

DIOCESE OF LEEDS



DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48 FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST EDWARD'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Boston Spa

School URN	108012
School DfE Number	383 3358
E-mail address	headteacher@st-edwards.leeds.sch.uk
Chair of Governors	Tony Chalk
Headteacher	Anne Gilpin
RE Subject Leader	Anne Gilpin
Date of Inspection	5 th - 6 th February 2014
Section 48 Inspector/s	Marie McClelland accompanied by Alixena Lubomski

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection Grades: 1 is Outstanding, 2 is Good, 3 requires improvement in order to be good, 4 is Inadequate

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

1

how effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

The above judgement on overall effectiveness is based on all the available evidence following the evaluation of:

- Outcomes for pupils,
- The provision for Catholic Education
- Leaders and Managers

OUTCOMES FOR PUPILS

1

THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION

1

LEADERS AND MANAGERS

1

Summary of key findings:

This is an outstanding Catholic primary school

- The Mission Statement '*Through God's Grace We Grow and Learn*' is central to all its work. It is a place where all pupils are helped to develop a personal relationship with God as they become increasingly independent learners and creative thinkers.
- The strong Christian ethos invites, enables and nurtures an impressive sense of belonging for all stakeholders. Feedback from parents highlights the special *Welcome Liturgy* for Reception pupils as setting the foundation for this *belonging* at the outset of a '*journey of faith*' with others.
- Links with the parish are excellent. Many staff and governors engage with regular parish-based worship, catechesis and other social events. The Parish Priest is a frequent participant in the life of the school.
- Progress and achievement in RE from Reception to end of KS2 continues to be outstanding since the last inspection in October 2008. Almost all pupils make very good or accelerated progress. Standards of religious literacy are excellent and impact noticeably on pupils' enjoyment of RE.
- *The Way, the Truth and the Life (TWTL)* resource forms the basis of curricular RE and informs the school's assessment and tracking methods. *TWTL* is adapted and supplemented to match the whole-school creative, cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning.
- The daily act of Collective Worship (CW) is the focal point of school life. CW unites all those present in various ways of contemplating God's grace at work among them. Thus the Mission Statement becomes a discernible reality.
- The headteacher, governors and staff are deeply committed to the school's Catholic mission. As RE co-ordinator, the headteacher has the professional drive and religious conviction to ensure that RE and the Catholic Life of the school are

relentlessly promoted and well-developed. Together with the experienced Yr2 teacher, they form the curricular *RE Team*.

What the school needs to do to improve further:

To meet the ever increasing and changing demands of school governance:

- Ensure that the majority of governors access diocesan training opportunities to support, and develop further, their role in school self-evaluation.
- In addition to the school's current plans for improving its website: explore its potential for Christian outreach and evangelisation by sharing aspects of the school's provision and practice for Catholic Education.

Information about this inspection

The Inspection of St Edward's Primary, Boston Spa, was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Leeds Diocesan Framework and Schedule for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Diocesan Administrator 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 2012).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following 7 aspects:

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school;
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education (RE);
- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship;
- The quality of teaching and learning in RE;
- The extent to which the RE curriculum promotes pupils' learning;
- The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school;
- How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.

Over 1½ days, the inspector consulted and/or observed the following,

- Five sessions of CW: including whole school, class-based and pupil-led CW
- Five RE lessons: Foundation Stage; Yr1; Yr2; Yr3 and Yr5/6.
- Samples and displays of RE-related work in all classrooms, corridors and shared areas as well as the quality of work in RE books of pupils from across the school, since the start of the academic year.
- The views of staff, pupils, parents, governors and the Parish Priest.
- A range of documentary evidence including RE, CW and other related policies, planning and assessment files, monitoring and evaluation records, the School Improvement Plan (SIP) & RE Action Plan; written communications to and from parents; photographic collections of special projects and themed work since the last inspection and information on the school's website.

Information about this school

- St Edward's is a popular, smaller than average-sized Voluntary Aided Catholic primary with 151 pupils on roll, 95% of whom are baptised Catholics. It serves the

parish of St Edward's Clifford and draws its pupils from Clifford, Boston Spa and the surrounding area.

- On entry to school, data shows that most pupils attain in line with national expectations. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is in line with, and the numbers eligible for Pupil Premium is significantly below, national averages.
- The school has low mobility and the majority of pupils transfer to Saint John Fisher High School, Harrogate.
- Since the last inspection (October 2008), pupil numbers continue to grow. Currently, there are 6 classes and 7.2 fte teachers of whom 3 hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies. Classes include Foundation and a mixed Yr5/6 class. New building work has improved and extended the provision for Foundation Stage and an outdoor Prayer Garden promises further enrichment opportunities for the Catholic Life of the school.
- Since September 2013 - and at the time of this inspection - there are three new teachers: an acting deputy head, on secondment from another school + two newly-qualified teachers. One of the latter replaces a senior teacher currently on maternity leave.

