

DIOCESE OF LEEDS  
DIOCESAN BOARD FOR INSPECTIONS

SECTION 48  
FINAL REPORT

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL  
AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ST COLUMBA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

School URN            107326

Date of Inspection

OE grade            2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015

Good

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Chair of Governors            Mr R Burton

Headteacher            Peter Spillane

RE Subject Leader            Anne Holroyd

Date and grade of last S48 inspection            October 2010

OE Good

Section 48 Inspector            Mrs Janet Hutton

## 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 the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

*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**

2

**THE PROVISION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION**

2

**LEADERS AND MANAGERS**

2

**Summary of key findings:**

**This is a good Catholic Primary school**

- St Columba's Catholic Primary School is a good school with many outstanding features made visible by the Catholic mission of the school which is prioritised each and every day. To walk around the school, talk to the children and observe the interactions between all members of the community is testimony to the school's mission statement, "Learning to care, learning to love."
- The school's mission statement underpins all aspects of school life as the gospel principles are valued and lived out daily by the whole school community in providing a good standard of education for all groups of pupils.
- The school has forged strong links with; St Joseph's Primary School Bradford, the Bradford Catholic Partnership of Schools and the local group of schools.
- Continuous Professional Development CPD has had a positive impact on the Catholic Life of the school and the quality of the Collective Worship(CW).
- All staff are fully committed to the Catholic Life of the school and work extremely hard to provide excellent care and support for all pupils.
- High quality CW is central to the life of the school and is a key part of every school celebration. It is a major strength of the school and all pupils play an active role in the preparation, delivery and development of CW.

- Children benefit from the excellent provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (FS) which offers education from the age of two in the Eden Department. Progress in RE is beginning to accelerate from very low starting points. This needs to be incorporated into the electronic tracking system.
- Standards pupils achieve in RE are mainly above the national average at the end of KS2 and in line at KS1. Improvement in pupil progress would benefit from the use of more challenging intervention programmes so that standards of attainment are above average in all strands of each attainment target, with specific focus on level 3 at KS1 and level 5 at KS2.
- Teaching is good, some is outstanding and none is inadequate. Teaching support staff play an active role in all lessons. This has a positive impact on behaviour for learning particularly for those pupils with specific learning difficulties.
- Displays around the school reflect, “The Way, The Truth and The Life of Christ,” to create a strong sense of belonging within St Columba’s. Pupils are extremely polite and well behaved and this goes hand in hand with the way in which they show their care and respect for others in all aspects of school life.
- All recommendations identified for action from the previous S48 inspection have been fully implemented and used as a focus for development.
- The Governors have ensured that the school fully meets the Bishops’ Conference requirements. All canonical and statutory duties are fulfilled.

### **What the school needs to do to improve further.**

- Improve standards of teaching and learning in RE across the school by sharing the outstanding classroom practice which already exists.
- Improve attainment indicators at the end of each key stage by using more challenging intervention programmes tailored to the RE levels.
- Measure progress more accurately from Reception to the end of KS1 by incorporating a system to record a baseline level on entry into the Nursery.

### **Information about this inspection**

The Inspection of St Columba’s 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 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 aspects:

- The extent to which the key issues for action identified in the previous S48 RE Inspection have been addressed.

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of teaching and the responses the children make in RE lessons.
- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in RE and participate in the liturgical life of the school.
- How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils in RE, particularly those pupils who require extended challenges in order to ensure maximum progress.
- The quality of Collective Worship (CW) provided by the school and how well pupils respond to and participate.
- The effectiveness of leaders, governors and managers in promoting, monitoring, evaluating and developing Catholic Education at St Columba's by establishing the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation systems.

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

- A sample of 5 RE lessons took place and 6 acts of CW across all key stages, a KS1 assembly led by Y1 children and a KS2 assembly led by Y6 children. The inspector carried out all of the observations with a member of the SLT.
- Meetings were held with the head teacher, deputy head, Chair of governors, the RE subject leader, Learning Mentor, teaching and support staff, parents and pupils.

