catholic faith are central to the life of the school. Multi-cultural opportunities enable pupils to become aware of and develop respect for the culture and faith of others.

The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to the school and celebrates Mass or leads a service every fortnight. More focus however, needs to be given to his visits to the classroom in order to ensure that the pupils understand his responsibilities within the local Catholic community and that he is clear about his role as chaplain to all of the pupils regardless of their faith background. Father Peter, a local Anglican minister, ably leads assemblies which enthral the children. Parents support liturgies, Masses and the religious life of the school.

The school promotes excellent relationships with key partners in education. Good links exist between the school, parents, governors, the diocese and the Franciscan Minoreesses. There are strong links with the School Improvement Partner, the local school cluster and with other Leicestershire Catholic Schools. The children take part in a range of activities in the local community, such as singing in the local old people's home effectively bringing the young and old together! The children have a voice through the School Council and are encouraged to use their own initiative to move the school forward.

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Collective Worship

2. How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

The provision for prayer and collective worship is, for the most part, outstanding. Classroom and Key Stage acts of collective worship were observed during the course of the inspection. The act of collective worship in the classroom was outstanding. Learning and enjoyment were evident in the key stage celebration but there were limited opportunities for pupil participation in prayer and worship. Therefore, it is recommended that the excellent practice that is taking place in the classrooms is extended into larger key stage and whole school acts of worship. The quality of singing is outstanding and a significant strength of the school. The children have been awarded the "Gold Standard Sing Up Award."

Pupils take an active role in the preparation for Eucharistic celebrations and liturgies. The Leavers' Mass practise was observed and it was very impressive, with children producing their own Mass booklet, choosing readings and writing their own bidding prayers. There is considerable evidence that the Statements to Live By which have been introduced fairly recently, are further influencing the children's spiritual and moral direction.

There are clearly identified prayer areas in each classroom which provide significant focus for the children. The Parish Priest says Mass regularly with the children, usually on a class basis.

The provision for prayer and collective worship is well planned but now needs to be more formally monitored and evaluated to ensure the very good quality is maintained and developed.

Grade: 1 Outstanding

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.**

The school makes a valuable contribution to promoting community cohesion in the local community, nationally and internationally, its provision is judged to be outstanding. The Religious Education curriculum promotes community cohesion to an outstanding level. Pupils are encouraged to think and act ethically and are very aware of their responsibilities as members of God's global family. The school actively supports local charities and the work of CAFOD in Africa. It has set up a virtual village there, so that money raised by the children can be used to purchase real gifts to which they can relate. In addition to this, the school is able to support an "adopted" child and his family in Tanzania. These link very successfully with the every child matters outcomes of achieving economic well-being and further develop the children's independence and problem solving skills.

Pupils are valued and respected and in turn value and respect one another. Relationships within the school are based on tolerance and respect. Pupil friendships cross cultural, faith, social and economic backgrounds. Pupils are willing to take on responsibility within the school community. There is an effective school council in place that give the pupils a voice which is listened to and acted upon by the leadership team.

The school works well with the parish sister in preparing children for the sacraments. However, there is concern voiced by the Headteacher and Governors regarding the number of Catholic children coming from the local parish who are admitted to school. This number has been falling steadily over the last few years. Greater efforts need to be made to forge links with practicing Catholic families in the area who do not attend the local parish.

Grade: 1 Outstanding

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards

4. How well do learners achieve?

Pupils at St. Francis School achieve very high standards in curriculum Religious Education; a large proportion achieving above national expectations for the subject by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils start school with levels broadly in line with their age and maturity and make very good progress during their time in school. There are no significant differences between groups of learners, due to the good support and encouragement given to pupils from both the teaching and support staff. The standard of pupils work is very good, but is outstanding both in Foundation stage and lower Key stage 1 and upper Key Stage 2. Pupils are able to use prior learning to inform their work and there is clear evidence of continuity and progression. However, progress is not consistent throughout the school and although tracking information suggests that pupils maintain good standards, there is insufficient evidence in the pupils' books to support this. Pupils are extremely well behaved, polite and mature. Their lessons are generally well planned and creative, catering for the age, learning style and attainment of the pupils and as a consequence pupils enjoy lessons. They talk confidently about the effect the Religious Education curriculum has on their lives. One pupil, commenting on the work undertaken on other World Faiths, said "It helps us to respect others and what they believe in". Pupils have a strong voice in the school which is listened to by the staff. The recent ECO Carnival Day was organised by the school council and made a valuable contribution to the charity and the children's awareness of global and ethical issues. The Religious Education curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to the moral, cultural and spiritual development of the learners and is a strength of the school.

