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DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTION

SECTION 48 REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beckbridge Lane
Normanton
WF6 2HZ

School URN	108263
Chair of Governors	Mrs Carmen Pearce
Headteacher	Mrs Lesley Darren
RE Subject Leader	Mrs Sarah Wakefield
Parish Priest	Canon Peter Maguire
E-mail address	headteacher@st-john.wakefield.sch.uk
Dates of Inspection	23 rd - 24 th July 2012
S48 Inspector	Joe Ginty

INTRODUCTION

The Inspection of St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School was conducted under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 (s48) 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:

From **Pupils** section of the s48 Framework:

- a. The level of consistency across all groups of pupils since the last s48 inspection in attainment and progress in Religious Education (RE);
- b. The pupils' response to the provision for Collective Worship.

From **Provision** section of the s48 Framework:

- c. The level of consistency in the quality of teaching in RE;
- d. The recent implementation of the Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) scheme;
- e. The views of parents of children at the school.

From **Leadership and Management** section of the s48 Framework:

- f. The overall quality of the Governance of the school;
- g. The proposed Catholic Multi-Academy Trust status;
- h. Leadership succession planning in relation to RE subject leadership.

The inspector examined and discussed school documentation including:

- Self Evaluation Form (SEF48)
- RE Action Plan 2011-2012 and draft Action Plan 2012 onwards
- RE Subject Leader's reports 2011-2012
- RE Subject Leader's portfolios of written and photographic evidence
- School assessment and tracking data for RE
- School Council Minutes

The inspector visited RE lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2, shared class-based and joint-class Collective Worship in Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1 and 2, whole school worship, the celebration of Mass and Circle Time. He held meetings with the Headteacher, RE Subject Leader, Governors, parents, the School Council, the Catholic Care Social Worker and individual members of the school staff.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is of average size with a rising role and regularly over-subscribed, serving the parish of St John the Baptist, Normanton. This is a mixed area of council and private housing. Most pupils are White British. The proportions of pupils who are eligible for free school meals, who are from minority ethnic backgrounds, who are learning English as an additional language or who have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities are all below average. The school has an average deprivation indicator in terms of Local Authority data. Recently there has been an influx of Polish families into the local community.

There are currently 253 pupils on roll, 47 of whom are part-time Early Foundation Stage (Nursery). Of the total roll, 69% are of the Catholic Faith with a further 26% of other Christian denominations. There are eight single age classes in the school with a significantly higher percentage of boys.

There are eight full-time equivalent teachers of whom three are Catholic with four having CCRS or equivalent qualification. There have been significant personnel changes since the last Section 48 inspection in March 2007. The Headteacher took up her post in September 2009 following the retirement of her predecessor. The Chair of Governors took up her position in September 2011. There have been many other changes to the membership of the Governing Body and teaching staff throughout the school during this time with further changes pending.

Since the last s48 inspection, the Governors and Leadership Team have overseen successive extensions and modifications to the school site with the support from Voluntary Aided Capital Project funding, resulting in the optimum use of space, inside and out, in a creative, imaginative and stimulating way, fully conducive to effective and enjoyable teaching and learning in the 21st century.

The school enjoys strong links with the parish and is actively involved within the Wakefield Catholic Partnership of schools wherein the current focus is on the formation of a Catholic Multi-Academy Trust with effect November 2012. The majority of pupils transfer to either St Wilfrid's or St Thomas à Becket Catholic High Schools at age eleven. The school has achieved Investors in People, Investors in Pupils, Healthy School Status and Get Set Network Olympics Status.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

1

The above is a summative judgement based on the judgements made below:

- Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils
- Provision for Catholic education including the effectiveness of leaders and managers
- Capacity for sustained improvement

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS, PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT

1

Main findings

The quality of Catholic education at St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School is outstanding. The outcomes for pupils, the provision for Catholic education, the effectiveness of leaders and managers are of the highest standard in almost every aspect. Through their pursuit of excellence in Catholic education, the Governors and Senior Leaders have ensured that the school has built on previously outstanding performance. There were no key issues arising from the last s48 inspection in March 2007 and the school has remained deeply committed to providing the best possible Catholic education for the children in the area. The priority identified by the school during the past twelve

months has been to fully embed the RE scheme, '*The Way, The Truth and The Life*' throughout the school and all evidence confirms that this is being achieved successfully.

