

DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH

Department for Formation



**Christ the King Catholic Primary School
Durdells Avenue
Kinson
Bournemouth
BH11 9EH**

URN 113837

**Head Teacher: Mrs Clare Tickel
Chair of Governors: Rev. William Muir**

**Record of Diocesan Review
6th December 2011**

Introduction

Christ the King school was inspected by Ofsted in July 2011 and was judged to be a good school with outstanding features particularly in the areas of care, guidance and support of children and its provision for Early Years. A new Section 48 Inspection process is currently being developed for use in diocesan schools. Pending finalisation of this process and as an interim measure, Bishop Budd has given his approval to a formal review to be conducted jointly by a diocesan officer and the school, to meet the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. This document is an agreed statement of the outcomes of that review, to be shared with governors, parents and other stakeholders as the school wishes. It identifies some of Christ the King's key strengths and also areas of focus that have been agreed to further strengthen the life and work of the school. The review covered a wide range of issues and as a process it sought to be creative and to support the school in its ongoing development as a Catholic community.

The review was conducted by Sarah Adams (Diocesan RE Adviser for Schools) working closely with Clare Tickel (Head Teacher), Mary O' Brien (Leader of RE), and governors of the school. The outcomes of the review were agreed on the basis of:-

- observation of lessons
- documentation made available in school;
- experience of class acts of worship
- participation in a whole school act of worship
- meeting with the school council
- meeting with leader of RE within the school
- meeting with Parish Priest (Chair of governors and other school governors)
- meeting with Head Teacher

Strengths of the School

As a Catholic School Christ the King has many key strengths which highlight its distinctive identity as a Catholic school and which demonstrate the commitment it has to educational success and to the mission of the Church in the world. The list below intends to be illustrative, not comprehensive.

Leadership

Since the last inspection the school has recently appointed a new Head Teacher who took up her position at the beginning of the academic year following the retirement of the previous Head Teacher.

Christ the King is continuing to grow and develop as Catholic school community with strong leadership and a commitment to providing the best of Catholic education for the children. The new Head is using her first year in the school to establish herself and to work closely with her very able senior leadership team. She has been keen to develop the spiritual life of the school and is building on the positive foundations left

by the previous Head. At the beginning of the year she involved the whole of the adult community including governors in a creative liturgy to mark the start of the academic year. The inclusion of all the adults in this has helped the different areas of the school to value the role they play in creating an environment for the children where all are respected and nurtured. Prayers begin before all meetings and set the tone for the business to follow. This is very positive.

As leaders, the Head, governors and senior leadership team are committed to nurturing positive relationships, support for parents (a new PTFA has been established) and a place where children can learn and grow academically and spiritually. The pastoral care which adults show to the children emanates from the commitment the school has made to be a school where Christ is at the centre and where Gospel values and teaching inform decision-making and ways of responding to all situations.

Religious Life

Many aspects of the life of Christ the King reflect the very strong religious and spiritual nature of the school. Great care is taken of the environment and many fine displays around the school reflect the prayer life of the school. The Head Teacher is very keen to continue developing the prayer life of the school and is both creative and inclusive in her way of approaching this.

Children are consistently asked about their experience of liturgies and encouraged to participate on many levels. During this visit the children fully participated in a rich and joyful Advent liturgy. Through drama and music children of all ages were helped to appreciate the deeper meaning of the season. The end of term production explored the Christmas customs of different countries around the world giving all children an opportunity to both learn and take part. The high quality of singing and enthusiasm shown by the children was captivating. Within classrooms prayer plays an important role. Teachers offer the children different opportunities for quiet reflection and for shared prayer. The children in their turn are growing in confidence and their ability to share their prayers aloud. A moving example of this was demonstrated with the children within the reception class who showed a great capacity for stillness. The teacher's skill in providing the right kind of atmosphere and timing ensured that children could enjoy the experience and be fully apart of it.

The school's desire to provide a consistently high standard of prayer and liturgy is reflected in the INSET that they have sought to guide and support them in this process.

The school continues to have strong links with the local parish community and in particular the community of priests who serve the parish. Unfortunately they have just lost a chaplain but the parish is committed to on-going support of the school and the parish priest is going to take on that role for the school. This is much appreciated.

Teaching in RE

In line with the rest of the Diocese Christ the King has adopted 'God Matters' for the teaching of RE. Teachers expressed their appreciation for the way that 'God Matters' helps their teaching and also how it challenges them. Lessons observed reflected a new found enthusiasm for RE both by teachers and children. The school is working hard to ensure that differentiation in RE is based less on literacy skills and more on the children's knowledge and understanding of religious concepts and ideas.

Lessons were well-paced, creative and engaging. Children had many opportunities to share their thoughts and ideas. One-to-one sharing, group work and quiet reflection were all part of the learning process. Teachers' lessons are well-planned with clear learning outcomes shared with the children at the start of lessons and assessed at the end. For example, within a year six lesson, a plenary session led by the teacher helped to determine whether the children had understood what is meant by the second coming of Christ and how scripture helps us to identify how we can be prepared for the second coming.