A comprehensive sample of evidence covering the RE/Catholic Life of the school was made available. This included:

- Re Co-ordinator File
- Policies and documentation
- The school's monitoring and tracking files to show pupil progress and attainment data.
- Year Group RE Files
- RE moderated work portfolios, samples of pupil's work of excellence, examples of marking.
- Recent monitoring visit reports
- RE action plans were also scrutinised.
- Displays in classrooms and around the school and photographic evidence of activities throughout the liturgical calendar year to show special themed work which has taken place in school and in the local community.

### **Information about this school**

- St Columba's is a larger than average primary school which serves the Parish of St. Mary's. It teaches pupils from 2 to 11 and has 422 pupils on roll. The Parish of St Mary's includes two churches, St Columba's and St Peter's. Approximately 68% of all pupils are baptised members of the Catholic Church.
- The school's population is mainly White British. However, the school continues to have a rising population of Eastern European pupils who are generally new to English. Most pupils live within the immediate locality.
- The percentage of pupils who are Pupil Premium is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with Special Educational Needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational needs is well above the national average.

- St Columba’s was built in 1929 as a separate infant and junior school. It is situated behind St Columba’s Church off Tong Street which enables the school to hold carol services there and other special liturgies during the year.
- Although the building is large and complex, it has the advantage of having two halls for group worship and an enclosed school quadrangle which houses the very well used Prayer Garden.
- A breakfast club is run each morning and after school care is provided on the premises.
- The school works closely with the parish and the priest. There are class, KS and whole school masses in the church which is situated on the same site as the school.
- The number of the pupils who leave St Columba’s and transfer to St Joseph’s and St Bede’s Catholic College is increasing each year. There are excellent links between the schools.
- There are currently 22 full time and 1 part time teacher, of these, 12fte are Catholics and 2 hold the CCRS. 14 teachers teach RE for a total of two and a half hours per week in **all areas of the school for full time pupils and one and a half hours for part time pupils in Nursery.**
- Each year group has two parallel year groups and Y2, 5 and 6 are taught in 3 ability groups for Literacy and Numeracy.

## Full report - inspection judgements

### Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils are good

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	<b>1</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	<b>2</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school’s Collective Worship.	<b>2</b>

- Pupils at St Columba’s live out the school’s Mission Statement, **which states**, “Jesus is the inspiration for all that we do in our school”. **They do this** through their behaviour and the examples they set to others.
- The outcomes for pupils at St Columba’s are good with many areas that are outstanding. The head teacher (HT), governors and staff have a clear vision of the nature of a Catholic School.
- Pupils take full advantage of the wide range of opportunities the school provides for their personal and spiritual development.