Through honest and accurate analysis of the pupils' achievements, the school has a very clear idea of its own strengths and those areas it wishes to develop further. Governors and Senior Leaders share an energetic vision for securing further improvement. They inspire the school community to work towards sustaining this ambitious vision to improve outcomes further. The capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding.

WHAT THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

To consolidate their current outstanding achievements and effectively contribute to the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust (Wakefield), the school leaders and staff should collectively:

- prepare their Action Plan (AP) and supporting Target Development Plans (TDPs) covering those aspects for improvement identified prior to and discussed during the inspection and fully appraise the governor School Improvement Committee;
- seek the endorsement of the full Governing Body;
- share ownership of these with all partners in the broader school community;
- thereafter use the AP and TDPs as an ongoing Self Evaluation Framework (SEF).

PUPILS

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

1

The extent to which pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE is outstanding. The school has maintained an extensive range of good quality evidence over a number of years giving a clear indication of pupil attainment and progress in RE. During this time there have been changes to the RE curriculum and schemes of work locally and nationally. There have also been significant changes in the assessment strategies informing teachers of pupil attainment in the subject. The school has been vigilant throughout, and worked very closely with others in the Wakefield Catholic Partnership to ensure a high degree of accuracy in work scrutiny, assessment data gathering and moderation. All evidence presented in the form of work scrutiny, pupil self-assessment, end-of-topic assessments, observations and discussions gives an accurate indication of pupil attainment.

For several years now by the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1) the vast majority of pupils have attained Level 2 or above in RE with a significant number of pupils attaining Level 3, and by the end of KS2 the vast majority of pupils have attained Level 4 or above with a significant number of pupils attaining Level 5. The latest summary for 2012 indicates that all pupils have attained Level 2 or above by the end of KS1 with 23% attaining Level 3 and 86% of pupils have attained Level 4 or above by the end of KS2 with 21% gaining a Level 5. These figures suggest an upward trend in pupil attainment in RE. Based on agreed diocesan expectations this level of attainment in RE is outstanding.

During observed lessons, in discussions, in their books and through the bright and colourful displays in the classrooms and throughout the school, the pupils endorse their enjoyment of the subject and display a good level of knowledge across the many topics they have covered including a good awareness, understanding and appreciation of other world faiths, traditions and customs. This high level of attainment in the subject has been consistent over several years and is consistent across all ages in the school.

The attainment of pupils in vulnerable groups is generally good. The school plans to refine its assessment and recording protocols in RE to enable teachers to provide early intervention strategies for those pupils who would benefit from such support. This aspect also receives mention in the Provision section of this report.

Records show that pupil attainment on entry to Nursery is generally below local and national expectations in RE but, as consequence of the excellent provision across the Early Years Foundation Stage, the progress these young children make is exceptional. There are inherent difficulties in tracking through the transfer from EYFS to KS1 largely due to the nature of the syllabus and the defined learning goals but the school is able to demonstrate that the rate of progress is consistent through KS1 and KS2. The overall progress made by the pupils whilst at the school is outstanding. When attainment and progress are outstanding, so is achievement.

The pupils proudly express their ownership of the behaviour expectations shared by all at the school. It is their code based on fundamental Christian principles, written, agreed and acted out in their daily life. The code encompasses relationships with all others, how they treat all others and how they expect being treated themselves. It is a code accepting mistakes but allowing for apology and forgiveness. They know acutely that their actions always have consequences. Their behaviour is exemplary in all given situations. All pupils display a sound, mature moral awareness in relation to their school environment and to the broader local and international world in which they live. *'Our dream for our country is that everyone, regardless of faith, race, wealth or religion, gets their fair share of food, water and medical support'*.

