



INSPECTION REPORT

Christ the King Catholic Primary School

Easton Hill Road, Thornbury, BS35 1AW

Telephone: 01454 866860

E-mail address: ChristTheKingPrimarySchool@southglos.gov.uk.sch.uk

URN: 109267

Head teacher: Mrs Mary Mainwaring

Chair of Governors: Mrs Mary Baskerville

**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

Date of inspection: 22-23 March 2017

Date of previous inspection: February 2012

Reporting Inspector: Mr Joseph Skivington

Additional Inspector: Mr Frank Toner

Description of the school

Christ the King is a smaller than average Catholic primary school, situated in Thornbury on the outskirts of Bristol, which serves the parish of Christ the King. There are 163 pupils on roll, of whom 36% are baptised Catholics. An increasing proportion of children (10.9%) have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) makes up 35% of the number on roll, significantly higher than the national average. The percentage of BME children has stayed the same at 20.9%, while 11.5% are from the Traveller community. Prior attainment on entry to the school is below national expectation.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Grade 2

This is a good school because:

- It is a fully inclusive school where pupils from all faiths and none are made welcome. The governing body and school leaders provide effective guidance and support to staff, making fruitful use of outside resources, advice, and diocesan training in its drive to develop and improve provision and outcomes. As a result, the provision for both Catholic life and religious education is good.
- The pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They demonstrate real care and respect for each other, and their willingness to learn contributes much to their good progress. The chaplaincy team are making a growing contribution to the Catholic life of the school.
- The quality of teaching is good, with some outstanding practice, resulting in good learning and achievement. Where there are weaker areas or inconsistent practice, the school is taking effective, supportive action to raise all teaching to the level of the best.
- The school enjoys strong support from parents.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop is good

- The school clearly knows its strengths and weaknesses, which are identified in the self-evaluation document, and this leads to focussed action to improve practice and outcomes.
- The areas for development noted in the last inspection have been systematically addressed. The governing body is clearer about its role, making full use of diocesan training and keeping up to date with the Diocesan Strategy. The use of assessment to support individual learning and progress has improved due to closer monitoring and levelling, and moderation Inset from the diocese. This is leading to more challenging tasks, and an improvement in the quantity and quality of written work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Bring the quality of teaching across the school up to the level of the existing best practice by monitoring and evaluation which is more robust and rigorous, to ensure learning objectives are more closely tied to attainment targets.
- Sharpen the impact of questioning and marking so that it challenges all pupils to make real intellectual effort, particularly stretching the more able to reach their full potential.

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- To extend the emerging positive impact of the chaplaincy team so that all pupils learn the skills of initiating, organising, and presenting their own liturgies and assemblies

How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

Grade 2

a) The extent to which pupils understand, contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school

- The chaplaincy team, together with Foundation Governors Committee, have drawn up their own Action Plan for Catholic life, and are already successfully promoting the prayer life of the school, as well as developing their skills in planning and organising their own liturgies. They have given demonstrations in other schools, including a local CofE school, of how to organise and present a pupil initiated assembly.
- Governors join the chaplaincy team in reviewing classroom reflections and monitoring the impact of displays and prayer tables. They are excellent role models especially for the younger children and are now in a position to actively encourage all pupils to become involved in planning and organising collective worship.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be in a Catholic school and what makes it different from other schools. They accept and flourish in an atmosphere of faith and spirituality. Their own composed prayers, displayed on the prayer focus in each classroom, are very thoughtful and heartfelt. They can articulate the impact that the prayer life of the school has on their view of life and their relationship with others.
- All pupils were able to contribute their ideas to the formal review of the school's Mission Statement which ran from June to October 2016. The mission of the school is frequently discussed and has become part of their lives, as have the recently adopted Values which are well promoted and practised.
- Pupils contribute significantly through their response to questionnaires, providing essential feedback, which is built into improvement plans for Catholic life and RE. Their behaviour, cheerfulness and concerned care for others are a strength of the school.
- Pupils increasingly take on a range of responsibilities, which show they are alert to the needs of others, and have many opportunities to exercise their generosity towards others. For instance, they play an important role in raising money for charities both locally and further globally.
- Pupils have a genuine respect for those from different backgrounds. This is due to a growing understanding of different faiths, which they have studied and reflected on in RE. As one pupil put it: 'We respect others who are different from us'.
- There is a real sense of belonging to a big family here shared by all regardless of faith or none. The links with the parish are strong, and pupils contribute to and participate in parish life and liturgies, and have a deepening understanding the Church's wider mission and its sacramental life, especially through the study of Baptism, Ordination, and Holy Communion.

b) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Pupils come from a variety of faith backgrounds and practice. Most enter the school at levels of attainment and understanding of religious knowledge and practice, which are below

expectation. Their achievement and progress over time is good given their starting points, and the high number of special educational needs children although this is not always reflected in results. They make particularly good progress from the start, especially in the early years where the children have an excellent introduction to RE through story, prayer and reflection, so that by the end of Key Stage 1 the majority are making good progress.

