



St Adrian's Catholic Primary School

Watling View St Albans, Herts AL1 2PB

Date of inspection: 1 May 2014

A. Classroom Religious Education

What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?

Overall Grade 1

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education (RE) in developing pupils' religious literacy is judged to be very good. The curriculum is well planned for and meets all statutory requirements. Children get a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and provision is equally very good in upper Key Stage 2. Children leave the school with above average standards of achievement in Year 6 and make very good progress as they get ready for secondary school. Pupils with special needs are very well supported in this school. Marking and feedback of pupils' work has been identified by the school and also in this report, as a key area for improvement. Quality of teaching is variable across the school ranging from requiring improvement to outstanding. One of the key reasons for this is that monitoring systems are not rigorous or robust enough and lack sufficient challenge. Many parents in a survey asked for RE homework to be provided and the school needs to address this issue. Leadership and management are very good because of the personal commitment and vision of a highly respected and experienced headteacher. The Governing Body has a wide range of knowledge and experience and equally has very good capacity to drive forward further improvement in classroom religious education. The school's own self-evaluation is a very good document and can greatly assist the school in the future.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade 1

The school's overall effectiveness in this area is very good. There are some outstanding examples of how the school develops pupils' experience of Catholic life and worship. It is not yet outstanding because the school needs to develop and monitor to a much greater extent its work on the Common Good. Religious Education is certainly at the core of life in this Catholic school. The 10% requirement teaching time for Religious Education is being fully met in every class. The experience of worship, prayer and liturgy in the school is judged to be outstanding in all areas. Pupils are aware themselves of just how good this experience is and greatly appreciate the opportunities afforded to them. The work around the Common Good needs to be developed and reviewed as opportunities for learning about service and social justice are being missed. Partnership with parents is particularly strong and parents are almost universally appreciative of the work being done for their children in this school. The headteacher and governing body provide very good leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school and have identified clearly areas for even further improvement.

A. Classroom Religious Education

How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?

The key issue highlighted in the previous inspection has been fully addressed. Most pupils are given targets in religious education which they know about and then strive to achieve. The main improvement that is obvious has been the increased focus on scripture resulting in a greater emphasis for all children in developing an understanding of the Bible as God's Word.

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade 1

The content of St Adrian's Catholic School Religious Education curriculum fully meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. The curriculum is well planned for by the religious education leadership team. The school uses the units of work provided by Margaret Carswell as its core curriculum. It is looking to the future for further extension resources to enhance religious education provision.

There is not much evidence to show creativity in the teaching and learning of RE and this needs to be developed further. Pupils are taught about other faiths such as Judaism in an appropriate way. The school has invested in a wide range of resources linked to the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*, this ensures that there is a three year cycle of learning which does provide opportunities for progression across the key stages. The structure, planning and content of this school's RE curriculum and in lessons is mostly very good and thorough.

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade 1

Pupil achievement overall is very good. This is most evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage and among the older pupils in the school. Achievement overall is very variable ranging from requiring improvement to outstanding. Targets are being set effectively in some classes and many pupils can discuss these and summarise what they have been learning about. Pupil enthusiasm and engagement for learning during lessons is a noteworthy feature of this school. Many pupils take care and pride in their work but this is not consistent in the school and presentation of work is often seen to be in need of improvement, especially in their books. For example, many pupils do not date or record when they do or complete their work. Some of the displays seen in classrooms and the use of stained glass effects in Key Stage 2 were of a very high standard. Pupils' work is assessed through the year using the National Levels of Attainment and agreed understandings and planning and teaching is modified according to these guidelines. The school has engaged with other schools in moderating pupil attainment. Marking and feedback of pupils' work has been identified as a key priority for improvement by the school itself, and this inspection concurs with this objective. Marking is not being used effectively in a wide range of classes. Pupils enter the school **broadly** either in line **or** **with above** national averages and leave in Year 6 achieving generally above the national average, therefore progress is deemed to be at least good in this school. This is evident by examining the pupils' analysis and understanding of Psalms and Scripture. Progress is especially good in Years 5 and 6 and among pupils with special educational needs.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