Excellent use of IT, role play and identification of key vocabulary consistently helped the children to be confident in their learning. Both younger children and older children demonstrated their willingness to participate in lessons, share their knowledge and support one another. For example in year one, the children were focusing on what they knew about the symbols used in Advent. Many of the children were able to show that they had absorbed what they had heard in the act of worship and respond to the questions and activities given in their RE lesson. Here the teacher worked hard to provide a variety of ways by which the children would be able to learn about what it means to prepare for Christmas. Differentiation in this lesson was ably supported by the teaching assistants who gently and carefully guided the children so that they could achieve and enjoy their activities. While some children worked independently others worked in groups. At the end of the lesson the children were able to show what they had done and talk about it within the context of a short but meaningful liturgy.

The introduction of 'God Matters' has been challenging for all schools and no less so for Christ the King. However the support of the RE leader, INSET from the Diocese and the opportunity to consider the theological themes within any given topic prior to teaching means that teachers are growing in their own knowledge and understanding. It is important that the opportunity to reflect on topics before they are taught continues on a regular basis. This will help to ensure that misconceptions or misunderstandings can be ironed out before teaching begins.

'God Matters' is a creative approach to teaching RE and as such relies on teachers to employ all their skills to deliver it. Evenly balanced lessons over the course of the week, determined by age and accessibility are the key to children absorbing and integrating what they have learned into their everyday experience. Christ the King is working hard to ensure that this happens and fully recognises RE as a core subject in the curriculum with literacy and numeracy.

Pastoral Life of the School

The quality of pastoral care for the children at Christ the King is of a very high standard. Throughout the visit it was very evident that children are treated with respect and compassion. Talking to the children at different times of the day revealed that they feel looked after and cared for. In all settings it was clear that relationships between children and adults are very positive. Clear boundaries and guidelines within a context of humour and a relaxed atmosphere ensures that children know what is expected of them and in turn they are able to respond as necessary. A great deal of work is done to help children to grow into emotionally literate young people. The focus for this is the Seal programme which also forms a key part of the prayer life of the school with strong links being made. The children expressed their appreciation for the way staff deal with issues and know that they always have someone to turn to if they are in difficulty. Although the school no longer has a buddy system this is something that the older children feel could be re-introduced as they had experienced it and valued it when they joined the school.

Christ the King is a warm and friendly school where children and adults are made to feel welcome. Visitors are also made very welcome, something that is very apparent from the moment of arrival at the school. This sense of welcome is something which seems to drive the outreach that the school has with the wider community. As a school it is committed to sharing Christ's love with all people. This is evident in their many charity activities, particularly for CAFOD, Julia's Hospice and the Southampton Cancer Ward. In addition the children are helped to be involved with the local Open Door project and with the elderly through their parish links. The school actively encourages people with learning difficulties to come into the school so that children are able to relate and appreciate the needs of all groups within society. In addition the school's links with a school in Tanzania is helping the children to foster positive international relationships.

All of these activities, in addition to the quality of care, prayer and teaching, make Christ the King a loving and joyful community in which to learn and grow.

Areas of Focus for Development

The school's mission as a Catholic School would be further enhanced by focusing planned development in the following areas.

1. To build upon and deepen the liturgical life of the school so that children grow in their capacity to appreciate ritual and the prayer life of the Church in line with the liturgical year.
2. To ensure that, prior to the teaching of every topic in RE, teachers will have the opportunity to reflect together at their own level on the theological concepts within the topic. Support from local clergy or other suitable people and continuing presence at Diocesan INSET will add to the experience and is recommended. In addition any support which the governors can give to supporting the Head Teacher to be fully

integrated into the life of the Diocese and through meetings with other local Catholic Heads from the Plymouth Diocese on a regular basis will be very beneficial.

3. For the school to fully implement a process of assessment for RE in line with Diocesan expectations and time-lines. In addition to assessment, a clear policy and guidelines for the gathering of evidence will significantly help in the assessment process. This will be aided by the attendance of the RE leader at training for assessment when offered by the diocese.
4. For teachers and teaching assistants to develop their understanding of the use of focal points and how these can support the prayer life and learning for children.

Conclusion

Christ the King is a very positive place to be and a richly rewarding place for children to learn and grow. The new Head Teacher has a clear vision for the school rooted in gospel values and reflective of the love of Christ. The commitment of the governors to the school reflects their desire to nourish the potential that the school has to offer the very best of Catholic education. As the school grows in its mission and purpose there is no doubt that both children and adults will thrive in this loving community of faith. Both the Bishop and the Diocese can be very proud of Christ the King.

On a personal note I would like to express my gratitude for the very warm welcome which I received during my visit. I would also like to thank all those who participated so openly in this visit and for making such a clear commitment to on-going progress.

Sarah Adams
18th December 2011