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DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

CANON LAW 806 FINAL INSPECTION REPORT INCORPORATING SECTION 48

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST NICHOLAS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL
Oakwood Lane, Leeds LS9 6QY

School URN	108029
Date of S48 inspection and OE grade	20/21 June 2019 Outstanding
E-mail address	office@stnicholasprimaryleeds.org.uk
Chair of Governors	Mr. Martin Gunby
Headteacher	Mrs. Jane Burns
RE Subject Leader	Mrs. J Burns / Mrs. Angela Cheyne / Mrs. L Dowd
Date and grade of last S48 Inspection	25/26 September 2014 Outstanding
Section 48 Inspector	Mrs. M.T. Bannister

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: how effective is the school in providing Catholic Education.

1

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

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

1

Summary of key findings:

This is an outstanding Catholic school

- All leaders have a shared, clear vision for the school. They are passionate in their desire to achieve the best for each child and are highly committed in their mission to promote Catholic education in the school and in the wider community.
- A clear sense of mission is evident throughout the school. This is expressed in the mission statement, *Love one another as I have loved you- Deo sit Gloria*. All within this faith community value each individual and aspire for them to be the best they can be.
- There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection in 2014. The current leadership team have been working as a team since 2016. Leaders lead by example and value all stakeholders. There is a strong sense of community and all within the school emulate the patronal Saint Nicholas in the love of the children in their care.
- All leaders work together tirelessly to ensure that a wealth of opportunities is offered to all pupils.
- The governing body have a thorough understanding of their role as a critical friend to the school and offer both challenge and support. They are a visible presence within the school.
- The highest priority is given to all aspects of the Catholic nature of the school. The governing body ensure that the Catholic faith is at the forefront of all that they do with a dedicated committee for Religious Education (RE) and Catholic Life.
- Catholic social teaching is evident throughout the school. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and are involved in a wide variety of roles of responsibility and outreach.

- The environment speaks clearly of the Catholic ethos. Displays are of a high quality and give excellent witness to the Catholic nature of the school. A prayer garden is in place and this provides pupils with an opportunity to access prayer independently.
- Outstanding Religious Education teaching was evidenced. However the majority of Religious Education teaching is not yet outstanding. Lessons show variety and pupils are always engaged and enthusiastic about what they are learning.
- Assessment is now well embedded within the school and moderation takes place within school and with other Catholic schools in the East Leeds Catholic Compass group.
- Leaders and governors are thorough in their monitoring and evaluation of the standards in the school and use their findings to inform plans for improvement.
- Most pupils from their starting points make good progress including those with special educational needs
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are courteous and friendly and show respect both for themselves and for others.
- Pupils engage with respect and reverence within Collective Worship. They are keen to participate and are beginning to show some independence in planning and leading this for their peers.
- Pastoral care is a high priority for the school and is extremely effective.
- The school works productively with other schools and with outside agencies for the benefit of all pupils and staff. The school works in partnership with St Anthony's Teaching School, Beeston, and the East Leeds Catholic Cluster.
- Parents are highly appreciative of all that the school does and feel both valued and supported by the staff and governors. They particularly appreciate the approachability of all staff and are kept informed of school events and news.
- All areas from the last Section 48 inspection have been addressed.
- All canonical and statutory duties are fulfilled.

What the school needs to do to improve further.

- Develop a more creative approach to Collective Worship and increase pupil involvement and independence.
- Ensure that all groups of pupils are challenged across school through focused marking and feedback.
- Begin to develop a systematic approach to the delivery of Character Education and Virtues.

Information about this inspection

The Inspection of St Nicholas Catholic Primary School 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 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 2017).

The inspector reviewed in detail the following aspects:

- How successfully the school has addressed the points for improvement arising from the last inspection and the latest canonical review.
- The provision made by the school for Catholic Life, RE and Collective Worship.
- How children contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their RE.
- The quality of teaching, assessment, marking and feedback and the responses the children make to these.
- The RE curriculum and how well it promotes pupils' learning.
- How well children contribute to and benefit from Collective Worship in the school.
- Leadership and management and how well they promote and monitor the provision for Catholic Education at this school.