The quality of teaching across the school is very variable overall and is judged to be good. The children get a very good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage classes where teachers are dynamic and very creative in how they develop young children's awareness. Both classes are very rich in language and resources and pupils quickly learn key words and names of people central to the Catholic faith. Pupils' individual needs and wants are well catered for and identified early. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is improving and requires further improvement. The quality of teaching across Key Stage 2 ranges from good to outstanding and in upper Key Stage 2 is of a very high standard indeed as teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and constantly challenge them to do better. During this inspection some very good and outstanding teaching was seen in these older pupils' classes around the theme of 'From Easter to Pentecost'. There was also a great deal of respect shown between pupils and teachers in these classes, who took time and care to answer what were some quite searching questions from the pupils. Teaching and learning assistants were very effective in all lessons seen and play a vital role in this school to help many pupils learn. Pupils with special needs are being very well supported. Marking is a weakness which has been identified and needs to be addressed. A very large numbers of parents in a questionnaire asked for and stated that there was little or no homework provision provided in religious education. The school recognises this is indeed the case and is taking steps to ensure that homework is provided in the future in this key area.

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Grade 1

The leadership and ~~management of~~ management of religious education is/are very good. The headteacher is greatly respected and admired by the whole community and pupils and parents speak very highly of her role within the school. She herself has a clear vision and commitment to the educational mission of the Church. She is being well supported by an enthusiastic religious education subject leader. The school has recently made some important changes to its leadership structure and has made some key appointments in leadership for the next academic year. The governing body hasve outstanding capacity to support the school in its mission and is/are equally committed to securing improvement in the near future. Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because the school's monitoring systems and structures are currently inadequate as they are not robust enough, they lack rigour and are not sufficiently challenging. This is a key area for development. There is-are a very good and wide range of resources within the school and in most classes. The school's own self-evaluation document is very good and comprehensive and identifies many of the key areas for development within the school. These now need to be implemented in the near future.

What should the school do to improve further in classroom religious education?

- Ensure that the monitoring of the quality of teaching is backed up by rigorous and robust systems and clear and specific targets are given to teachers, where improvement is required
- Review how work is presented in books and around the school to ensure greater consistency of standards in all classes
- Develop in the near future, marking and feedback systems so that pupils know clearly what they have to do to improve their work.
- Provide homework opportunities for all pupils in the school to further enhance their learning in religious education.

B. The Catholic life of the school

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

What has improved since the last inspection?

The key issue identified in this area during the last inspection concerning the monitoring of class prayers has been well addressed. Some of the other areas that have been developed include the introduction of class Masses and ~~resources in~~ resources in Key Stage 2 and non-Eucharistic liturgies for Key Stage 1. The Governing Body now has a Catholic Life & Community group (CLC group) which helps to monitor this key area within the school.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade 1*

10% of curriculum time is devoted to the teaching of religious education across all key stages every week. This is planned and monitored ~~for as to~~ compliance by the headteacher and religious education subject leader. The school views religious education as a core subject in the curriculum and as such, time, money and resources are given in accordance with its high status. An appropriate annual budget is allocated and extra resources provided as and when required. Teachers have mostly very good subject knowledge of religious education in accordance with the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* for England and Wales. New teachers to the school are being well supported in learning about the teaching of religious education and are encouraged to study for higher Catholic qualifications. The accommodation is of a high standard both indoors and outdoors as well in the school's extensive grounds. Displays and prayer corners are mostly of a high quality and the school clearly places a high emphasis on the centrality of the Catholic faith to its mission.

The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community.