The pupils make a significant contribution to the life of the Parish, the Wakefield Partnership and to the broader community of Normanton, being actively involved in initiatives and celebrations throughout the year.

The pupils are well aware of the needs of others less fortunate in areas around the world. They are imaginative in their fund-raising efforts and very generous in their response. The pupils record the range and variety of their involvement; they are celebrated in displays around the school and covered by the local media. In a recent reflection, one pupil wrote: *'My dream is that everyone in the world will have enough money to buy everything they need. In our school, we all have enough money for necessities; other people in this country and overseas do not always have enough money for these things. Let us try to help these people so they have enough money for the things they need.'*

A 'formidable' Pupil Council who clearly and articulately discusses their achievements and their hopes for the future represents the pupil body. In recent times, they have made a significant contribution to the outdoor provision at their school, enjoyed by all their peers. They were also responsible for preparing the welcome and liturgy to celebrate the visit of the Lord Mayor. They respect and value the environment in which they learn and the example set by others. They regard the quiet, tranquil and peaceful setting of Luke's Garden, testimony to a former pupil, as a special privilege they can enjoy. The current Pupil Council are sure their mantle will be taken up by others in years to come, as there will surely be new projects for the pupils to engage with. The pupils take full advantage of all the school provides for them and feel safe and secure. They are unanimous in their praise for their teachers who they regard as inspirational, trustworthy, kind and caring.

The provision for Collective Worship features in a subsequent section of this report. For a number of years this aspect of Catholic school life has been a significant strength of the school and as such the pupils now have the confidence and wherewithal to prepare and lead a range of liturgical and prayer opportunities at class, KS and whole school level.

Encouraged by the Parish Priest and staff to be *'participants rather than bystanders'* the pupils flourish from the earliest age and thrive spiritually, morally and socially during the regular occasions they pray, sing, quietly meditate and joyfully rejoice together. The School Prayer encapsulates the aims of the school and is a living reality, fully and actively endorsed by all pupils:

*'Thank you God our Father for our school and all the people in it.
Help us to make it a safe and happy place to be where people look after and respect each other at all times.'*

All pupils adopt a mature and respectful attitude at prayer and worship. They have a very good understanding of the nature and format of worship including the responses during Mass. They display reverence, listen well, respect silence, respond enthusiastically and sing with gusto. They are overtly happy in their celebration of their life in Christ, the Word of God. Recent initiatives enabling classes of different ages to pair and celebrate together in the intimate and familiar surroundings of the classrooms has added yet another dimension to worship in the school and is proving successful and popular. Pupils in upper KS2 are also preparing liturgies and supporting PowerPoint displays used as the basis for class worship during the course of the year.

Pupil response to, and participation in Collective Worship is exemplary and a significant strength of the school that the pupils themselves could share amongst the wider diocesan community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
Taking into account:	
• <i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress</i>	<i>2</i>
• <i>pupils' attainment in Religious Education</i>	<i>1</i>
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

The provision for Catholic education is outstanding. The Catholic mission proclaimed by the school is a living reality and has been since the school's foundation a century ago:

St John the Baptist Catholic Primary School is rooted in the local Catholic community with which it shares beliefs and values.

Christ is the way, the truth and the life.

Our school is a welcoming Christ-centered community, committed to the development of faith and worship.

Our mission is to provide a loving and stimulating environment, where all are inspired and empowered to achieve their true potential as unique and valued individuals.

Our children will be encouraged to develop an awareness and respect of others as well as themselves, as we all journey through life with Christ.

