

DIOCESE OF MIDDLESBROUGH

Inspection of Religious Education Collective Worship and The Catholic Life of the School

School: St Mary's R C Primary Malton North Yorkshire

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Chair: Stephen Parkes

Date: 5th & 6th December 2007

Inspector: Anthea Benfield

A Report from
The Diocese of Middlesbrough Education Service
Section 48 Inspection Team
50a The Avenue
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Bishop of Middlesbrough (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

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FACTUAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Mary's is a small Voluntary Aided Catholic Primary School serving the parish of St Leonard's, Malton, a small rural town, and surrounding countryside. The school, which is oversubscribed, currently has 98 pupils on roll of which 60% are Catholics, 37% are of other Christian denominations and 3% are of other faiths. The school is organised into 4 classes with the head teacher teaching 2 days a week in the Y3/4 class. There are 2 part time secretaries and 2 Teaching Assistants. 3 teachers hold the CCRS. The school does not have a Nursery but a high percentage of Reception Class pupils attend local pre-school settings. Children's attainment on entry is in line with the national average. The majority of children in Foundation Stage achieve or exceed expected goals by the end of the Foundation Key Stage.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School is a good Catholic school with a number of outstanding features. All members of the school community are fully committed to ensuring they ".....follow Christ's example in all they do....." (extract from the School's Mission Statement). The culture of the school is that of a family, where the importance placed on the well being and happiness of the children, is the key to their successful school. The adults in the school are good role models. The pupils have a very clear understanding of the distinctive nature of their faith school.

The school has good relationships with its parish and continually seeks to nurture and develop this relationship. An exchange of information between parish and school is effective and informative. At appropriate times children's work is displayed in church. A member of staff attends the Parish Pastoral Council meetings. The parish priest makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and pastoral life of the school. He has been involved with the school since 2000 and is a regular visitor to the school who welcome him as a valued member of their community.

The Governing Body has a clear understanding of the importance of their role in governing a Catholic school in the local community. They are well informed about their roles and responsibilities and have identified the strengths of the school alongside the areas for development. They work closely with the head teacher and staff and influence the success of the school through their challenge and support.

Parents are very proud of their children's school, are supportive of a varied range of school activities, and value the ethos and aims of the school. Parents from all backgrounds have the opportunity to be involved in the life of the school. Various opportunities are offered for attendance and participation in liturgical celebrations. These include class/whole school masses, some of which are celebrated in the school's garden of remembrance, and an Advent 'Celebration of Light', which is celebrated in St. Leonard's church. Parents are regularly consulted and their views taken into account and they feel any issues are resolved quickly and effectively.

The school has links with various charities and actively encourages the school's involvement in responding to their needs, ensuring the children are aware of people who are less well off than themselves.

The good support mechanisms and buddy systems which are related to the children's moral development ensure there are no 'behaviour issues' in the school. The behaviour is exemplary and the children make a valued and effective contribution to the life of the school. The children really enjoy the opportunities for Circle Time and the school might consider reviewing this practice throughout the school.

Improvement since the last inspection

The school's improvement since the last inspection is outstanding. The school has addressed the areas for development identified in the Religious Education Report of 2003, and have progressively worked hard at developing further the strengths of the school, alongside introducing new effective initiatives, practices and procedures.

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is outstanding as there is explicit evidence that the ambitious and conscientious climate within the school will ensure it goes from strength to strength. All members of the school community from the leadership team, staff, governing body and parents to the pupils, have a clear understanding and vision for the future success of the school. The school has identified a Religious Education Objective within its School Improvement Plan.

What the school should do to improve further

To improve further the school should;-

- Further develop the monitoring of Religious Education and the Catholic Life of the school so that the Religious Education Subject Leader has the opportunity to monitor in a focussed, structured way. Identifying a clear timetable, specific objectives and criteria for monitoring which are shared with staff, and systems for successful implementation of the findings, will support the aims of the school in the further development of Religious Education.
- As the school plans to implement 'Assessment for Learning' across the school - to encompass the core subject of Religious Education within initiative.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The effectiveness of leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school is outstanding in terms of the clear and strategic vision of the Head teacher, the Subject leader and the Governing Body, who are fully and extensively committed to the mission of the school. This commitment is a source of inspiration for the school community. The Head Teacher sets a very clear direction for improvement and promotes high quality care and education. He identifies the quality of the Catholic life of the school as a priority for his leadership, as he recognises this impinges on all aspects of school life. His leadership style recognises the value of all members of the school community but he is ready to challenge as appropriate. The Governing Body know the school very well and work in an effective way with the head teacher and staff in ensuring the distinctive success of the school. The school's leadership team has a reflective approach in ensuring all decisions are made which are right for their school. They see the Catholic life of the school as a priority and this is reflected in the School Improvement Plan.

Collective Worship

The quality of collective worship is good. There is a good range of opportunities for the children to take part in whole school assemblies, class worship and liturgical celebrations. The staff and parish priest plan a programme of liturgies at the beginning of the year and the children are encouraged to participate through prayer, singing, and the use of scripture and religious artefacts.

During the Inspection the head teacher led a whole school assembly related to Advent which involved the children reading prayers and a passage from the bible, accompanied by a variety of hymns. The pupils showed respect when praying and they listened well. It was evident they understood the significance of the Advent wreath and the importance of Advent as time of preparation for Christmas. In seeking to create the joy, thanksgiving and wonder that pupils can experience, the school might reflect on how they use the skills and abilities of the children in leading liturgical celebrations which would provoke heartfelt responses and self reflection.