- By the end of Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils are meeting their targets and continue to make good progress. The more able pupils' extended written work is reflective while the less able pupils' outcomes are verbally stronger. Most pupils have a secure grasp of meaning and relevance, and the links between belief and action, amply demonstrated in their caring and calm behaviour.
- Other groups such as those with SEN and disadvantaged pupils, make similarly good progress because of effective planned interventions, and the pro-active support of learning assistants.
- Discussions with pupils and responses in their written work show clearly that, as they move up the school, they become more confident in using religious language in a meaningful way. Their ability to learn independently, and with others, is on occasion curtailed by learning objectives which are not tied closely enough to the assessment targets, and low level tasks which inevitably block or cap further upward progress.
- Pupils are, however, proud of their achievements and demonstrate a positive interest in learning new ideas, and feel confident enough to express their own opinions. This is evident where there is good practice and challenging questioning. When asked, pupils were positive about RE lessons, and are ready to be involved and challenged especially through art, role play, and more imaginative responses.
- Pupils are able to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and make links between what they are learning and its relevance to their own lives. Their good conduct in lessons and around the school reflects the extent to which they have internalised the values promoted by the school, and the success of the school's behaviour strategies, which successfully meet their often challenging learning and behavioural needs.

c) How well pupils lead, respond to and participate in the Prayer Life of the School

- All pupils irrespective of faith background participate fully, and feel included, in collective worship. They show reverence, attentiveness, and willingness to play their part, singing with great enthusiasm. The chaplaincy team have made a good start by becoming more involved in the planning and organising of their liturgies and assemblies. Their example and positive role modelling are already making an evident impact in the prayer life of the school.
- The pupils value the many prayer opportunities during the school day, be it at the beginning of every lesson or the end of the day. They compose their own heartfelt prayers and reflections, displayed on the prayer tables. The sacramental and liturgical life of the school is reflected in the assemblies, the class Masses in the nearby parish church, and the celebrations throughout the Church's liturgical year of the life of Jesus, and the saints;
- Pupils are beginning to pool their own ideas on how to enliven their prayer life and they deserve as much encouragement and opportunity as possible. They would like to be even responsible for the school's liturgies and class assemblies.

How effective are leaders and governors in developing the Catholic Life of the school?

Grade 2

a) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

- Leaders and governors effectively promote, nurture and sustain the Catholic ethos of the school as their primary concern and care, and it is the main thrust of its strategic planning. The mission review in 2016, and the Foundation Governors Committee, were set up in 2015 specifically to monitor Catholic life and RE. Governors meet all the statutory, canonical, and diocesan requirements fully.
- The committee works with the chaplaincy team on frequent ethos walks to monitor and review lessons, displays, the chapel and prayer tables. A feedback report is written up and action speedily follows. A recently chosen set of Values has been introduced which are prominently displayed around the school and are referred to in assemblies and liturgies under the themes of Presentation, Values, and Challenge.
- The strong links with parents are evident in a thriving Parent Forum who are significantly involved in the school's life. The school also provides regular information which is shared through the newsletter, highlighting Catholic life and the topics their children are currently studying in RE, with helpful hints on how the parents can help them to learn better. As a result of good communication through discussions and questionnaires, their views and suggestions for improvement are acted on, and the school gets a realistic view of what has to be done to improve and grow.
- There is at least one Inset day annually devoted specifically to Catholic life and spirituality. The staff have opportunity to develop their own spirituality through the faith based route which has been set up. Leaders are open to advice and support from outside agencies, including the diocese, and are reaching out in partnership to the other Catholic schools in the Emmaus and Newman clusters.

b) How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the curriculum for Religious Education and relationship education, and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

- Leaders and governors are starting to use data and monitoring information more effectively, exercising careful oversight of the curriculum and learning outcomes. The Foundation Governors Committee, accompanied by chaplaincy members who act as 'learning detectives', take part in RE learning walks, lesson observations, and work scrutinies. Governors challenge and hold staff to account, as is evident in a reading of the minutes of governor's meetings, where there are specific questions, and answers expected, regarding the quality and impact of the RE provision;
- Subject development plans are drawn up based on this monitoring and used as working documents, which are added to or otherwise amended during the course of each term. The need for differentiation by task to better meet individual learning needs, or the embedding of the dialogue marking system, are good examples of areas highlighted by the much improved closer scrutiny of provision and outcomes. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of

teachers' formative comments, and the pupils' response, which clearly shows that marking has limited impact on progress over time.

- The provision for staff induction and in service training such as the RE Leader training days, or the New to Catholic Teaching course, is very supportive of the teaching of RE. The support for teachers' personal development, as well as their subject knowledge and practice, is resulting in teachers gradually becoming more confident in assessment and in setting learning objectives, although there is still serious work to be done in these areas. The RE moderation cluster meetings as well as diocesan training have been effective in improving assessment skills.