The inspection was carried out by one inspector over one and a half days:

The inspector was given a tour of school by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Teaching and learning was observed in five classes over all key stages.

Interviews were held with the headteacher, the RE leaders and the senior leadership team, governors, the parish priest, a group of parents and a group of pupils, some of whom were Mini Vinnies.

A range of Collective Worship was observed, including a whole school act of worship, a whole school assembly and class worship led by different members of staff.

A sample of work was scrutinised from all classes and a range of both RE and English books was closely examined to view progress. A comprehensive set of documentation was scrutinised including the Diocesan Self-Evaluation form (DSEF), the RE leader's file, monitoring records, governors' minutes, action plans, canonical returns for the last three years and a moderation folder.

Other evidence was noted during the inspection, for example displays, classroom environments and pupil behaviour.

Information about this school

- St Nicholas Catholic Primary is a larger than average school with 300 pupils on roll.
- It serves the parish of Blessed Edmund Sykes which incorporates St Nicholas Church, Gipton and Our Lady of Good Council, Seacroft.
- The school has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 45 full time pupils. Of the 300 pupils currently on roll 76% are baptised Catholic. The pupils are organised into 11 single and mixed aged classes.
- The school is currently staffed by 16 full time equivalent (f.t.e.) qualified teachers. 11 are Catholic teachers (f.t.e.) and three teachers hold the Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies (CCRS) or equivalent. 16 teachers teach Religious Education (RE).
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above national average.

- The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language has increased over recent years.
- The proportion of pupils on the Special Needs register, supported through school action, is above national average. One pupil has an Education Health Care plan.
- The school provides a breakfast club and a wide range of after school activities.
- The current leadership team have been in post since 2016. The current headteacher was executive headteacher over two schools including St Nicholas prior to 2016.

Full report - inspection judgements

CATHOLIC LIFE

The Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	1
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school	1

- Pupils' contribution to the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding. The pupils are rightly proud of their Catholic school and know that they benefit from attendance there: 'St Nicholas is like a big friendly family, we all work together and nobody is left out.'
- Pupil voice features strongly at St Nicholas and there are numerous groups they can join such as the Mini-Vinnies, Chaplaincy Team and the School Council .Groups and individuals are very active, and they plan fundraising events, both at school and at home. This was evident in the 'Helping Hands' which allows the pupils to offer thoughts, prayers and actions for causes such as Grenfell Tower and the disaster in Indonesia.
- Pupils are also actively involved in fundraising for The Good Shepherd Appeal, CAFOD, The Olivia Arnold Trust and Sylvia Wright.
- Pupils all understand the school's behaviour policy. Pupils embrace the ethos of the school by consistently showing respect and cooperation around school for each other and the wider community. Behaviour is exemplary. One pupil said 'If we fall out, Jesus forgave Peter when he denied Him, so we do the same as well'
- The sense of belonging is reinforced by the buddy systems, where pupils look out for one another. Year 6 children help the Reception children settle into school and continue this relationship throughout the year.
- The school's mission has recently been revisited: it is, therefore, a good time to incorporate education in the virtues into the school's mission and wider curriculum.
- Teaching in the wider curriculum strongly supports the Catholic Life of the school. Pupils are able to express opinions, they know about how to develop strong

relationships and understand how to keep safe, in age appropriate ways. The Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum across school is delivered through 'Journey in Love' and 'I Belong'.

