NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN INSPECTION REPORT ON DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION

AUTUMN 2009

St. Norbert's Catholic Primary School, Spalding
PE11 1TY

Date of Inspection: *6th October 2009*

(Section 48, 2005 Education Act)

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SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

Name and address of School:	St Norbert's Catholic Primary School Tollgate Spalding Lincolnshire PE11 1NJ
Headteacher:	Mrs Elizabeth Jordan
Chair of Governors:	Mr Tony Bray
Date of Inspection:	6th October 2009
Inspection Team:	Mrs Anne Recchia Mr John Honey
URN & DCSF Numbers:	URN 120616 DCSF 9253343
Overall Grade Awarded:	3

A.   DESCRIPTION OF THE SCHOOL

St Norbert's is a smaller than average size primary school. It provides Catholic education for children living in the parishes of Spalding and Holbeach. It is an extremely wide catchment area. Of the 144 children on roll 77% are baptised Catholics and 23% are almost entirely from other Christian backgrounds. Fewer pupils than average receive a free school meal. The percentage of children with a disability or special educational need is well above the national average. All classes in the school are currently mixed age, but pupil numbers are rising to such an extent that a big expansion programme is under way. A new hall will be completed shortly and this will be followed immediately with two additional classrooms. This will mean there is one class for each year group. The number of children with English as an additional language has increased significantly. The average academic attainment on first admission to school is below the national norm

B.   OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

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

St Norbert's is effective in providing a Catholic education to a satisfactory standard. The overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school is satisfactory whilst the provision for community cohesion is good. The strengths of the school are the commitment shown by staff and governors to the needs of the children and the very good quality care that each child receives from every member of the school community. The school is held in high regard both by parents and by the local community. The Catholic life of the school could be further developed with the introduction of more creative Acts of Worship and more rigorous monitoring and evaluation.

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are satisfactory. Teachers plan the curriculum well and are creative in their use of other subjects to ensure pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons. Teaching is generally good with some outstanding features. The monitoring and tracking of pupil progress is still in its infancy and needs to be more rigorous to fully develop initiatives and raise standards. Pupils with additional needs are well supported. High achieving pupils however, are not sufficiently challenged.

Steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection in March 2007 have been satisfactory.
Given the short time since the last inspection, the school has effectively supported the introduction of a parish based programme of sacramental preparation. A good start has been made in the assessment and tracking of pupil progress

GRADE: 3 Satisfactory

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

The school's own self assessment has accurately identified the areas for development. In some cases, the gradings are slightly inaccurate. The school improvement plan tends to be rather ambitious and not sufficiently tight in its focus. A more developmental approach should be adopted
The school has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvements. Staff are well motivated and highly committed. Given good direction and encouragement, they could be the vehicle to drive through improvements and raise standards. Governors will need to play their part in this process. With the whole school community pulling together, and supported by the Diocese, rapid progress could be seen.

GRADE: 3 Satisfactory

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

The governors and staff are fully committed to the school's further development both in its Catholic life and in its standards of attainment in Religious Education. We recommend they focus on the following aims.

- Research ways of delivering more creative and inclusive Acts of Worship.
- Establish manageable systems to monitor and evaluate Acts of Worship and also the Catholic life of the school.
- Put in place a rigorous and developmental system of monitoring and tracking that identifies strengths and areas for improvement in Religious Education. Ensure initiatives are fully developed to raise standards.
- Ensure that lessons are sufficiently differentiated to challenge every child, but especially high achieving pupils.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and Management

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The overall leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school is satisfactory. There is good evidence of committed and competent leadership that very much wants to develop the school's Catholic mission. However, there is a need for creative ideas to help revitalise this aspect of the school's work.

The governing body carries out its role to a satisfactory level. With four new members and a new chair, the time is ripe for an induction programme for new and existing governors. The Diocese would support that request. One focus should be on how to develop and support the Catholic life of the school. The leadership in school is working at a satisfactory level in developing the school's Catholic life. It is clear that the focus in recent years has been to nurse the school through a series of challenges. One consequence is that there has not been the personnel to   effectively take on the responsibility of leading on Catholic life. It should be a priority in the newly expanded school to ensure this responsibility is allocated appropriately.