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Grade 2

a) The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- Teaching is good across the school, with some excellent practice, especially in questioning which checks understanding and stretches the more able. The best teaching is effective in promoting purposeful learning, the engagement of the pupils, their enjoyment, and their overall good results. The pupils' excellent attitudes to learning also have a strong impact on their progress and achievement. Learning assistants are involved in planning lessons with the teacher, so that interventions have a positive effect.
- Where learning is weaker, this is due in large part to learning objectives and tasks which do not meet the attainment levels of the pupils, especially the more able who lack any real challenge. These lessons are largely teacher led, resulting in compliant pupils who have limited ownership of their own learning, and who are not sufficiently encouraged to become inquisitive, and independent self-learners. The school itself has identified this as an area for improvement.
- Where teaching is better than good, teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of work and intellectual effort, with pupils rising to the challenge and being able to contribute their own arguments and opinions through extended reflective writing tasks, where they can relate what they are learning to their own lives. This best practice needs to be emulated across the whole school.
- There are now more effective systems for the tracking and monitoring of pupil progress over time. The assessment and marking policies have been adopted, but the school's own scrutiny of pupils' written work reveals that, on occasion, the quality of the teachers' formative comments often lack challenge, or the pupils' responses show a lack of any real intellectual effort.
- Teachers are becoming more confident at assessing progress with the support of shared moderation with the other schools in the Emmaus partnership. This will improve the accuracy and reliability of their judgments, and lead to a more fruitful use of the levelling sheet in every child's book.

b) The extent to which the Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The RE curriculum meets all Bishops Conference requirements. It is broad and balanced so that pupils can explore and develop their own values and beliefs. Pupils explore themes such as fairness, compassion and injustice, which they then link to the objects of their charity fundraising, and outreach to others who are more needy.

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- The study of other world faiths is a strength of this inclusive school because it promotes tolerance, understanding, and respect for others belief. It also inculcates an appreciation of the diversity and richness of the many cultures represented by the backgrounds of the pupils and their families, which are genuinely celebrated. This year the Emmaus group have sponsored the Year 5 class to visit a temple and mosque in London.
 - Provision for sex and relationship education is in place and approved by the governors adhering to diocesan guidelines.
 - The curriculum promotes continuity and progress, and contributes to good teaching and learning. It supports the pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development, and is taught through the lens of the Faith. The Forest School facility is used very successfully to develop the wonder of creation and responsible care and stewardship of the earth.
 - The sacramental preparation programme for First Holy Communion is run jointly by the parish and the school, strengthening the link between school and church.

c) The quality of the Prayer life provided by the School

- The prayer life of the school is fully inclusive and joyful. Prayer punctuates the school day and is part of every celebration, including Mass, assemblies, and the marking of Advent and Lent and the major feasts of the Church. There is now a focus on encouraging more pupils to organise and lead collective worship, starting in the first instance with the chaplaincy team.
- The parish priest is a welcome and inspiring figure in the school. The life of the parish is shared with the school and vice versa. For example, the pupils were able through the parish newsletter to explain Pope Francis' Five Finger prayer, which they have adopted, to the parishioners.
- There are colourful and thought provoking displays around the school, which remind the whole community of the liturgical cycle, the topics the pupils are currently studying, and the new Values.
- There is clear progression in prayer and pupils compose their own heartfelt prayers. They make good use of the school chapel. There is a retreat for Year 4, and the staff from the whole Emmaus cluster joined together on retreat at Downside Abbey.
- Parents and carers are invited to attend Mass and assemblies, which they increasingly do, and the school is working to reach out more effectively to them and invite them further into the spiritual life of the school.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

All 57 returned questionnaires scrutinised were positive about the school and the quality of their children's education. Some typical responses included:

'The school has really strong values, good values, and is a caring environment...every member of staff genuinely cares and knows every child in the school...going above and beyond the care of duty'.

'The school supports me as a parent in the spiritual, moral, religious and academic development of my children. Teaching is based on Gospel values and promotes Jesus Christ as the Way, Truth, and Life'.

'The school caters very well for the most vulnerable children in its care and is part of the Catholic community of Christ the King parish'.

'The values pupils are taught... to be loving and caring individuals..... this certainly shows in my daughter already'.

'The school provides such a family, friendly, warm an inclusive environment... staff are always friendly and approachable. A great deal of effort is made by staff 'to meet children where they are' in their learning journey – providing support and opportunities for each child to progress to the best of their abilities'.

'The school has a fantastic relationship with parents. The open door policy means we are well known to the staff and know them well. The school involves parents in the religious character of the school inviting us to Mass and assemblies regularly and when the Values were written we were fully involved. The message of Making a Difference and building strong foundations within God's loving hands is clear'.