- During the inspection there was a whole school focus in lessons, assemblies and worship on 'Crosses from Around the World'. This linked very clearly to Catholic social teaching, to care for our common home and the respect for the dignity of every human person. This also linked to the wider curriculum.
- Pupils are fully aware of their responsibility as 'Stewards of Creation' and show a real empathy for helping those less fortunate than themselves.
- The school works closely with the parish. A number of the pupils are altar servers and school does all it can to promote this and weekly Mass attendance in general. Plans for further events are to be arranged in the near future. This exemplifies the school's wish to evangelise and strengthen parish links even further.
- The headteacher and parish priest plan events to promote the Catholic Life of the school at the beginning of every year.
- Displays around school are of the highest standard and clearly promote the Catholic life of the school. For example, the school's motto is displayed at the entrance to the school. Each classroom also has a religious focus area, displaying the correct liturgical colour and appropriate artefacts to engage the children spiritually.
- Each class has a 'Goddle Box' which celebrates acts of kindness and this is then celebrated through the Good Samaritan Award, recognised in Praise assembly each week.
- A visible prayer garden allows the pupils the opportunity to have quiet reflection time and worship outdoors.
- Governors have been extremely successful in employing practising Catholic staff. The governors make the Catholic Life of the school a priority.
- Governors are regular visitors in school. This means that they can provide the correct amount of challenge and support to leaders, ensuring that RE and Catholic life have high priority within the school.
- The school uses highly successful ways in engaging with almost all parents/carers including Twitter, the school website, text messaging service, newsletters and RE newsletters. Parents stated that they feel communication is a strength of the school.
- Parents feel very welcome and well informed. 'We are invited to lots of events including Praise assembly.'
- Many of the staff and governors attend the parish church. This leads to very strong links and a real sense of community. The parish priest is supported in sacramental preparation by the school which meet the needs of all.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious Education is Outstanding

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	1

- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning in RE. They take an active part in lessons and listen attentively to staff and to each other during discussions. They are encouraged to question and to comment on each other's ideas.
- Most groups of pupils from their starting points make good progress in each key stage. However, the school needs to ensure that all groups of pupils are challenged within lessons and there is consistency in marking and feedback opportunities.
- Most pupils are actively engaged in lessons. They concentrate well and have a good understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.
- During the inspection there was a whole school focus on *Crosses from Around the World*. This was part of a planned theme week which took place across the RE curriculum. There was clear differentiation linked to the driver words and included a range of creative activities. Pupils responded well to challenging activities and questioning which extended their learning. Pupils were exploring the meaning of different crosses including the Peruvian, Finnish and Ethiopian Crosses.
- Teaching is good with some being outstanding. Driver words are used in all classes, learning objectives are shared and 'I Can statements' are used to track attainment and progress.
- Shared learning objectives were evidenced, and success criteria were a feature of good and outstanding teaching and shared at the beginning of each lesson
- Deeper questioning enabled pupils to think more deeply, but pupils of a higher ability would benefit from more challenging tasks from time to time.
- Pupils show a high level of religious literacy appropriate to their age. They are able to show how the gospel has a message for today, and what impact this has upon their lives and the lives of others.
- All pupils observed were actively engaged in activities and developed their skills throughout the lesson, remained on task and enthusiastic regardless of whether an adult was working with them or not.
- Teachers have a high level of subject knowledge and expertise. All teachers have access to continuing professional development (CPD), which ensures that standards continue to improve.
- Staff have very high expectations of pupils and this is reflected in the quality of their work and their attentiveness in class. It has a very positive impact upon the pupils in that they too have high expectations of themselves.

- Support staff are well deployed throughout the school and are effectively used in RE lessons to enhance the learning. They use their initiative to move around the classroom supporting different groups of children.
- In most cases, the pace of lessons is good and in some, it is outstanding. In a small minority of classes, time management could be improved.
- RE is well resourced and teachers make very good use of resources during lessons.
- Achievement is regularly celebrated throughout the school. Praise assembly is held each week during which a Star of the Week is chosen from each class, and also a Good Samaritan Award is recognised from across each class in school.
- The school uses the Way, the Truth and the Life as the core RE curriculum but teachers supplement this with other resources and ideas, enhancing the learning for all pupils.
- RE is clearly a core subject at the school, teaching time being in line with, and often exceeding time required by the Bishops' Conference.
- Curriculum RE benefits from the leadership of a highly skilled and committed team. They display a thorough understanding of the subject and offer both formal and informal support for teachers and are excellent role models.
- Leaders and governors have a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation to ensure that standards are high. Work scrutinies, lesson observations and learning walks form part of this and written records are kept. The findings are always used to inform future plans and improvement.
- Continuing Professional Development in RE and the Catholic life of the school is ongoing, the school using both Diocesan training and the East Leeds Catholic Cluster to help their teachers develop.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship is Outstanding