- Pupil behaviour is outstanding in response to the spiritual and moral development of CW. All staff are involved in the rigorous monitoring and evaluation Calendar which is linked to the school's development plan and in particular, those aspects that form the school's RE Action Plan.
- Pupils are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school and show their concern for those less fortunate than themselves through regular masses with a distinct focus on providing help for others. The school supports many charities through a variety of fundraising activities throughout the year. The most recently initiated is a Mini Vinnies group – which was launched at the **Children's Sunday Harvest Mass where the Harvest Gifts collected for the Franciscan Friars Soup Kitchen at St Patrick's Church, Westgate, were displayed.**
- There are many opportunities for pupils to lead and take responsibility for prayerful activities which benefit and include the whole school community. Voluntary acts of worship during May have enabled pupils to plan and lead the Rosary in the Prayer Garden and share their own acts of worship. They do this with a depth of spirituality and maturity and show great reverence and respect for others.
- Rewards and sanctions are clearly displayed around the school and pupils respond extremely well to the positive nature of the Behaviour Policy and take full responsibility for their actions. Adults and pupils treat each other with high levels of respect and pupils know the consequences of unacceptable behaviour. Pupil behaviour is therefore consistently good and in the main, outstanding, due to good quality teaching and the positive behaviour strategies observed in all classes.
- Progress is good for all pupils taking into account their lower than average starting points. The well embedded tracking system shows an upward trend with all pupils making at least expected progress and with many pupils on target to exceed. Standards pupils achieve in RE at the end of KS2 are above the national average and in line the end of KS1. The school needs to ensure that all groups are closely tracked and monitored to ensure that no pupil is at risk of underperforming.
- RE is a core subject and permeates the entire curriculum. The school's electronic pupil tracking, monitoring and evaluation system used in Literacy and Numeracy is also used in RE to maximise the progress and attainment of individuals and groups of pupils. Reports to governors giving details of progress and attainment in RE follow the same format as those for Literacy and Numeracy.
- Progress is monitored through observations, drop-ins, work and planning scrutinies and rigorous analysis of the comprehensive assessment data. Areas for improvement are identified by the RE Co-ordinator who then works closely with the Team Leaders to address any underperformance. In RE the current emphasis is to ensure that the next steps are linked to the RE learning intention, more focussed assessment tasks and levels of attainment.
- Current data analysis which is monitored by the deputy head and RE Co-ordinator shows that the standards pupils have achieved in RE at the end of the first Autumn half term are on an upward trend and in particular, indicate an increase in those pupils who are predicted to make three levels progress in the forthcoming year.
- In the Foundation Stage the majority of children reach secure age related expectations. Due the high quality of imaginative teaching, planning and assessment in the

Reception class, many are on track to exceed expectations. The school needs to devise a system for recording attainment data on entry into the electronic tracking system so as to be able to show accurate progress at the end of KS1.

- The quality of work in the RE books is of a good standard and has improved dramatically since the school introduced cursive writing. This has had a huge impact on the presentation and quality of pupils' work.
- Collective Worship at St Columba's is of a high standard and always involves pupil participation. KS2 plan and deliver their CW and take responsibility for the readings, intercessions, activities, power points and setting up of the RE focus tables to invoke a strong response from the pupils. These are age appropriate and follow the rites and practices of the Catholic Church. In all classes the bible is given a very high profile and is greeted with respect and reverence to create a calm atmosphere for personal reflection in quiet contemplation.
- Weekly year group class masses are age appropriately planned to ensure that all pupils have a good understanding of the Eucharist and are always actively involved by taking part in the Offertory Procession and readings.

## The provision for Catholic Education is good

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

- The teaching is good, much is outstanding and none is inadequate. The school needs to share the outstanding practice which already exists within the school. In the classes where improvement is required the innovative and creative teaching evident in several year groups should be observed by teachers to enable them to develop outstanding practice in their own classrooms.
- In the best lessons teaching is inspirational and uses creative activities to engage and motivate pupils to produce work of a very high standard. In a Y6 lesson the teacher gave the **Archbishop** of York as an example of how people stand up for the rights of those who are persecuted. Pupils were then encouraged to enter into very thought provoking discussions. The teacher used open ended and probing questions to encourage lively response partner dialogue and concluded the lesson with a highly constructive debate.
- A range of systematic monitoring systems relating to outcomes and provision provide a firm basis for accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for further development which have led to significant improvement to outcomes for pupils.
- Following an audit carried out by the RE Co-ordinator all classes have a well-resourced worship area and liturgy boxes containing cloths of the liturgical colours, candles, artefacts, CDs and pictures.

