

DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM INSPECTION SERVICE



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

(Section 48, Education Act 2005)

Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School
Ashlawn Drive
Boston
Lincolnshire
PE21 9PX

26 March 2012
(Spring Term 2012)

URN: 120615

SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

School:	Saint Mary's Catholic Primary School
Headteacher:	Mrs Sarah Lammond
Chair of Governors:	Mr John Poucher
Date of Inspection:	26 March 2012
Inspection Team:	Mrs Jane Monaghan Mrs Anne Recchia
URN:	120615
Overall Grade Awarded:	2

Description of the school

Saint Mary's is an average sized primary school. It serves the parish of Saint Mary's, Our Lady of the Rosary and is situated near the centre of the town. Pupils come from the town of Boston and the surrounding villages. The current number of pupils on roll is 210 of whom 56% are baptised Catholics, 39% from other Christian denominations and 3% from other faith backgrounds. Since the last inspection the number of pupils with English as an Additional Language has risen and is currently 34% of all pupils. This figure is above the national average and is increasing. Some of these pupils are at the earliest stage of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The number of pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. No pupils transferred to a Catholic secondary school in the last academic year. Arrangements with the local secondary school Haven High to support Catholic students with their faith are to be commended.

Common grading scale for all inspection judgements	
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness

Saint Mary's Primary is a good school which is continually striving to be outstanding. Pupils' standards and progress in Religious Education are both good; as a result of the good or better teaching that pupils receive. The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual and moral development and is at the heart of the school. Pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school to a good extent. This is evident in their good relationships with one another and the staff, their good behaviour and readiness to help those in need both locally and further afield.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and shares this effectively with staff and pupils. The leadership team has developed good systems for monitoring and evaluating provision for the Catholic life of the school and pupil outcomes in Religious Education. They are beginning to use these effectively in planning future improvements. As staff become even more confident and precise in assessing pupils' attainment and progress, leaders and managers will be able to have a more accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. The governing body ably support the headteacher and offer both their own expertise and a level of challenge that is needed to move the school forward.

The school's provision in promoting Catholic education is good. Teaching is mostly good or better leading to purposeful learning in Religious Education. Assessment for learning is still in its early stages of development for Religious Education. Teachers have become more confident in assessing attainment and tracking the progress of pupils but a level of refinement is now needed in order to inform planning more effectively. The Religious Education curriculum is generally well differentiated to meet the needs of different groups of learners. The support provided by teaching assistants is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. The provision of collective worship provided by the school ranges from satisfactory to good. The Eucharist is central to the life of the school. Class Masses are celebrated weekly with a good deal of pupil involvement. However, many of the liturgies and acts of worship are adult planned and led. The school now needs to provide opportunities for pupils to gain the skills and expertise needed to plan and lead their own liturgies and acts of worship from an early age.

Overall effectiveness	Grade: 2
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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To further refine the assessment and tracking of pupil achievement and progress in Religious Education by introducing the use of sublevels within assessment data.
- To ensure that 'driver words' are used within the planning of differentiated tasks and that the marking and assessment of pupils' work is consistent throughout the school.
- To further develop the use of pupils' self-evaluation through more widespread use of target cards and Assessment for Learning strategies.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to gain the skills and expertise needed to plan and lead their own liturgies and acts of worship from an early age.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

The school has a good capacity to improve. There are clear systems in place to evaluate the school's strengths and weaknesses and a headteacher with a clear vision for the school which she is able to share and articulate with the staff and pupils. She has an able leadership team and a governing body which is very supportive and eager to develop the school further. Since the last inspection, the school has addressed all of the issues raised and as a result, has become much more focused on raising standards in Religious Education through effective assessment, monitoring and evaluation. This is beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching and in turn pupils' progress. The headteacher and senior leaders are aware of the need to refine some of the systems already established to give a more detailed picture of the impact that new initiatives have on standards. They are also aware of the need to track different groups of pupils to ensure that progress is consistent throughout the school. The headteacher and leadership team have responded well to the support offered by the Diocese so that the school is now in a good position to move forward.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade: 2