Leadership in the school promotes children's spiritual and moral development to a good standard. There is a particular strength in moral development as evidenced by the wonderfully calm, cooperative atmosphere that pervades the school. Relationships with key partners in education are good; parents in particular feel very enthusiastic about St Norbert's. The impact in school of the local clergy is satisfactory. The monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school is happening on an informal basis only. With a renewed commitment to develop this aspect of school life, it will be important to have a tool to use that will gauge the impact of new initiatives.

Collective Worship

2.   How good is the quality of Collective Worship?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The overall quality of Collective Worship at St Norbert's is satisfactory. For whole school Acts of Worship, children gather very calmly and without fuss. This is achieved with minimal staff intervention. Children sing extremely well, so well in fact they should be taught to sing in two parts. There is scope here for significant achievement which could be used to good effect in worship.   Some children are actively involved as candle bearers or technicians during the worship and some children compose Bidding Prayers. In one exciting instance, children combined their composition of a prayer with percussion. This creative element of worship is one step towards a more deeply spiritual experience for all. At the moment, the children tend to be too much the spectators and not enough the participants. The careful introduction of a range of creative arts would more effectively engage more children.   Resources to support this development are readily available. The new hall should be equipped with the latest electronic aids to facilitate delivery.

Most Acts of Worship take place in groups of classes or on a whole school basis. Consideration should be given to some of them taking place as a single class event.

The planning of worship is thorough. It is based around the liturgical seasons and significant feast days. The monitoring and evaluation is satisfactory. With possible new developments in worship, it will again be important to gather the reaction of all involved in order to know more accurately whether success criteria are being achieved.

3.   Community Cohesion
   How effectively the school promotes community cohesion:
   inwardly (within the school);
   within the local faith community (parish and education communities);
   and the wider social, cultural and educational communities.

Grade: 2 Good

The overall promotion of Community Cohesion is good. It is a harmonious school and everyone thinks highly of it. The children are proud they go to St Norbert's and staff take pride in the school . Very good efforts are made to welcome new arrivals into the school community with several staff using their bi-lingual skills. At lunchtime children sit in mixed age groups. When asked how they get on together, one child replied simply: "Oh! We all get on really well."

Community Cohesion with the wider Catholic faith is promoted to a good level. Good and effective links are in place with the parish. The school takes and heeds advice from the Diocese and supports the development opportunities as much as possible. Routine attendance at Diocesan in service training opportunities, together with the networking that automatically takes place, would enable the school to draw additional benefit from other leaders in the Diocese and beyond. The work done by the school with groups beyond the Catholic community again is good. There is a significant list of visitors to school to raise awareness of a whole host of needs and issues. When this leads to fund raising, the children are extremely generous.

There is good involvement with both town and county communities in sporting and cultural events. This has in fact led to significant success which is all the more noteworthy because St Norbert's is a small school. Engaging with local residents over plans for the school building extensions was an excellent initiative by governors.

The inclusive nature of the provision for the liturgical life of the school is satisfactory. Consideration should now be given to extending children's involvement. This could include more use of their own prayers, solo or group singers, prayers in children's mother tongue, using prayers from other faiths – all led by children themselves. The promotion of community cohesion through the Religious Education curriculum is satisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and Standards

4.   How well do learners achieve?

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

Attainment of pupils on entry to St. Norbert's School is variable but generally below average compared to schools nationally. The majority arrive with little faith background but make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the end of this stage boys tend to out perform girls in their emotional, social and personal development. However, all have a sound knowledge and understanding of simple prayers and rituals of the church, some bible stories and the qualities needed to be a good friend. Progress in this stage is good. By the end of Key stage 1, children are beginning to understand how Religious Education has an impact on their lives. Most pupils are at a level in line with other children of their age nationally. There is some underperformance at this stage, but this does not affect many learners and is not substantial. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are working at least in line with national expectations and with some pupils exceeding these.

The rate of progress in gaining knowledge, understanding and skills in Religious Education throughout the school is variable but generally satisfactory. Where progress is good learning objectives are made clear to the pupils, work is both well tailored to their needs and challenging. There is some inconsistency in achievement between Literacy and Religious Education. Children with additional needs are well supported and make acceptable progress. In some classes where work is effectively differentiated, high achieving pupils are set challenging targets and are able to produce work of a good standard. Differentiation is not sufficiently embedded to ensure this level of challenge is evident in all classes.