Community Cohesion

The effectiveness of the school in promoting community cohesion is good. Examples of this include the links with St Benedict's in Ampleforth, with whom Arts projects have been shared, and All Saints in York. The school has been involved in a Sports cluster in the area. Y5/6 children attend residential centres as part of their behaviour and moral development programme. Their involvement with raising funds for various charities such as Cafod, Mission Together and Romanian shoebox appeal enhances the children's sense of the misfortune of others and raises their awareness of the responsibility we have for each other. The school is committed to further developing links with other schools and other faith communities.

The religious diversity within the school community is celebrated and respected.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Achievement and standards in Religious Education are good.

The pupils achieve well in Religious Education and have a secure knowledge and understanding of their religion. Their skill in exploring questions and communicating their ideas, beliefs and understanding of other people's feelings and emotions is well developed. Evidence within the 3 lessons observed showed that the children are able to apply their previously learnt knowledge to new contexts and situations. They express their own views and beliefs with confidence and can refer to the teachings of Jesus. Pupils are encouraged to develop a sound knowledge of subject specific vocabulary, stories from the bible, the liturgical year and signs and symbols used within the church. This they use well. The pupil's learning in Religious Education makes a good contribution to their spiritual and moral development. This is evidenced in their positive and considerate relationships with all who work in their school and in the confidence they show in their own self esteem.

The teachers know their pupils well and a variety of skills and styles are used across the school. The teachers show they respect and value the children's ideas and work by the way they respond and encourage further thinking, observations and recording. Staff use their knowledge of the children well as they reference the children's own experiences in order to enrich their achievements. These lesson observations and discussions with children evidenced good progress and achievement. The children showed they value and respect the words of Scripture as good use of the Scriptures was evidenced.

Scrutiny of the children's work evidenced good standards of work with some evidence of outstanding work.

There was strong evidence of equal opportunities for all children and adults in the school community and no discrimination takes place.

Quality of provision for Religious Education is good.

The RE Curriculum fully meets the Bishop's Conference requirements for education. The curriculum matches the learner's needs and potential and builds on prior attainment. It is socially inclusive and respects the faith backgrounds of pupils of other denominations. The Here I AM programme is fully implemented across the school. The Religious Education curriculum is regularly reviewed. All pupils experience the school's Religious Education syllabus with no requests from parents of other faiths for withdrawal from Religious Education lessons. Assessment is well embedded in the school's Religious Education practice, with assessments completed by the children on a regular basis.

Leadership and Management of Religious Education at St Mary's is outstanding. The Religious Education Subject Leader, who has a theology degree, is confident and well informed as she leads and manages her curriculum area in an organised and effective way. She has a clear overview of the teaching and learning achievements in the school and uses the success of these to feed into new initiatives the school is working on, such as a more cross curricular approach to the whole curriculum. They are aiming for quality of coverage and this would include the teaching and learning of other faiths. The head teacher effectively supports and encourages the role of the Subject Leader and this provides a consistent approach to the leadership and management of Religious Education

in the school. Governors are very enthusiastic and conscientious and discharge their responsibilities effectively.

Assessment procedures are effective and the Subject Leader is continuing to work with staff on the levelling of attainments particularly in AT2. She ensures staff have ready access to guidance, support and relevant training. This includes all staff. Pupil tracking is in place which gives the Subject Leader a good overview of the progress of the pupils. The school's Religious Education budget allocation is generous for such a small school and money is spent appropriately.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS FORM

Area	Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 is good, grade 3 is satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	Judgement
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

A1	Effectiveness and efficiency of the Provision of Catholic education	2
A1.1	Distinctive nature of the Catholic life of the school	2
A1.2	Overall effectiveness	2
A1.3	Effectiveness of the home / school / parish partnership	2
A1.4	Improvement since the last inspection	1
A1.5	Capacity to improve further	1

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

B1	Effectiveness of leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of the school	1
B1.1	Governing body	1
B1.2	Leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction	1
B1.3	Quality of the leadership of the Headteacher and senior staff in developing the Catholic life	1
B1.4	Contribution to spiritual and moral development	2
B1.5	Effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation	2

B2	Quality of collective worship	2
B2.1	Frequency and quality of provision	2
B2.2	Learners' response	2
B2.3	Contribution to spiritual and moral development	1

B3	Effectiveness of the school in promoting community cohesion	2
B3.1	Effectiveness of leadership to promote community cohesion	1
B3.2	Inclusive nature of provision	2
B3.3	RE curriculum and the promotion of community cohesion	2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

C1	Achievement and standards in Religious Education	2
C1.1	Learners' success in achieving targets, trends over time and variations between groups of learners.	2
C1.2	Standards of work	2
C1.3	Progress	2
C1.4	Enjoyment	1
C1.5	Behaviour and strategies in use	1
C1.6	Contribution to spiritual and moral development	1
C1.7	Learners' contribution to the school community	2

C2	Quality of provision for Religious Education - teaching and learning	2
C2.1	Match to learners' needs and curriculum requirements	2
C2.2	Suitability and rigour of assessment in planning, monitoring and informing learners' progress	2
C2.3	Additional learning needs	1
C2.4	Involvement of parents and carers	1

C3	Quality of provision for Religious Education - curriculum	2
C3.1	Match to aspirations and potential	2
C3.2	Match to external requirements and response to local circumstances	2
C3.3	Contribution to spiritual and moral development	1

C4	Quality of provision for Religious Education - leadership and management	1
C4.1	Effectiveness of leadership and support of staff	1
C4.2	Effectiveness of monitoring of performance - quality assurance and self-assessment	2
C4.3	Equality of opportunity	1
C4.4	Adequacy and suitability of staff	1
C4.5	Adequacy and suitability of resources and accommodation	2
C4.6	Deployment of resources	2
C4.7	Effectiveness of Governors' responsibilities	1