Full report - inspection judgements

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	1
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	1

- Outcomes for pupils at St Edward's are outstanding. Evidence of pupils' self-esteem, their enthusiasm for learning and their exemplary behaviour confirm the school's success at valuing the 'whole child' and nurturing personal dignity. One six-year old's spontaneous thank you prayer, for instance, read: '*Thank you God for inviting me into your world. Amen*'.
- At interview, pupils summarised with ease what is special about St Edward's. It is educational, fantastic, and bold and it is always exciting. They value the impact of annual themed weeks and special events and they can articulate how these can have lasting personal effect. Positive Psychology Week, it is claimed, enables them to recognise the needs and talents of classmates as well as identifying their own specialness. Peer-support and respect is thereby nurtured and filters instinctively into the playground, the dinner hall and after school clubs. In proportion to their years, pupils evince a capacity for praise and celebration as well as a readiness to excuse, to forgive and be forgiven.
- Pupils engage independently and collectively in a school-wide culture of loving God by recognising and attending to the needs of others. Each year, during Lent, they refresh a variety of ways of alms-giving. In 2013 this amounted to £1,500, with donations being sent to the Good Shepherd Appeal, to Martin House Hospice and towards sponsoring the education of a child in Bolivia. These are additional to the on-going twinned work with a South African school (in place since the last inspection) and regular involvement with several more local-based needy causes.

- The creative and varied cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning ensures that engagement with RE is both spontaneous and lively. In each RE topic, for instance, pupils know they will encounter written work, drama, art, discussion, and music or dance and they will be expected to make links with other aspects of their learning and their own lives. Listening skills across all key stages are excellent. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and they apply themselves diligently to the task in hand. The 'Top Tips' technique in each classroom reinforces a hidden culture of 'self-help' and minimises distraction.
- Comprehensive pupil tracking systems show that progress and attainment in RE from Foundation Stage to Key Stage 2 (KS2) is high and is consistent over time. Tracking records from KS1 to KS2 in 2013 showed that 100% of pupils made at least 2 levels, and 32% made 3 levels, of progress in RE.
- High standards of religious literacy - underpinned daily by CW - help to evoke what the headteacher calls 'glimpses of God' for adults and pupils alike. During class discussions and in proportion to their age, pupils can adduce stories or incidents from the gospels and the Old Testament to match some everyday issues and to explain their own understanding of faith in action. Asked how one could be like Christ at home today, a KS1 pupil talked about '*being generous with my time for others*' rather than always preferring to engage silently in a book.
- Parents and pupils attest to the positive effect and enduring memory of the annual 'Welcome Liturgy' for Reception Pupils. A non-Eucharistic event, yet marked by religious gestures and symbols, it empowers older pupils to welcome the youngest, by name, into the school family and parish and to sow the seeds of 'belonging'. It is one of many inspiring ideas, at St Edward's, for developing Catholic Life that ought to be shared more widely than hitherto among other providers.

The provision for Catholic Education is outstanding

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning.	1
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	1

- Provision for Catholic Education is outstanding because teachers and other adults are acutely aware of pupils' capabilities and prior learning and they plan effectively to build on these. The imaginative and stimulating curriculum ensures highly effective continuity and progression in pupils learning and development of key skills.
- *TWTL*, as a resource, forms the basis of curricular RE and informs the school's assessment and tracking methods. It is adapted and supplemented to match the whole-school creative and cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning.
- Subject knowledge is generally strong across the school and teaching skills are used very effectively to challenge and inspire pupils as independent learners. Excellent engagement in research skills in the Yr5/6 lesson helped to extend and deepen pupils' understanding of *sacrifice*, with exemplars from a range of sources.
- The teaching observed during inspection was mainly good or better and none is inadequate. Internal monitoring records and scrutiny of work by the RE team confirm this standard to be consistent and often outstanding. Key skills are well rehearsed in RE and customized appropriately to suit the age group. Foundation pupils readily listen-up with 'turbo-charged ears', and love to 'tap-out their

idgetiness' while they contemplate oral responses. At the end of a noon-time lesson, Yr3 pupils opted for a lively 'Grace before meals'!