- The school has been focussing on improving the curriculum by using more creative methods of teaching. Several members of staff have attended courses to improve the quality of their teaching. In the best lessons the teaching is inspirational and creative activities are used to engage and motivate the pupils to produce work of a high standard and make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy RE and say that their teachers make the subject interesting and exciting. Work is well differentiated and all groups of pupils are able to access the curriculum and produce work of a high quality in line with their ability.
- Lesson objectives are shared and discussed with the class and the children are aware of what they are learning. Examples of creativity were seen in FS and KS1 where role play was used in a variety of ways to enhance the meaning of Advent and the story of the Nativity.
- The school identifies and supports specific groups of pupils through effective target setting procedures to improve performance. Teachers need to further extend targets by setting more challenging activities to enable maximum progress to be made and to use the extra support in the classroom to target the higher ability pupils who could be at risk of under achieving.
- The entire staff is committed to providing not only the best education possible for the children in a safe, secure environment, but also a fulfilling and enriched faith experience where they can abide by the school's mission statement of "Learning to Care, Caring to Learn"
- Teachers use a wide range of questioning techniques within lessons and these enable the pupils to respond effectively and confidently. Pupils enjoy their RE work and say that they find that their teachers make RE interesting and exciting. In Y2 a pupil wondered if she could watch her DVDs when she gets to heaven while others made a collage of what they heaven would be like.
- The support staff at St Columba's are totally committed in their work. They have a positive impact on the quality of learning through their contribution in breaking down some pupils' barriers to learning. The Learning Mentor is particularly highly skilled in this area and works closely with those pupils who need more structured support for a variety of reasons. The Remembrance Garden is an excellent example of how valuable she is to the pastoral care offered by the school.
- The recently reviewed marking scheme incorporates the use of thought provoking comments at the end of each piece of work to encourage pupils to improve their work. These should be made more specific and focussed by linking them to RE assessment tasks in order to challenge the pupils to make further progress and move to the next level.
- The school uses the Diocesan approved RE scheme 'The Way, the Truth & the Life', (TWTL). All teachers are responsible for administering and levelling the RE assessment tasks and have been receiving excellent support from the RE Co-ordinator. Regular moderation of assessed pieces of work is carried out with other RE Co-ordinators from the Bradford Catholic Partnership and RE Advisory Service. The school needs to extend this to involve all staff so that regular monitoring and evaluation takes place to standardise judgements.

- School pastoral systems are well established and as a result relationships between children, parents and staff are exemplary and a real strength of the school. The school is committed to the development of the whole child and that each child is given the opportunity to reach his or her full potential. This is lived out in the Mission Statement which has recently been reviewed and re-written in child friendly language for all to understand and cherish.
- The RE budget is in line with other core curriculum areas.
- Pupils are given opportunities to expand and explore their faith on a day to day basis. To further support the RE curriculum and promote pupils' learning, the school should consider arranging retreat day for pupils in KS2 to enhance their personal spirituality.
- CW is central to the life of St Columba's and a key part of every celebration. The celebration of the Eucharist is seen as the heart of the school and all pupils are proud of the fact that the church is on their doorstep and that they are able to visit regularly. This facility motivates pupils into a greater involvement, understanding and enjoyment of their faith.
- The children experience a wide range of prayer opportunities ranging from whole school prayers to more reflective personal prayer time. CW always involves pupil participation and shows a marked progression from FS to Y6. The place of prayer in the Catholic life of the school is established as soon as children enter school at the age of two.
- The RE curriculum provides good opportunities for Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development and is enhanced by the Sex Education Relationship scheme.
- The children are given many opportunities to actively participate in a wide range of worship. CW is closely monitored by the RE Co-ordinator to ensure the highest possible quality is maintained. The school uses the Pray Together scheme which provides a clear structure and content in accordance with the liturgical calendar.
- All staff actively encourage, guide and support pupils on their journey of faith by creating a calm, spiritual atmosphere and creative use of music, visual aids and gospel readings to successfully develop the Catholic Life of the school. Symbols, Icons and displays strongly promote pupils' learning and understanding of the Catholic faith.

## **The Leadership and Management are Outstanding**

<b>How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Catholic Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils.</b>	<b>2</b>
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- All areas of leadership and management at St. Columba's are good with many outstanding features, particularly the way in which governors and senior leaders monitor, analyse and evaluate the impact of the Catholic Life, including CW on pupils and staff. They are aware of the major strengths and areas for development as well as

being very effective in both the support and challenge they offer to the school. This is now bringing about rapid improvement in the outcomes and provision for pupils.

