

Diocese of Hallam



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST GERARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

School URN	106941
Name of Chair of Governors	Mr Des Maher
Name of Head teacher	Mrs Patricia Lunn
Date of inspection	23rd November 2011
Section 48 Inspector	Mr John Cape

“ An enthusiasm for the things of God”

Introduction

The Inspection of St Gerard's Catholic Primary School has been carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Diocese of Hallam Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections as approved by the Bishop of Hallam.

The process of inspection in the Diocese of Hallam has been developed as an activity of the Church to support schools in further deepening the quality of Catholic education provided.

Description of the School

St. Gerard's is much smaller than the average-sized primary school which was founded in 1928. Most pupils are White British although increasing numbers are Black African heritage and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to eligible for free school meals is well above average. An above average proportion of children have special needs or disabilities.

The published pupils' admission number is 20 although intake continues to fluctuate from year to year. The current Foundation 2 class is a small cohort. Pupils are taught in five mixed age classes.

Most pupils come from the local parish of St. Gerard's although they have very limited involvement or experience of Church before they start school.

Type of School	Voluntary Aided Primary
Age profile of students	4 - 11
Number on roll	106
Number of students on Special Needs and Disabilities Register	34
Number of students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs	0
Number of Catholics on roll	77
Number of Other Christian Denominations	29
Number of other Faiths	
School Address	Park Nook, Doncaster Road, Thrybergh Rotherham S65 4AE
Telephone Number	01709 850568
Fax Number	01709 855948
Email	st.gerardsc.primary@rotherham.gov.uk

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

How effective the school is in providing Catholic education	1
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St. Gerard's school is at the heart of the local community and is outstanding in providing Catholic education. The Mission Statement is a lived reality and children are developing an authentic knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. There is a genuine commitment to the provision of quality Catholic education which is very visible in the everyday life of the school. Quality leadership is at the heart of maintaining and developing the outstanding ethos. This in turn has created outstanding relationships which are manifest in common values such as respect, empathy, understanding and forgiveness. High quality self evaluation provides significant evidence that priorities for the continued development of Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school are explicitly addressed.

Daily prayer, for adults and pupils, nurtures this community where both behaviour and attitudes are outstanding and so too is pupils' spiritual and moral development. Children feel safe and secure which has built their confidence and given them a sense of purpose.

Pastoral care is a real strength and is given the highest of priorities. The school has demonstrated, with outstanding impact, care for the bereaved and there is significant concern demonstrated for those in need. The learning mentor has a key role in ensuring each child is cared for and their individual needs met. Parents are very proud of their school and confirm their children love attending each and every day. During a meeting with parents they said they felt valued and listened to and can approach school if there are any difficulties. One parent commented, "this is a fantastic school that has worked wonders for my child; I don't know where I would be without St. Gerard's".

The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
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The school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding. Morale is currently very high and all staff work in partnership for the best interests of the pupils. Consequently standards are at least good and often much better. The leadership team remain committed to high expectations and aspire to securing continuing improvement. The Governing Body are very effective in holding leadership to account.

In order to further strengthen this capacity, the school should continue to:

- Develop the role of the Religious Education Link Governor
- Implement the Diocesan recommended Sex and Relationship Education Policy
- Ensure a consistency in assessment throughout the whole school.
- Work towards the implementation of the new Catholic Religious Education programme 'Come and See'

PUPILS

How good outcomes are for pupils taking particular account of variations between different groups
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2

The outcomes for pupils are good. The majority of pupils make very good progress or better from their starting points which is at least as good in each Key Stage for different groups and exemplary in some. They have developed skills which are commensurate with their age and ability and have a knowledge and understanding to think spiritually and ethically. Pupil's spiritual and moral development is outstanding and they have an appetite to improve their understanding even more. All pupils were fully engaged in their learning and demonstrated an active interest and enthusiasm.

Opportunities to share work with peers and other adults offered occasions of affirmation which inspired pupils to give of their very best. Pupils are very orderly, interested and keen to please. They were also very respecting of each other and maintained their outstanding behaviour. Their books are generally well presented and demonstrate a very good coverage of the curriculum. They have well developed views which they are happy to share with others. The School Council were keen to explain that they do enjoy their learning.

The quality of Collective Worship is outstanding and impacts very positively on the developing spiritual needs of pupils. Celebrations are wholly inclusive and the quality relationships which exists amongst pupils, and pupils and staff, enables them to access full involvement in the celebrations. They experience a wide range of opportunities to pray purposefully in a variety of styles and are encouraged to have pride in their offerings. Pupil's reaction to the 'Christ the King' assembly was excellent; they had confidence in their responses to questions and demonstrated a good understanding of the occasion. A quiet, reflective and prayerful atmosphere prevailed and the pupils demonstrated reverence and respect. Pupils are offered many opportunities to lead Acts of Worship; they contribute at all ages and abilities to end of topic celebrations. They feel very much at ease and pray with integrity. Parents are interested to attend liturgies and assemblies and are strongly influenced by their children's involvement in liturgical celebration. The impact of this witness has influenced a number of parents and staff to move towards becoming full members of the Catholic Church.