PUPILS

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

Pupils' enjoyment and learning in Religious Education are good. Their attainment in Religious Education on entry to the Foundation Stage is broadly average. They make satisfactory progress at this stage and have a satisfactory level of Religious literacy. Staff use the Foundation Stage Profile to make judgements about attainment on entry in Religious Education; the use of the Diocesan recommended baseline assessment will focus these judgements ensuring more robust tracking of progress. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress with some pupils with EAL (English as an Additional Language) showing outstanding progress when expressing themselves orally. Throughout Key Stage 2 EAL groups make at least good progress and all pupils are keen to do well. They work with enjoyment at their tasks and are enthusiastic about their learning. Where outstanding teaching was evident, pupils responded well to well-targeted tasks and challenging questioning. They worked diligently and made accelerated progress in these lessons. In all key stages, use of the recommended 'driver words' will aid progress and will clarify what pupils need to do in order to achieve the next level in their work in Religious Education.

Religious Education is at the heart of the school curriculum. In Key Stage 1 staff have high expectations of the pupils and this continues into Key Stage 2. Lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding with the majority being good. Where lessons were good, planning was detailed with stimulating activities stretching the understanding of all groups of learners. Pupils worked at a high standard in a lesson that linked the scripture passages with the hymn 'Lord of the Dance'. In other lessons, the use of images and powerpoint presentations enabled all pupils to enjoy their learning and increase their knowledge and understanding of the 'Self Giving' topic. The impact of good teaching ensures that standards of attainment at the end of both key stages is

mostly above average with high proportions of pupils working at the nationally expected outcome of Level 2b and above at the end of Key Stage 1 and the nationally expected outcome of Level 4b and above at the end of Key Stage 2. In order to raise standards even further, pupils should be more aware of the levels that they have achieved and should know how they can improve their work further. The use of driver words would aid this process.

The contribution that pupils make and the benefits they receive from the Catholic life of the school are firmly rooted in the school's Mission Statement, 'As we grow in the love and care of God, we aim to respect and care for one another in our daily lives'. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about respecting one another and the importance that this plays in Saint Mary's with its diverse school community. Phrases such as 'no one judges you' and 'people value each other' were prominent in the discussions with the school council. All groups of pupils benefit from the care, guidance and support of the staff with some saying that teachers are available at anytime to talk to them if there are concerns with work. Pupils take on responsibilities such as road safety officers, they organise fund raising for CAFOD and there is an effective class buddy system. Pupils feel safe and commented that 'there is no bullying in our school'. Any racist issues are addressed sensitively.

There are a range of rich opportunities celebrating the varied cultures at Saint Mary's, the pupils cited a Jamaican visitor and members of the Polish community coming into school to talk about their lives and experiences. Discipline is well managed within the strong Catholic framework of the school and pupils know the sanctions in place to deal with poor behaviour. There are strong links with the parish and the Parish Priest is a regular visitor to the school. Pupils benefit from the weekly Masses when parishioners attend and engage them in conversation. The contributions pupils make to school life, their work and the wider community are celebrated in the weekly 'praise' assemblies. Residential visits, productions by visiting theatre groups, visits to church, the war memorial in Boston and the 'Big Assembly' all contribute to pupils benefitting from being members of the Saint Mary's Boston school community. The range of experiences presented to the pupils impacts greatly and helps them to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to take their place as responsible citizens in society.

Pupils participate actively in class Masses, whole school and class liturgies by writing prayers, reading and choosing music. During the inspection, the headteacher led an act of worship with some children in upper Key Stage 2 reading prayers. There were frequent opportunities for silent reflection and the whole school participated enthusiastically in the well-chosen hymn. There is evidence in the teachers' folders of preparation documents for class Masses. Pupils are encouraged to write prayers at home and bring them to school to be read in class liturgies. To develop their skills further in this area, pupils should be taught to plan, prepare and lead liturgies and acts of worship from the earliest years in Key Stage 1 thus enabling greater independence in Key Stage 2.