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

5. How effective are teaching and learning?

Teaching at St. Francis School ranges from good to outstanding. The curriculum is well planned. Much thought and creativity has been given to pitching activities at the correct level to engage and test pupils. Good use is made of resources to enhance teaching and vary tasks to suit the learning styles and ability of all learners. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and are able to demonstrate the knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways. The very effective links made with literacy ensure work produced, especially in upper Key stage 2, is of a very high standard. Pupils are confident in their use of religious language from an early age. They talk and write knowledgeably about their own faith and the faith of others. Pupils are challenged by their teachers and increasingly by their peers, to think ethically, spiritually and theologically. They very quickly become aware of the demands of religious commitment in their lives and enthusiastically demonstrate this in their actions. St. Francis School actively promotes its Mission Statement "A respectful Catholic community working together for excellence", through its Religious Education curriculum.

Teachers meet regularly to moderate work produced by the pupils. They are confident in levelling work accurately and have begun to track pupil progress on a termly basis. Marking is generally of a high standard and in some cases informs pupils of the next stage in their learning. However, this is not uniform across the whole school. Good practice could be effectively shared to ensure consistency. Assessment for learning has been introduced but needs now to be embedded throughout the school to inform planning, raise standards consistently and inform learners of the next step forward.

Parents are well informed of their child's progress and attainment in Religious Education through regular meetings and an annual report.

Grade: 1 Outstanding

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

The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools, to an outstanding level. "Here I Am" is used effectively throughout the school and is reflected in interactive displays and prayer foci around the school. Every effort is made to prepare the children for the multi cultural world in which they live. An impressive range of visits and visitors from other World Faiths augments the curriculum and encourages pupils to respect and celebrate the culture and faith of others. A good range of activities are planned to meet the needs of the pupils. However, the recording of work in line with Diocesan guidelines is not always consistent. Care should be taken to record all work undertaken by the pupils to inform the assessment process and effectively track the progress of pupils.

Learners are encouraged to investigate and reflect upon God's call in their everyday lives. This was very evident in the work being undertaken during the inspection. Pupils were enthusiastic and thoughtful in their response to World poverty issues; they could relate this to the teachings of scripture and were keen to act upon their findings. The curriculum is well planned and plays a very effective part in the pupils' spiritual, ethical and moral development. Good use is made of ICT both for research and for the presentation of knowledge. Full advantage is taken of opportunities to develop pupils' skills in other areas of the curriculum, especially reading, writing, speaking and listening. Pupils can work independently but enjoy collaborative work. They interact very well, sharing ideas and knowledge respectfully. Good relationships exist throughout the school making St. Francis School a happy, safe and lively place.

Grade: 1 Outstanding

Leadership and Management

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

The leadership and management of curriculum Religious Education is outstanding. The coordinator has a clear understanding of her role and is very focused on raising achievement and supporting all learners. She is an excellent practitioner and a positive role model for all staff and pupils. Staff are well supported in their teaching and learning of Religious Education and those new to the school receive a very good induction. The coordinator regularly attends Diocesan training and has worked hard to establish a collegiate approach to moderating pupils' work which has resulted in teachers being very confident in the use of levels in the assessment process. The school has established robust systems of analysing assessment data and tracking pupil progress. Monitoring pupils' work through more regular book scrutiny and lesson observation will add rigour to the schools' already very good self-evaluation procedures. Consideration could well be given to including the Religious Education Coordinator on the senior leadership team given her pivotal role in the Catholic education of the pupils.

Governors play an active role in the school and understand the strengths and areas of development. They have taken advantage of training to increase their knowledge and understand their responsibilities in the governance of the school. They act effectively as a critical friend and support to the Headteacher and leadership team.

The school is set in beautiful grounds where the outside space has been used very effectively. Resources are well placed and used to good effect to engage the pupils and enhance their learning. Teachers are skilled in the use of interactive white boards as a teaching aid, and make good use of them.

The leadership team place a high priority on equality of opportunity for all. They tackle discrimination and inequality when it occurs with effective intervention. This results in a very respectful and inclusive school where morale is high and learners flourish.

Very good links exist with the parents, parishioners and the Franciscan Sisters who have a convent on the site. The Parish Priest is a regular visitor and is keen to support the school. The school makes good use of the Diocesan agencies to reinforce high standards of Religious Education and has good links with the local community.

Grade: 1

Common grading scale for all inspection judgements

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction which promotes high quality care and education and leads to improvement 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of the leadership of the Headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes learners' spiritual and moral development 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the impact of the involvement of the local priests on the work of the school 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the leadership promotes relationships and communication with key partners in education 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated 	1
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school and its frequency 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> learners' response to the school's provision 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively the provision is planned, monitored and evaluated 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well the liturgical life, prayer and Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners 	1
How effectively the school promotes Community Cohesion?	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how effectively leadership at all levels promote community cohesion within the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the efforts of the school to promote community cohesion with the wider Catholic faith and education communities 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how well does the school work in partnership with the wider education, cultural and social communities 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the inclusive nature of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and the liturgical life of the school 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> how far the Religious Education curriculum promotes community cohesion 	1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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