PROVISION:

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

2

At least 10% of curriculum time is dedicated to the teaching of Religious Education. The overall quality of teaching is at least good and in some cases outstanding. Staff display very good subject knowledge which inspires pupils and builds their understanding. Teachers know their pupils well and good planning, which is often shared e.g. Key Stage 2 staff plan with the Religious Education Co-ordinator, has a positive impact on learning. Good subject knowledge, the effective use of ICT and the excellent support given by Teaching Assistants ensures all pupils make at least good progress. Teaching Assistants play a key role in improving the quality of learning and make a valuable contribution in supporting the needs of all pupils both individually and in groups. Some excellent questioning styles were observed which

created opportunities to extend pupils' learning. Good and imaginative use is made of resources.

Staff have worked hard to develop levels of attainment and assess pupils' work effectively. Focused assessment provides an accurate picture of achievement. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. There is some variation in provision with assessment activities more developed in some classes than in others.

Detailed and accurate information on pupils' achievement ensures the school has a clear view of pupils' achievement and progress. The Religious Education curriculum provides very good opportunities for spiritual and moral development and as a result pupils are confident and motivated learners

Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and pupils are given many opportunities to pray purposefully and spontaneously. The prayer tree in the school hall welcomed thoughtful prayers from pupils, staff and parents when thinking and praying about the work of the Macmillan Trust. Parents and parishioners attend Masses and Services both in church and school and the impact of these occasions is significant and inspires an interest in celebration. One parishioner explained how much she enjoyed being present whilst children celebrate Acts of Worship. Themes are consistent with the Catholic character of the school and most responsive to the religious diversity among pupils.

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

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

1

Leadership and management of Religious Education is outstanding and this is a real strength of the school. The Headteacher provides strong and purposeful direction and has a genuine love of her faith and a real pride in professing it. Staff are welcomed to gather each morning in prayer. The Headteacher, working in partnership with the Deputy Headteacher, jointly lead and co-ordinate Religious Education throughout the school. They are true witness to the Catholic faith and tradition and are deeply committed to eliciting the Catholic mission of the school. This partnership has encouraged the development of a strong team ethic where everyone is valued and each person plays a significant part in creating a wholly inclusive ethos. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils and high levels of trust and co-operation. The quality of care is outstanding and the learning mentor is a key figure in facilitating support for children and families in need. The outstanding Catholic ethos permeates every aspect of school life.

The School Development Plan, which focuses on three distinct areas for development, is underpinned by a clear philosophy of Catholic education and consistently promotes the schools' vision and values. A collaborative approach to evaluation ensures all stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved in shaping a shared vision for the school. Governors are also involved in this process of review to ensure the very best of outcomes for pupils.

Governors play a key role in promoting and sustaining the Catholic life of the school and their views support school development and inform priorities for growth. The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to school and he celebrates weekly Mass in the parish church for pupils, parents and parishioners. He has a key role in supporting the development of the Catholic identity of the school, nurturing and supporting leadership and affirming good practice. He recognises and appreciates the quality leadership of the school. The Governing Body take their role of holding the school to account seriously and frequently challenge leadership particularly in Governor or Committee meetings. The role of the newly appointed link governor will further strengthen these very good links.

The Self Evaluation Form is well written and a precise and thorough document effectively and accurately analysing progress. The development of both formal and informal monitoring systems ensures leadership is fully aware of how pupils' progress and also how they live the shared vision for the school. Pupils were able to articulate with confidence about how important it was to show love and tolerance to everyone in their school. The School Council meeting echoed this very corporate understanding of the school's mission where young leaders clearly had a shared ownership of this vision.

The school is fully inclusive and there is a real sense of belonging. Leaders and managers' promotion of Community Cohesion is of the highest quality. The school has welcomed many children from diverse backgrounds in recent years and this has strengthened this provision. Pupils from all backgrounds feel safe and secure and interact very well with each other. Leaders respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all.

Subject leaders remain actively involved in professional development opportunities and attend diocesan briefings and meetings. Each year, one day is specifically devoted to developing a growing understanding of the distinctive Catholic nature of the school.

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1 Outstanding Grade 2 Good Grade 3 Satisfactory Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness	1
The school's capacity for sustained improvement	1
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups	2
<input type="checkbox"/> how well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
the quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<input type="checkbox"/> pupils' attainment in Religious Education	2
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school	1
<input type="checkbox"/> how well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship	1
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic Education	2
<input type="checkbox"/> the quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
<input type="checkbox"/> the effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education	1
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	1
<input type="checkbox"/> the quality of collective worship provided by the school	1
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 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	1
<input type="checkbox"/> how well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
<input type="checkbox"/> the extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities are met	1
<input type="checkbox"/> how well leaders and managers develop partnerships with other providers, organisations and services in order to promote Catholic learning and well-being	1
<input type="checkbox"/> how effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion.	1

Further copies of this report are obtainable from St. Gerard's Catholic Primary School or from the Diocese of Hallam Schools' Department, The Hallam Pastoral Centre, St Charles Street, Sheffield S9 3WU Tel: 0114 2566440.