



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Philip's Catholic Primary School

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D/ES Number: 938 3328

Headteacher: Mrs M. Fraher

Chair of Governors : Mrs K. Hallam

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of Inspection: 23rd November 2009
Date of previous Inspection: 1st December 2006

Lead Inspector: Mrs C. Walker
Associate Inspector: Mr S . Beck

Description of School

St. Philip's is a voluntary aided, one form entry Catholic Primary school and is situated in the Cathedral Deanery in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by the West Sussex Local Authority. The principal parishes, which the school serves, are the Cathedral Parish of Our Lady and St Philip Howard, Arundel, and Our Lady of England Priory Parish in Storrington. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below the national average, 26 pupils are on the Special Educational Needs register and one pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need. 75% of the teachers are Catholic. The school has a wide catchment area, ranging along the coastal strip as far as Bognor and as north as Pulborough.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St. Philip's is an outstanding, highly effective, distinctly Catholic school placing equal value on academic achievement and the pupils' personal faith development. It is a caring, nurturing Catholic community that embraces pupils of all abilities. As soon as you enter the school the strong Catholic ethos is clearly evident. St Philip's has a coherent sense of mission and purpose. The drive to develop the whole child and to nurture individual worth is embedded in school culture. Pupils are encouraged to strive for excellence in all areas of their academic and personal development. They, in response, learn to respect all members of the community as equally valuable. Very strong liaison with parents and parishes further nourishes this provision. The key to the school's success is the strength of leadership. The headteacher gives outstanding direction to staff and pupils as she nurtures and empowers them to give their best. Governors are passionate about the ongoing development of the Catholic ethos of the school, providing both support and challenge when discussing priorities for improvement. All leaders work together to secure outstanding provision for the care, guidance and support of pupils. Relationships are excellent and pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Numerous opportunities for personal and collective worship result in the pupils' spiritual and moral development being outstanding. Pupils make good progress because a well-planned curriculum meets their different needs and consistently excellent teaching challenges their thinking. This is underpinned by effective systems for assessing pupils' attainment. The school is based in a listed building. It is commendable how the whole school community have worked together to develop and maximise the use of the school premises for the benefit of all pupils and further enhance provision for staff.

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

Very good progress has been made in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection. Assessment is now embedded across the school and teachers are more secure in their judgements. Tracking procedures have enabled pupil progress to be identified quickly. Children are actively involved in their own self-assessment through the introduction of "I Can Statements" for "Here I Am topics". This has meant greater ownership of their own learning and a deeper understanding of the next steps needed on their learning journey. The introduction of a more creative curriculum has helped to foster links with other subject areas such as dance, drama, music, art and the use of the environment. A great deal of professional development has been put in place throughout the school to help raise teacher's expectations and ensure clearly differentiated activities are evident for the Relate section of each topic and beyond. Great strides have been made with the use of ICT in Religious Education lessons and Collective Worship. Excellent progress has been made in all areas

Grade 1

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

St. Philips has excellent capacity to improve and sustain development because strong teamwork and shared commitment ensure clear pathways to improvement. The school promotes a community of reflective practitioners who are not complacent about the school's many strengths. There is a strong commitment and understanding of what is involved in leading a Catholic school. Accurate self-assessment ensures all stakeholders are able to reflect on current practice, standards and provision. A clearly communicated vision ensures a common understanding of identified actions. The school has robust procedures in place to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and impact. All governors are dedicated, enthusiastic and regular visitors to the school. They understand their roles as critical friends and provide strong mentorship and challenge. All in the school are open to new ideas and work together to generate development.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

There are no significant areas for improvement. The school should continue to maintain and build upon its current, numerous strengths.

Further develop the assessment process and the tracking of individual pupil progress so that assessment has an even greater impact on attainment.

Extend links and developments in the area of Community Cohesion.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management in developing the Catholic life of St Philip's School are outstanding. The school's Mission Statement "Journeying together in faith through prayer, worship and celebration" expresses the philosophy of the school and enables it to be a place where the gospel teachings permeate every aspect of its life and work. The leadership of the school is strongly focused on the school's Catholic mission and on promoting the personal development of learners. The headteacher has a positive presence around the school, and the leadership team have a clear vision for the development of the school as a Catholic learning community, created and supported by parents, pupils, staff and governors. The governors and leadership team are very proud of the distinctive atmosphere and ethos of the school and are deeply committed to its Catholic life. The school's self evaluation process is rigorous and areas for development and the school's strengths have been correctly identified. Very strong partnerships exist between the school and the Cathedral and Storrington parishes. Parents are very supportive of the school and strong links also exist with the local community. Canon Tim Madeley regularly visits the school. His commitment is greatly valued and appreciated by all members of the school community.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer and worship are central to school life. The school more than meets its statutory obligations with regard to collective worship and its provision for prayer and worship is outstanding. Through a rich and varied programme of Masses, assemblies and other liturgies, such as services of reconciliation, pupils are given excellent opportunities to participate. The weekly whole school assembly is an important focus of the prayer life of the school, with a real strength being the level of pupil participation in the communal singing and prayers. The opportunities provided are outstanding in range and quality. This was observed during an act of collective worship where pupils prepared the liturgy and presented it with confidence and reverence.

Prayer is woven into the very fabric of the day. In addition to the traditional prayers of the Church, every opportunity is given to pupils to compose their own prayers. These are often incorporated into the daily prayers of the class. Pupils are introduced to a variety of prayer forms, including reflective and spontaneous prayer. Excellent use is made of candlelight, music, darkness and ICT to create an atmosphere conducive to prayer. Every class has a prayer table and these are, without exception, outstanding. The use of these focus areas is characterised by a common ownership and collective reverence.