Grade 1*

Prayer and worship are at the core of the Catholic life in St Adrian's School. This is a major strength of the school and is judged to be outstanding. Worship and prayer are central to the daily life of the school as is ~~evidenced by~~ evidenced by class prayer, Key Stage prayer or whole school prayer services. A very reverent Key Stage 2 pupils' prayer group took place during the course of this inspection, led by the religious education subject leader. Also worthy of note are some of the collated whole class books which display and show pupils own prayers and reflections. School Masses are celebrated each term with at least one taking place termly in the parish church. Governors and parents are invited to attend school Masses and whole school assemblies as well as class themed assemblies. Pupils are involved in the celebration of Mass on many levels such as by ~~altar~~ serving, as musicians, as readers, during the offertory procession and in preparing the liturgy beforehand. In class liturgies and assemblies pupils are actively involved through preparation of prayer, drama, liturgical dance and other forms of worship. Pupils showed great respect during

prayers observed and were also keen to share in opportunities to pray for those in need. The school has recently introduced class meditation to assist pupils' spiritual development. The school has interesting plans to develop a Children's Chaplaincy group in the near future.

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice.

Grade 2

The pupils are keen to support a wide range of local and international charities. The pupils do recognise their responsibility as members of a Catholic community to the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged. They collect and raise money for a wide and eclectic range of charities. However the school has much work to do in developing this area and is a key issue for the future. Pupils have no clear understanding of the charities they support and what they actually do. They appear unsure and confused as to whether the work of the charities such as CAFOD and the Catholic Children's Society is local or international. The school currently supports no long term or sustainable overseas projects that pupils can articulate, write about or share displays about. Major opportunities for social, moral and cultural development are being missed. Equally they are unsure of the theology underpinning this area. The school has identified this as a key area for development in its own evaluation. Within school, pupils take on their responsibilities with eagerness, zeal and commitment and this aspect of the Common Good is much more highly developed. They respond well to responsibilities to support younger pupils through activities such as reading partners, playground monitors, walking younger pupils round to mass and by supporting them in groups during school themed curriculum days.

Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf;

Grade 1

This is a ~~strength~~ strength of the school in many ways. The partnership with parents is very strong at all levels and the questionnaires and school surveys show parents greatly appreciate the life and Catholic mission of the school. The head is particularly respected and valued by parents in many comments and confidential responses. A newly formed Parents Forum group has been established to facilitate a shared understanding and further improve communication through parent channels. Parents actively support the school in a wide variety of roles. Whilst the parish priest is no longer a governor, he accepts the role of the school in the parish and supports the school in his role as associate member of the CLC governors' group. The school welcomes all opportunities to work in collaboration and support of other Catholic schools in the area through for example, the St Albans Deanery. The school works in a close and effective partnership with the diocese at all levels through regular attendance at training sessions by teaching staff, leadership and governors. Senior Leaders and governors attend diocesan celebrations and relevant conferences. Partnerships are strong and committed on most levels.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school.

Grade I

The headteacher promotes the Catholic life of the school leading by her own clear faith and commitment. She is being very well supported by a strong Governing Body. The Governing Body fully recognises their responsibility for upholding the distinctive character and nature of the school and have established a working group with responsibility for Catholic Life & Community of the school. Governors are fully committed to ensuring that the Church's mission in education is central to the life and work of the school.

Pupils are very aware of the school mission statement and can recite it easily. School life is underpinned by this school mission statement, which parents and especially pupils are very aware of. ~~performance~~Performance management reviews for staff frequently include a target supporting the Catholic life of the school. There is a systematic process of school self-evaluation that involves the Catholic Life and the Community group. This group includes members of teaching staff as well as parish priest and other governors. This self-evaluation is mostly accurate in identifying strengths and areas for development. The challenge for the school is to implement these priorities and address the key issues contained in this report.

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Implement the school's plans to establish a Religious Education Leadership Team to include among others, the new deputy head teacher.
- Further develop and review the school's work around the Common Good and consider the establishment of some sustainable and long term projects both at home and overseas to support pupils' understanding and moral development. Also develop more the theology that underpins the work the pupils are doing for the Common Good.
- The school has identified some innovative plans to further develop the involvement of staff and pupils in the Catholic Life of the school through establishing a Chaplaincy group for children. This exciting idea now needs to be implemented.