

**DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH
VICARIATE FOR EVANGELISATION CATECHESIS AND SCHOOLS**



St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School
Pymore Road
Bridport
Dorset
DT6 3TR

URN 140757

Head Teacher: Mrs Frances Guppy
Chair of Governors: Mr. Chris Addis

Canonical Inspection under Canon Law 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Plymouth and
inspection of Denominational Education under S48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of Inspection: 28-29th June, 2018

Inspectors:
Miss Sarah Adams
Mrs. Helen Brown

Context of School

St Catherine's is a smaller than average-sized primary school serving the parish of Bridport, Chideock and Beaminster. It is part of the Plymouth Catholic Schools Trust which was formed in April 2014. The current Head Teacher has been in post for 7 years and was also executive Head Teacher of this school and St. Mary's Axminster for one year 2016-2017. Staffing has generally been stable in this time.

Context Data

NOR: 185 Girls: 91 Boys: 94

Number children with a statement of special needs is 6 with 19.5% on the SEN register. 8% of children receive free school meals, 10.8% are identified for Pupil Premium and 1% of children identified as EAL.

Over-All Effectiveness:	RI	Grade 3
The School as a Catholic Community:	Outstanding	Grade 1
Leadership and Management:	RI	Grade 3
Word (Curriculum RE)	RI	Grade 3
Worship and Spiritual Life of the School	Outstanding	Grade 1

Summary of Key Findings

St. Catherine's is a Catholic school which **Requires Improvement**

The school has the following strengths:

1. St. Catherine's is an inclusive and welcoming school, striving to live out its Mission and vision as a Catholic school. There is much evidence to show that this school really tries to live out its mission to 'live, love and learn together'
2. Gospel values permeate the life of the school and are lived out in all aspects of school life.
3. Relationships within the school community are highly positive and contribute to the ethos of the school in many ways. Children like their school and are happy at St. Catherine's. They feel safe and well-cared for. Adults speak positively of the support they offer to one another.
4. The Head Teacher is passionate about the school and serves it with humility and compassion. She recognises that they are on a journey and that teaching and learning is not yet where they wish it to be. She is willing to accept challenge and is open to the support that she needs to bring about change. Her leadership is reflective of the model which Christ offers us.
5. The RE Leader has been exceptionally effective in the work she has done to develop the Catholic life of the school. She has been the driving force behind a number of initiatives, most notably the nurture breakfasts. In addition her work, supported by the Head Teacher and the staff, has enabled the liturgical life of the school to flourish.

6. There is a high level of openness and willingness to ensure that all members of the immediate and wider community feel welcomed.
7. Induction is a strength of the school with all new teachers being supported to develop their skills, embrace the Catholic nature of the school and receive appropriate training.
8. Pastoral Care in the school is outstanding. There is a genuine commitment on the part of all adults to see the unique potential of every child. In particular, vulnerable children receive excellent care and attention. The Sendco and ELSA lead practitioner are highly effective in identifying the needs of children and putting in place appropriate courses of action to ensure that such children are kept at the fore-front of people's minds.
9. Pupils from a wide range of groups have a strong voice in decisions relating to their well-being. Their involvement in the school and their interactions with the wider community are substantial and valued. An example of this would be the Nurture Breakfasts which encourage parishioners to engage with the children within the school in a relaxed and informal manner.
10. All aspects of school life contribute to the spiritual development of pupils. They are open to God's presence in all that they encounter.
11. The school's relationship with the parish is excellent. Strong links ensure that both the parish and the school have a sense of being a part of each other. This relationship has been enhanced by the establishment of a Catholic Community Group (CCG) made up of parents, parishioners and the RE governor. This group is particularly supportive of the RE leader and Catholic life of the school.
12. The excellent school liturgies and worship opportunities enable pupils, staff, parents and carers to reflect on and be grateful for the gifts they have received from God.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