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2
The quality of provision for Collective Worship	1
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	1

- Pupils act with reverence in Collective Worship and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. The inspector observed many opportunities for pupils to say their own prayers both silently or out loud. All pupils showed real depth of participation in all worships observed whether it was at whole school level, key stage or class worship.
- Pupils prepare and lead worship in their classrooms with a degree of confidence. The pupils use a structure and format that they find easy to follow and have lots of artefacts and resources which they can choose to enhance their planning.

- Worship opportunities created by pupils are varied and well planned. Most pupils are engaged by the worship planned by their peers.
- In the more successful, competent, and independently pupil led Collective Worship evidenced, confident peer-to-peer questioning fully engaging the interest of pupils. An example was observed during an upper KS2 act of Collective Worship. However, this is not consistently applied across all classes in school where a more creative approach needs to be undertaken.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and have a sense of respect for those of pupils of other faiths.
- Collective Worship is well resourced. The liturgical calendar is used by adults and older pupils to support planning. Pupils clearly understand the four part structure to acts of worship. They are also given a variety of resources to ensure that each worship is different and vibrant, whilst at the same time teaching the traditional responses of the church.
- Pupils are encouraged to write in their class prayer book which forms part of the focal point in each classroom.
- The parish priest and senior leadership team plan a comprehensive list of services which reflect the liturgical year and give pupils and parents many opportunities to receive and be prepared for the Sacraments.
- The quality of adult led Collective Worship in the school is highly appreciated by parents.
- Collective Worship has a clear purpose with the themes chosen for worship reflecting a deep understanding of the Church's mission in education and the liturgical season. There are many reminders of this in the beautiful displays throughout the school.
- Staff are excellent role models for pupils in their adult led worship, which enables pupils to experience high quality experiences of the Church's liturgical year. Pupils are able to reflect in silence and join in community prayer appropriately and with confidence.
- Pupils have an excellent awareness of all the key liturgical seasons and celebrations of the Church's year, easily knowing the different colour cloth used during the liturgical seasons. Informative high quality displays and age-appropriate religious resources on the prayer tables throughout the school support adults and pupils.
- Parents value the provision for Collective Worship. One parent said, *'We are always welcome, we are given many opportunities to come to school to join in many prayerful events.'*
- Families are supported to pray at home with Advent, Lenten and Rosary Boxes.
- Families are informed of events taking place in the parish church thus strengthening the bond between home, school and parish.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school, it has a clear message and focus. The whole school worship during the inspection was around the theme 'uniqueness and difference'. The story of the colours was explored with the message 'We can all live in peace even though we are all different.' This launched the theme of 'Crosses from Around the World'.
- There is a clear policy for Collective Worship which is monitored and evaluated regularly. Liturgical and spiritual formation is considered a priority for all staff and they have accessed Collective Worship training through the East Leeds Catholic Cluster and Diocesan training.
- Staff also pray together on a regular basis.

- Leaders and governors place a high importance on the self-evaluation of Collective Worship. Highly committed governors are often in school to attend worship, assemblies and conduct learning walks.
- Leaders and governors are highly effective in prioritising Collective Worship and they perform regular monitoring and evaluation. This is both formal and informal. Records are kept of formal monitoring and informal monitoring is followed by verbal feedback and discussion.
- Leaders ensure that staff have access to good quality CPD in order to develop skills and understanding and expose them to new ideas.
- All leaders are models of outstanding practice.