The Parish Priest makes a very positive contribution to the prayer life of the school, ensuring that there is an effective sacramental life to the school. An excellent feature of the prayer life of the school is the embedded cross curricular approach to the planning and leading of worship. Collective worship is purposeful, planned and contributes significantly to developing the spiritual journey encountered by both staff and pupils. Collective worship and prayer make a significant and very valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Grade 1

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

St. Philip's is an inclusive school, which welcomes all. This is clearly evident from the many attractive displays that enhance the learning environment. Strong links with the wider community and firm partnerships between local and Deanery schools also nurture cohesion. Excellent links within the Deanery have resulted in innovative ways to support personal and professional development both within the parish and the school. This partnership has resulted in a Catechesis programme being set up for all catechists in the Deanery. Liaison with other local schools allows pupils to engage in sporting activities, history trips and music events. While recognising their own good fortune, pupils show concern for those less fortunate than themselves and enthusiastically participate in a range of fundraising activities, such as Mission Together and CAFOD. They are also aware of more local concerns, as shown by attending the senior citizens' Christmas tea party, participating in the Rotary "Spirit of Christmas" event in the town and taking part in many parish and Deanery events. The school's teaching and curriculum has a significant impact on pupils' understanding of the United Kingdom and more distant global communities. The school has taken positive steps to promote global links with two developing schools in Africa. The school's accurate self-evaluation has rightly identified this is one strand of community cohesion that now needs to be explored further. The parents were highly supportive of the school's approach to developing their children's understanding and knowledge of other faiths. Good practice was seen in the use of "My Other Faith" books.

The participation and positive interactions between groups of pupils, parents and staff make an important and beneficial contribution to cohesion. The Catholic ethos of St. Philip's is far reaching as people are drawn into this cohesive community.

Grade 2

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Very effective teaching and monitoring ensures pupils make good progress overall, with achievement being in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. This compares favourably with Literacy. The relatively new teaching team has made significant strides in these areas. Opportunities will be provided for securing higher levels of attainment as this is further embedded. The development of Assessment for Learning alongside the development of "I Can Statements" for Here I Am topics enable pupils to self assess and peer assess their work. Pupils demonstrate confidence, enthusiasm and interest in their Religious Education lessons and are able to articulate their enjoyment of this curriculum area. Their written work provided some perceptive comments for example a Reception child wrote, "Even before I was born, you knew me, you watched me grow inside my mummy." A Year 1 child formulated a recipe for a good friend, which included "Add a big pinch of love and serve with a smile." At the end of Key Stage 2 the use of ICT deepened pupils understanding of relationships through the production of a Power Point presentation entitled "A Guide to Family Living." There is a clear progression as pupils move through the school in both the quality and variety of work evidenced in books. This is very well presented and marks the high value placed by all on Religious Education.

Grade 2

Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

Teaching is of a very high standard and often inspirational with the vast majority of lessons being outstanding. Teachers build very successfully on previous knowledge and have excellent relationships with the pupils. Learning is enhanced by the good cross-curricular links that have been established benefitting a range of subjects such as Literacy, ICT, Art, Music and Drama. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and this is communicated with pupils confidently. Teaching and learning benefit from outstanding subject leadership. A whole school approach to planning which is in the main appropriately matched to the needs of pupils, results in a good range of activities that stimulate learning. Classroom management is excellent with lessons being well paced. Teachers use praise and affirmation regularly, developing self-confidence in the pupils. This will be further supported through the ongoing development of Assessment For Learning. Pupils are encouraged to pose questions to each other. An excellent liturgy was seen where pupils were asked to share examples of when they felt they or others had shown courage. They responded with answers relating to their own lives and the lives of the saints. Further examples were seen in another lesson where pupils confidently responded to scripture. In relation to the theme of Advent one child claimed "He is Our Father and always brings love to us." Teaching was greatly enhanced through the highly effective use of support staff. This practice could be usefully shared across the school to further enhance the learning opportunities for all pupils.

Pupils are encouraged to have a moral conscience and the moral teachings of the Church are explored through the promotion of Fair Trade, CAFOD and supporting numerous charities.

Grade 1

Quality of the Curriculum

Religious Education is at the core of the whole school curriculum and appropriate levels of the "Here I Am" programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Diocesan requirements, 10% of total curriculum time being allocated to this curriculum area. The Religious Education curriculum is very well matched to the pupil's potential and builds very effectively on their prior attainment and experiences. Where appropriate, opportunities are embraced to foster creative learning experiences for the pupils. An innovatively planned curriculum is beginning to challenge pupils to think independently.

Teachers are well supported by the very strong subject leader. The RE curriculum makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

All adults make extensive efforts to support pupils and ensure they are happy in school and work enthusiastically. Relationships between adults and children are outstanding.

Grade 1

Leadership and Management of Religious Education

Inspection evidence gathered judges the leadership and management of Religious Education to be outstanding. The subject leader has excellent knowledge of her subject and is well placed to advise and support her motivated staff and knowledgeable governors. She has a clear vision of her role within the school and provides strong leadership and direction. Her key strategic position on the leadership team helps to ensure that Religious Education is held first and foremost in the life of the school. There are very effective systems in place, which enable her to monitor planning, undertake lesson observations and learning walks and lead staff in moderating pupils' work. She can appreciate and promote the way in which Religious Education pervades the school and fully involves the stakeholders at all levels of decision making. Governors are kept fully informed of Religious Education and prayer and worship by written and verbal reports from the headteacher, subject leader and link governor, by visits to the school and by attending various celebrations and functions. The Religious Education leader has successfully created an effective team whom she inspires and motivates whilst ensuring appropriate support and challenge are also evident.

Grade 1