The introduction of a more creative approach to the curriculum has had a very positive influence on children's enjoyment of the subject. They work well in groups, pairs and individually. Behaviour in the classroom and around the school is outstanding. The moral and social development of pupils is well promoted in Religious Education lessons. Good use is made of prayer and reflection. It allows pupils time to consider what they have learnt and has an impact on their spiritual development. Pupils take an active role in the local community through their music, sport and charitable acts. The children at St. Norbert's School have the ability and enthusiasm to take a more responsible role in the running of the school.

Quality of Provision for Religious Education

5.   How effective are teaching and learning?

Grade: 2 Good

Overall the Teaching at St. Norbert's School is good. Standards range from unsatisfactory to good with some outstanding elements. In classes where teaching is most effective, teachers plan exciting lessons that engage all the learners, learning objectives are clear to the children and work is suitably differentiated to challenge but not overwhelm the children. Achievement is maximised when pupils are actively engaged in their learning and are aware of the learning objectives. This practice should be consistent across the whole school. Pupils with additional needs are well supported by knowledgeable

and skilful teaching assistants. Their impact could be even more effective if they were used for the whole of the lesson and not just the task element.

Teachers plan work well and the Here I Am programmes of study are well covered. Teachers are aware of the needs of their pupils and assign support skilfully. In this way work is well differentiated by outcome and support but more care needs now to be given to the varied tasks given to groups within the class. High achieving pupils are not sufficiently challenged at present.

Marking of work is generally good. Assessment for Learning has been introduced and is having a positive effect. Pupils are more aware of what they need to learn and are able to gauge their success in achieving objectives. Pupils' self evaluation is evident and they are increasingly aware of the next step in their learning. This good practice now needs to be fully established across the school in order to inform future planning and fully support all pupils.

Work in Religious Education is regularly assessed and levels assigned. Further agreement on levelling now needs to be undertaken to ensure consistency across all Key Stages. Monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken by the Headteacher. Development issues are well identified but a more thorough follow up would ensure certain issues are addressed and standards improve.

Parents are very supportive of the school. They are well informed about the content of the Religious Education curriculum and their child's progress through regular newsletters, the annual report and termly consultations with the teachers.

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The Religious Education curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools to a good standard. Generally 10% of curriculum time is allotted to Religious Education although care should be taken to guarantee that all pupils are present in the classroom during the lesson and thus given their full entitlement of time to the subject. The creative approach to curriculum planning has begun to have an impact on learning. Children enjoy lessons especially when effective links are made with other subjects. In one lesson observed, pupils enthusiastically created jingles that celebrated the qualities of a good friend. Literacy and ICT are developed well through Religious Education.

Most children are able to make satisfactory progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding and become aware of the growing demands of religious commitment in their every day lives. In this way the curriculum in Religious Education makes a contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the learners. Teachers set targets that can comfortably be met by most of the children in the class. However, extension activities are rarely given to those pupils who can achieve at a higher level.

Pupils are taught to respect other faiths and can understand and celebrate similarities and differences. There is little evidence of first hand experience in this area of the curriculum. The leadership team recognise that this is difficult in the Spalding area and know that other avenues could be pursued to rectify this.

Leadership and Management

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

Grade: 3 Satisfactory

The Headteacher takes on the role of Religious Education coordinator at St. Norbert's school. She leads the subject to a satisfactory standard but realises that this role is a difficult one given the burdens of headship. She supports teachers well in the planning of the curriculum and has led the introduction of a more creative approach to teaching and learning. Assessment has been recently introduced and a start has been made on the tracking of pupil progress. Plans to make this more rigorous are in place.

The monitoring of teaching takes place but not in a planned and regular way. More attention needs to be placed on a developmental approach to monitoring to ensure areas of concern are tackled effectively and good practice is shared. Pupils' work is scrutinised from time to time. The school needs to develop a pattern of monitoring that follows through developments in the subject and ensures consistency of approach leading to improvement in standards.

St. Norbert's has been through a period of instability over the last five years. Staffing is now much more stable and recent appointments and changes have had an impact on the teaching and learning within the school. The staff now has the ability and determination to drive through change and improvement.