Aspects of Mission are promoted weekly through the focus on *Ethos Statements*, which permeate the daily life of all in the school. The spiritual and moral development of the pupils is a significant strength of the school and this is the direct result of the wholehearted dedication and commitment of each member of staff. All adults in the school are excellent role models and enthusiastically share their own beliefs, values and faith journeys with the pupils in a challenging, supportive and caring way. The teaching (catechesis) is of a reciprocal and trusting nature where all adults assume responsibility for teaching the children and they are the first to recognise that they themselves have much to learn from the children. The living, sharing and celebrating of the Gospel (evangelisation) fills each school day. The adults are the first and primary provision and this fact more than any other is cause for celebration.

Comprehensive monitoring records maintained by the school show the quality of teaching over time in RE to be consistently good with examples of outstanding practice. Observations of teaching conducted during the inspection confirm this judgement. Teachers are increasingly confident in using '*Driver Words*' to focus their planning and teaching and in the use of '*I can*' statements to encourage self-assessment by the pupils and generate sound assessment-based criteria.

Where outstanding, teachers use a range of enthusiastic and dynamic teaching styles incorporating hot seating, drama and role-play to fully engage the pupils in the topic. They take calculated risks! The use of time is well thought-out, lessons proceed at a brisk pace and the transition from one phase of the lesson to another is smooth, often facilitated through quiet music or reflection. There are effective strategies for differentiation by task ensuring the needs of all abilities are addressed. Cross-curriculum links are well considered and there is creative use of IT and resources to enhance teaching and learning in the subject.

Close professional relationships between the teachers and supporting classroom staff enhance the quality of teaching and learning. This comes about through planning dialogue, clear direction, and an unequivocal understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Teachers display good subject knowledge and speak favourably about the RE scheme, '*The Way, The Truth and The Life*' in terms of the clear structure and subject knowledge base on which it is founded. Whilst the use of assessment to support and inform teaching is generally good, the teachers have expressed a certain lack of confidence in assessment processes, which are at a development stage. This is understandable when considering the amount of change in recent years locally and nationally in RE.

Assessment in RE has focused on Attainment Target 1 (AT1) but through their Action Plan the school will ensure that all strands are assessed across both AT1 (knowledge and understanding of religion) and AT2 (the ability to reflect on meaning). The school Assessment Coordinator maintains a comprehensive overview of monitoring and assessment. She is refining current systems in such a way that will be of benefit to staff in giving a clearer indication of precise levels of pupil attainment. The refined system will also give a clear and early indication of pupils who not meeting expectations and signal a need for early intervention. The Early Years staff are also planning for the new Early

Years provision which again will have an impact on monitoring, assessment and intervention where required. Through its development planning the school is actively addressing the identified assessment issues and will harness the expertise and experience within the staff to ensure successful outcomes.

Parents state that they are well informed about their child's attainment and progress in RE and have many opportunities for discussion with the teachers. The school adopts an open and welcoming approach and parents are particularly grateful for the curriculum open day facilities when they come in to school and work alongside their children. The parents have a very good understanding of the RE curriculum requirements and the scheme of work. They are also appreciative of the frequent and informative newsletters, the 'Wednesday Word', and the frequent opportunities they have to share prayer and liturgical initiatives strengthening the home and school relationship. Parents are full of praise for the school's support for families in times of need and single out for particular mention the work of the diocesan Catholic Care Agency and the school based social worker.

The Headteacher and colleagues have undertaken training with the Family Life Ministry and now offer Parenting Training. This has proved very popular with those parents taking part to the extent that there is now a 'waiting list' for those wishing to take part in the programme. The school is looking to provide evening sessions in the new school year, as it is conscious that many parents have full-time work commitments during the day. The school is also implementing the Rainbows programme to further support vulnerable groups of children.

St John the Baptist is a prayerful community where, traditionally, liturgy and worship have been central to the life of the school and a significant strength of it. Prayer opportunities are appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils. Themes, based upon the Ethos Statements, the scheme of work topic and the liturgical calendar reflect a deep understanding of the Church's mission and include the spiritual aspirations of all pupils. The quality of provision is second to none.