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups	Grade: 2
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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

Leaders and managers demonstrate a clear commitment to the mission of the Church in providing a rich, broad and balanced curriculum where the mission statement of the school is a lived experience for the pupils. The moral and spiritual development of the pupils has high priority in the shared vision of the headteacher and staff. The headteacher has been in post for almost three years and prior to this served as the acting headteacher for three years. She has taught generations of children at Saint Mary's and is enthusiastic in her desire to deliver the best education for each one of the pupils. She has an able leadership team which is very supportive and eager to develop the school further. Serious thought should be given to the training of aspiring leaders of the future from amongst the leadership team as there is the capacity on the staff. This focused leadership training will not only serve to further support the headteacher in her role but may address some of the issues facing the governors in succession planning.

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors use a variety of different strategies to monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school. Evidence is collected during informal talks with teachers, learning walks, scrutiny of liturgical planning and discussion with pupils. Parents' and parishioners' informal feedback after liturgies and class Masses is very positive and also aids evaluation. The headteacher's report to governors is informative and helps governors to monitor progress towards school improvement targets particularly related to the Catholic life of the school. Pupils are able to articulate clearly the distinctive nature of Saint Mary's Catholic School and are very appreciative of what it has to offer them.

In Religious Education, the self-evaluation process is becoming more accurate and robust in assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Pupil progress meetings increasingly include progress in Religious Education and as teachers become more skilled in the use of raw data, developing a narrative from this that focuses attention on underperformance and challenge; they will be increasingly able to focus their planning on particular groups and individuals in order to raise standards further in Religious Education. A more consistent use of 'driver words' and sublevels to plan tasks for pupils will aid assessment and will ensure that work is better tailored to the needs of all pupils.

Staff new to Saint Mary's are well informed and are offered appropriate training by the headteacher who is 'willing to go the extra mile' to ensure that staff feel supported and cared for without being dependent. This honest and compassionate approach has created an ethos of trust rooted in professional development amongst the staff, where their professional and spiritual needs are well met and where consequently, morale is high. The school has taken advantage of the training offered by the Diocese and is planning to link with another Lincolnshire school to introduce the new Religious Education framework 'Come and See'.

Relationships within the school are very positive and there is a common sense of belonging. Parents speak very highly of the school rating it as one of the best in the area. The population of the school has changed considerably since the last inspection

with the arrival of families from Eastern Europe. The school has welcomed pupils from these families and has worked hard to ensure that they are settled and that they are acquiring the language skills required to participate fully in the curriculum. The school website has a translation facility to help inform these parents and is a valued tool for communication. Parents involved in 'The Association of Friends of Saint Mary's' work hard to raise funds for the school and provide valuable opportunities for parents to meet socially.

Good links have been developed with the local schools in the area, sharing facilities and taking part in sporting and cultural activities. Pupils leaving Saint Mary's no longer have a local Catholic secondary school to transfer to. The headteacher is very aware of the need to maintain the faith links with these pupils and has successfully liaised with Tollfield School to facilitate this. Catholic pupils from this school have been given the opportunity to join the primary school in celebrating Mass on feast days and liturgies during important liturgical seasons. Pupils from the local special school are given opportunities to work alongside pupils at Saint Mary's - leading to pupils showing tolerance and understanding of disability and impairment.

Pupils from other world faiths within the school are willing to share their own faith experiences with their peers during weeks dedicated to other faiths within the curriculum. Parents and church leaders have also visited the school to enrich the curriculum and give pupils some first-hand experiences. Opportunities to visit different places of worship have been few but plans to do this in the future would further enhance this area of provision.

The school has good links with the parish. Staff at the school support the parish in the preparation of children for the sacraments. The Parish Priest regularly celebrates Mass in school which is attended by parishioners. The school has made available a room for quiet prayer before Mass where the rosary is regularly recited with some of the children. Many parents also attend Masses, acts of worship and other liturgies in school. Opportunities are provided by the school for pupils to play an active part in the local community thus raising the profile of the school in the town.