The Coordinator makes good use of the Diocesan planning framework and effectively shares this with the staff. The school improvement plan successfully identifies the development needs in relation to curriculum Religious Education. The time frame for these improvements to be fully embedded is however, a little ambitious.

Resources in the school are used well but need some updating. The interactive whiteboards in every classroom are, however, used effectively. They enhance the interest and enjoyment of the learners. The excellent displays of pupils work around the school create a lively environment for all in the school community to work in. Plans to enlarge the school with the addition of a new hall and classrooms will considerably improve the facilities .

The governors are keen to act as a critical friend to the school. They have embarked on some monitoring but are not entirely clear of their position. The establishment of a monitoring protocol would define roles and responsibilities and give a much clearer overall picture of the subject. In this way monitoring could be used much more effectively to drive through improvements and raise standards.

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Common grading scale for all inspection judgements

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective and efficient is the provision of Catholic education in meeting the needs of learners and why?	**3**
• **the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school and its provision for community cohesion;**	**3**
• **the overall effectiveness of the provision for the Catholic Religious Education curriculum, its main strengths and areas for development**	**3**
• **the effectiveness of steps taken to promote improvement since the last inspection**	**3**
• **the capacity to make further improvements**	**3**

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

How effective are leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school?	**3**
• **how well the governing body fulfils its role in relation to the school's Catholic foundation**	**3**
• **how effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction which promotes high quality care and education and leads to improvement**	**2**
• **the quality of the leadership of the Headteacher and senior staff in leading and developing the Catholic life of the school**	**3**
• **how effectively leadership at all levels in the school promotes learners' spiritual and moral development**	**2**
• **the impact of the involvement of the local priests on the work of the school**	**3**
• **how effectively the leadership promotes relationships and communication with key partners in education**	**2**
• **how effectively the Catholic life of the school is monitored and evaluated**	**3**
How good is the quality of Collective Worship?	**3**
• **the quality of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and liturgical life of the school and its frequency**	**3**
• **learners' response to the school's provision**	**2**
• **how effectively the provision is planned, monitored and evaluated**	**3**
• **how well the liturgical life, prayer and Collective Worship contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners**	**3**
How effectively the school promotes Community Cohesion?	**2**
• **how effectively leadership at all levels promote community cohesion within the school**	**2**
• **the efforts of the school to promote community cohesion with the wider Catholic faith and education communities**	**2**
• **how well does the school work in partnership with the wider education, cultural and social communities**	**2**
• **the inclusive nature of the provision for prayer, Collective Worship and the liturgical life of the school**	**3**
• **how far the Religious Education curriculum promotes community cohesion**	**3**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well do learners achieve in Religious Education?	**3**
• **learners' success in achieving challenging targets including qualifications and learning goals, with trends over time and any significant variations between groups of learners**	**3**
• **the standards of learners' work**	**3**
• **learners' progress relative to their prior attainment and potential, with any significant variations between groups of learners**	**3**
• **the extent to which learners enjoy their work**	**2**
• **the behaviour of learners**	**1**
• **learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**	**2**
• **the extent to which learners' contribute positively to the school and broader community in the school**	**3**
How effective are teaching and learning in Religious Education?	**2**
• **how well teaching is used to meet learners' needs and curriculum requirements**	**2**
• **the suitability and rigour of assessment in planning, monitoring and informing learners' progress**	**3**
• **the diagnosis of, and provision for, additional learning needs**	**2**
• **the involvement of parents and carers in their children's learning and development**	**2**
How well does the Religious Education curriculum meet the needs and interests of learners?	**3**
• **the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum matches learners' aspirations and potential, building on prior attainment and experience**	**3**
• **how far the Religious Education curriculum meets external requirements and is responsive to local circumstances**	**2**
• **the extent to which the curriculum in Religious Education contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the learners**	**3**
• **the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum contributes to learners' enjoyment and achievement**	**3**
How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners in Religious Education?	**3**
• **how effectively whole school and subject leadership in Religious Education lead and support their staff**	**3**
• **how effectively performance in Religious Education is monitored and improved through quality assurance and self-assessment**	**3** **3**
• **how well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve their potential**	**3**
• **the adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are well taught**	**2**
• **the adequacy and suitability of specialist equipment, learning resources and accommodation**	**3**
• **how effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve high standards**	**3**
• **The extent to which governors discharge their responsibilities**	**3**