- Leadership of Catholic Education is extremely well served by dedicated governors, the head teacher, SLT and all staff who are all firmly focused on St Columba's becoming an outstanding school through their deep commitment to the Church's mission in education.
- With the support and scrutiny of the deputy headteacher and the RE Co-ordinator, leaders at all levels share a collective responsibility for the Religious Education and Catholic Life of the school. The impact of this has been a greater sense of ownership of the school's Catholic Mission and a stronger drive for improvement in RE as a core subject. This is a strength of the school and is reflected in the outstanding way in which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.
- The governors are keen to challenge the senior leadership team (SLT) through the effective RE monitoring and evaluation systems they have established. Reports on the Catholic Life of the school and RE assessment data are reported to governors each half term. Governors challenge the headteacher and SLT by questioning what impact has been made on standards in RE. This is a real strength of the school in promoting positive collaborative working partnerships for the common good of Catholic Education for the pupils at St. Columba's.
- The Chair of Governors is a long serving and very experienced member of the governing body. He is a regular visitor in school and has an excellent working relationship with the headteacher. They both lead by example in their determination to provide the best possible Catholic Education for the pupils at St. Columba's and to prepare them for the next stage on their journey of faith as they move to secondary school.
- The support offered by the headteacher to staff, pupils, parents and the wider community is outstanding. He has a clear vision and a strong sense of purpose for this Catholic school. This is shared by the leadership team who are effective role models and set high expectations of themselves and others within the school community to ensure that RE is given the high profile of a main core subject
- The RE Co-ordinator has established rigorous monitoring and self-evaluating systems so that Team Leaders have an overall view of standards in their relevant key stages. She works tirelessly to monitor and evaluate RE, Worship and the Catholic life of the school by giving support and encouragement to staff across all key stages. In order to produce more accurate data to record progress at the end of KS1, the school now needs to include data from the FS into the systematic monitoring and evaluation activities and ensure that it becomes firmly embedded in a drive to continue to raise standards in RE.
- The RE Co-ordinator is very clear about standards throughout the school and is able to identify those pupils who are at risk of underachieving and those who are on track to make accelerated progress through the rigorous electronic tracking systems which have been implemented.
- The deputy headteacher is passionate about her role as a member of the SLT and is a source of advice and encouragement for everyone within the school community to

ensure continuous improvement in attainment in RE. She clearly demonstrates this through her professional drive and determination to ensure that RE and the Catholic life of the school continues to move forward. Through her knowledge and understanding of special educational needs (SEN) and assessment data she is having a very positive impact on standards in RE.

- A systematic range of monitoring and evaluation activities in relation to provision and outcomes are in place and there is extensive evidence in the minutes of their meetings to show that the Governing Body is kept well informed and up to date about the Catholic Life of the school. A very detailed RE action plan is in place which leaders and governors monitor and evaluate. This is beginning to show rapid improvement in standards in RE, Worship and the Catholic Life of the school.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the key aspects of the content and grading of the school's Self Evaluation Form. This allows them to hold the HT and SLT to account for attainment in RE and the Catholic Life of the school to ensure that the school meets all canonical and statutory requirements.
- RE and Catholic Life related policies are reviewed regularly and presented to governors. The Mission Statement and policy for EPR and SRE were updated recently. Parents are consulted regularly and are pleased with the way in which the school keeps the lines of communication open and informed about their child's progress at all levels.
- Links with the parish are very strong and varied. Many staff and governors engage with regular parish based worship, catechesis and other fundraising and social events. The headteacher leads the children's Sunday Liturgy on a regular basis.
- The Parish Priest is extremely supportive of the school and is keen to work closely with all staff to celebrate traditional liturgical events.