The Parish Priest has given generously of his time and energy to the school. He is a frequent and popular visitor, known and respected by all the children, parents and staff. He is a source of inspiration to all. He consistently encourages pupils and staff to be participants in liturgy and worship and the response is described earlier in this report. The Parish Priest is also the catalyst in the highly cooperative relationship enjoyed by the school and parish covering Sacramental preparation, liturgical celebrations and a very comprehensive social calendar involving children and their families. The parish also provides the RCIA programme and other opportunities for parents to engage in the ministry of the Church. Parents openly shared their personal faith journey and stated that the strong moral code and Catholic ethos they and their children experienced within the school had been a profound influence and motivational force on them.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge, understanding and appreciation of other world faiths and cultures through visits to places of worship such as the Sheffield Buddhist Centre and a Bradford Mosque. Pupils of other faith backgrounds with the Wakefield Partnership have also visited the school and shared their beliefs and faith journeys. The school further supports the development of the 'whole child' through a comprehensive Circle Time programme, an established EPR programme and the recently introduced SRE programme. The combined effect of these initiatives is that the Spiritual and Moral development of the pupils is outstanding and a significant strength of the school.

The Parent Association have, over the past five years, generously raised and donated £30,000 towards the enhancement of the overall provision the school gives. An obvious example of the way the pupils have benefited from this enthusiastic generosity is the extensive outdoor adventure play apparatus. There are many annual events promoted by the Parents Association for the children and their families and these are always very popular and well supported. Parents new to the school might consider playing an active roll in the Association and may be in a position to relieve some long-serving members of some of their duties. The purpose of this report to not to mount a recruitment drive - but go on, think about it.

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

The school governors and senior leaders are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education and are outstanding in their effectiveness in all aspects of their role. Their underlying belief in driving the school forward is 'Where *charity is true, God is there*' and they ensure that the celebration of the Eucharist liturgy is central to the life of the school. Members of the Governing Body maintain a welcome 'presence' in the school as parents themselves, parishioners or both. This helps to maintain the strong family ethos and ensures open and effective dialogue.

Parents state unequivocally that the strength of the school lies within the core moral values openly promoted and shared by all. They speak fondly of the warm, nurturing atmosphere and the confidence this instills; of an intimate atmosphere '*which can be felt in the air and in the walls.*'

The governing body and headteacher have been particularly influential during the past eighteen months working with the diocese and those across the Wakefield Catholic Partnership in preparation for the Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. Their commitment in this venture demonstrates an expertise that extends beyond the school as they help to shape and determine the direction of Catholic education across the Wakefield area. They are clear about the benefits of this initiative but are adamant, as are the parents that their action must not be to the detriment of other schools in the diocese.

The Chair of Governors, a long-serving governor now coming to the end of the first year of her office, enjoys a long-standing relationship with staff, pupils and parents. She demonstrates clarity of vision and acts with dogged determination in challenging and supporting the school, in tackling areas for development and so bringing about improvements. She is very aware of the needs of the children and their families and works tirelessly with her colleague governors in ensuring the highest quality provision at the school.

The Headteacher is inspirational, totally committed to Catholic education and is highly regarded across the Catholic community. This is witnessed in her support and guidance of staff, pupils and parents alike. She is instrumental in leading and promoting a collaborative working environment, wherein morale is high. There have been many staffing changes in recent years, some temporary and others permanent. The Headteacher, with the support of the Governors, has ensured that there has been minimal disruption for the pupils and a continuity in provision. The Headteacher is well aware of staff talents and expertise and is well placed to harness these to very good effect. She will be instrumental in leading the school forward within the Wakefield Partnership.

The Headteacher has been instrumental in providing the Foundation Stones programme for staff to support the knowledge base underpinning Catholic beliefs and promote greater confidence in the teaching of RE. Staff who have completed the programme clearly identify the benefits of it and identify a professional enrichment. The school is considering adopting the Foundation Stones programme as an integral part of future staff induction.

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.	1
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