Governors are very supportive of the school and have the skills and expertise to meet the school's needs. They are becoming increasingly more influential in determining the Catholic direction of the school. The work of the 'Scrutiny Team' supports the headteacher in monitoring and evaluating standards in Religious Education. Governors have been proactive in helping the Parish Priest to appoint Foundation Governors who would fulfil the strategic needs of the school. They have a good relationship with the staff and are constructive in their feedback. They show determination in tackling weaknesses and work with the headteacher and staff to bring about improvements.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school	Grade: 2
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PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic Education

Teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding with the majority being good. Where teaching in Religious Education is good or better, it is effective in ensuring that pupils are consistently interested in their learning, are on task in lessons and making progress. Where outstanding teaching was observed, pupils were challenged through open ended questioning, to extend their answers and test their thinking. In these lessons, pupils were confident to voice their opinions, worked well in groups sharing ideas and were ready to evaluate their learning accurately against learning objectives. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally very good. The headteacher ensures that teachers new to Catholic schools receive appropriate training and continuing support to ensure that they have a good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum in Religious Education. Teachers use cross curricular links well to engage pupils and make learning fun. Information Technology is used well as a teaching and learning aid. Lessons are well planned with differentiated tasks to ensure teaching consolidates prior learning and builds upon and extends pupils' knowledge and understanding. The curriculum enhances pupils' spiritual and moral development to a good standard.

Pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities are well supported and make at least as good progress as other groups of pupils in the school. Teaching assistants and other adult support are well prepared by the class teacher and as a result, make a very positive contribution to the teaching and learning within the classroom especially with vulnerable groups. Pupils are generally keen to learn; they concentrate on the given tasks and make good progress. The school is well set to introduce the new scheme of work for Religious Education 'Come and See' in the Autumn Term. They have successfully trialled some of the units and have planned joint In-Service training with another Catholic school in the Summer Term to launch the programme to all the staff.

Assessment for Learning in Religious Education is still in its early stages of development. The use of 'driver words' in planning differentiated tasks and assessing outcomes is not consistently embedded throughout the school. As a consequence, pupils are sometimes not aware of the next steps in their learning. The quality of marking in Religious Education is also not consistent. Where marking is good or better, teachers are beginning to mark pupils' work in response to the learning objective and are able to show pupils how to improve the Religious Education element of their work. Pupils respond well to this, often making their own comments showing that they understand how to improve their work. This good practice now needs to be shared and used consistently throughout the school.

Teachers are becoming more confident in assessing attainment and tracking the progress of pupils in Religious Education but a level of refinement is now needed in order to inform planning more effectively. The use of sublevels would show more accurately the levels of pupil progress in the subject. Also the regular use of 'driver words' in setting appropriately differentiated tasks for pupils would aid the assessment process and would help pupils to understand how they can improve their work. The use of assessment information to identify the progress of different groups of learners is not as refined as in other core subjects but this is being addressed. Pupil progress meetings now include discussions regarding progress in Religious Education. The headteacher's

expectation that teachers include a commentary on the raw statistics is beginning to develop a shared responsibility for pupils' progress in the subject and is helping to tackle pockets of underachievement.

Acts of collective worship are given a high profile and are well resourced. The Eucharist is central to the life of the school with class Masses celebrated weekly with a good deal of pupil involvement. Parents, carers, past pupils and parishioners are invited to these and comment on the strong Catholic ethos of the school through its worship and prayer. The school's dedication and devotion to its patron saint is a strong feature. There is a strong commitment amongst the teaching staff to prayer and worship with this often seen as a springboard into lessons. There are a range of formal and informal opportunities for daily prayer often using the pupils' own reflections and prayers. Pupils respond to this prayerfully and reverently. Appropriate themes consistent with the Catholic nature of the school are used in the planning of collective worship. Account is taken of the diverse cultural experiences of the children and effort is made to include these in the prayer and worship. Planning and leading worship is for the large part adult initiated. There is an eagerness on the part of the pupils to take more of an active role in the planning and leading of prayer and worship in the school. This has been recognised by the leadership team and plans to bring in outside training to meet this need will greatly enhance provision.

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education	Grade: 2
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Inspection Judgements Summary

Overall effectiveness – How effective the school is in providing Catholic education.	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	2
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education.	2
How good OUTCOMES are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How well pupils progress and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
<i>pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education;</i>	2
<i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress;</i>	2
<i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress.</i>	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship.	2
How effective LEADERS AND MANAGERS are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	2
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.	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	2
How well leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for 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.	2
How effective the PROVISION is in promoting Catholic education.	2
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	2
The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education.	3
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	2
The quality of collective worship provided by the school.	2