- Assessment in RE is thorough and the RE Team has worked hard particularly in the last academic year to improve staff confidence in identifying and refining sub-levels of attainment. Individual pupil targets are in place and they are monitored for each topic and each term.
- Accredited with the International School Award from 2012-2015, St Edward's has a pro-active annual programme for promoting pupils' learning about other cultures, countries and faiths. This entails themed workshops during the International Week and the European Day as well as twinning with schools in Africa and inner city Leeds. Some opportunities have been missed for extending knowledge about life for a Catholic child in the non-European countries being studied. This has been discussed with governors.
- A Health & Fitness Week in the Spring Term refreshes knowledge and commitment to healthy lifestyles and choices. On-going weekly challenges include 'Walk on Wednesdays', the 'Golden Mile' and healthy school dinners.
- The school provides a variety of opportunities for prayer, CW and liturgy. The provision is inclusive and enjoyed by all pupils. Parents enjoy attending the Friday Celebration Assembly, hosted by Yr5/6, because it highlights ways in which the school promotes and rewards 'whole child' values.
- Whole school and class-based CW sessions observed during inspection evinced impressive signs of pupils' composure in gesture, demeanour and reverence. Pupil-led CW sessions in Yr5/6 and Yr3 displayed growing confidence and enthusiasm for planning and delivering their own liturgies. This is an on-going development.
- Verbal and written comments from parents and grandparents - and from some of the older pupils themselves - testify to a deep spiritual uplift for both performers and spectators from the annual Advent and Lenten Presentations. The school would do well to 'share its story' of this special aspect of Catholic Life as part of its Christian outreach for the benefit of other groups or professionals.
- Staff relationships with pupils and their readiness to share their faith experiences are a key strength and they have a visible positive impact on a school-wide sense of belonging.

The Leadership and Management are outstanding

How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.	1
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- Leaders, governors and managers (LGMs) of St Edward's are committed to the Church's mission in education. The Mission Statement 'Through God's Grace We Grow and Learn' is replicated as a strapline on the main title board at the school gate and provides a daily reminder of its common purpose to all who work or visit here. The attendant *Vision Statement* promises that LGMs are committed to the development of the 'whole child', a school where every individual is valued and their personal dignity is maintained.
- RE and Catholic Life are regular features in Performance Management targets and in the annual School Improvement Plan (SIP) and RE Action Plan. There is a named governor for RE/Catholicity. A frequent visitor to the school, she

undertakes annual monitoring of RE lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work with the RE team.

- The headteacher has a strong sense of purpose and clear vision for this Catholic school. In the interests of distributive leadership, she has three curriculum teams - including an RE team - to ensure that key responsibilities and professional talent among staff can be harnessed and developed. These, in turn, liaise with the appropriate committee of the Governing Body.
- Many governors have considerable professional expertise and long-term involvement with the school and parish. This enables them to fulfil statutory and canonical responsibilities. Pupil and Parent voice, accessed through annual questionnaires, are analysed by governors and headteacher together and feedback is determined. Healthier school lunches and attention to specific allergies are recent outcomes. In view of recent and ever increasing demands of school governance, however, it is important to ensure that a majority of governors try to access diocesan training opportunities to support, and develop further, their role in school self-evaluation.
- RE is well resourced compared with other core subjects. Recent spending includes altar cloths, music for liturgies, posters, artefacts for multi-faith focus as well as RE books. Class sets of Youcat, Bibles and Old Testament Stories group readers were being well used by older pupils during this inspection.
- In-service training in the past year included Prayer, Meditation, Statements for Living, CW and Assessment in RE - as well as a mosaic workshop for pupils to design a permanent and meaningful icon for the Prayer Garden.
- Links with the parish are strong and varied. Many staff and governors engage with regular parish-based worship, catechesis and other social and fund-raising events. Education Sunday is a special occasion when pupils attired in school uniform attend with their families and the headteacher speaks to the parish in praise of Catholic Education.
- The Parish Priest is very supportive of the school. He celebrates class Mass with each year group and facilitates the Sacrament of Reconciliation in school twice a year for pupils. Preparation for first sacraments is thorough and school based with Yr3 pupils. First Communion Day is celebrated by the whole school in the church at Clifford. In recent years, many pupils and some parents have been baptised and/or received into the church.
- RE and Catholic Life related policies are reviewed annually by LGMs. This includes the policy for the 'Development and Growth of the Whole Person' which incorporates Sex Education & PSHCE. Parents confirm they are consulted and informed about the delivery and timetabling of Sex Education lessons.
- Networking with other professionals and agencies in the local area and beyond brings many benefits to staff and pupils of St Edward's. As a reciprocal focus the school needs to share aspects of its strong Christian culture with others as part of its evangelising mission.