1. Ensure that curriculum RE has a high status in the school, is time-tabled appropriately for each year group and meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference of 10% teaching time.
2. Establish high expectations with regard to RE and put in place a clear monitoring system so that senior leaders ensure that all teachers are supported to teach effectively and then held to account.
3. In light of the current RE leader leaving, consider identifying a new RE Co-ordinator to focus on the teaching and learning of RE with an additional person who can oversee the Catholic Life and Worship.
4. For the subject leader to have training and support to develop the capacity to challenge and when necessary be able to have difficult conversations.
5. Provide a programme of support to ensure that all teachers and those new to the school feel confident to deliver engaging and challenging lessons in RE.
6. Develop assessment in line with Diocesan and National guidelines so that teachers understand the framework for assessment and the expectations these hold for teaching and learning outcomes.
7. For Governors to continue in their work of supporting the school and be clear about the need to challenge effectively and rigorously.
8. For children to be supported to start to learn the skills of preparing and delivering small acts of worship.

FULL REPORT

THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Outstanding

- St. Catherine's is a warm, welcoming and caring community. Service to all lies at the heart of the school and a deep desire to nurture the needs of the children is evident throughout the school.
- A commitment to living Gospel values is tangible. Compassion, forgiveness, a willingness to listen and kindness permeate the life of the school.
- The school celebrates diversity and places the promotion of equality at the heart of all its work. Most notable is the care and attention given to the vulnerable members of the community. The school's ELSA lead and the SENDCo work hard to ensure that all children have their needs met. They understand the issues and through careful analysis of information, provide the most appropriate support packages for each child so that they can settle and participate fully in the life of the school. Pastoral care throughout the school is outstanding. Teachers and teaching assistants respond well to the different emotional and social needs of the children. The atmosphere around the school is calm, purposeful and respectful.
- Behaviour around the school is excellent. Children like their school and respect the adults. They are polite, courteous and friendly.
- Children feel very positive about how they are treated and have a genuine faith in the adults to keep them safe and looked after. They are happy and appreciate the clear expectations that staff have of them. Equally they believe that they have a strong voice and that adults listen to their views and ideas.
- Children are helped to appreciate the needs of others and enthusiastically look for opportunities to support the needs of others. In particular they have embraced Mary's Meals, CAFOD and Mission Together.
- As part of being a welcoming school, St. Catherine's has made induction a strength of the school. New teachers speak positively about their experience of being welcomed into the school and the on-going support they have received to embrace the Catholicity of the school.
- The school embraces the love of Christ by promoting strong partnerships. These include developing positive relationships with parents, engaging with the parish in a meaningful way and encouraging parents to feel confident about asking for support with their children.
- The schools' commitment to supporting the wider community enabled the Head Teacher to respond to a request to support another CAST school when it was left without a Head Teacher and struggling. The generosity of the staff at St. Catherine's to take on additional work to support this reflects their genuine desire to be a people who serve the Common Good.
- Many comments from parents and visitors reflect the commitment the school has to openness and being a truly welcoming school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Requires Improvement

- The leadership of the school role models a positive Christian ethos which others within the community follow but in terms of teaching and learning there lacks a deep understanding of what this looks like in its fullness.
 - The Head Teacher and other senior leaders are motivated to bring about improvements. In terms of RE these need to ensure that high expectations are focused on teachers delivering effective, engaging and challenging lessons.
 - Currently verbal feedback is the main forum following any form of monitoring. This means that it is difficult to hold people to account and provide suitable support for ensuring progress. Monitoring of the different areas of RE (book scrutiny, lesson observation, working walls etc.) needs to be rigorous, set clear targets and be followed up on a consistent basis. It is important that this is recorded so that recommendations are followed up.
 - The RE action plan needs to be incorporated into the whole school action plan so that areas for development are seen as part of the whole picture.
 - Governors are a visible presence in the school on a regular basis. However, their understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, particularly in relation to the teaching and learning in RE, is limited. This needs to become a priority with pertinent questions being asked so that they can challenge effectively and appropriately.
 - Support for those responsible for curriculum development and the implementation of new ideas will be key to ensuring that the school moves forward.
 - Staff are highly positive and supportive of the Head Teacher. They recognise the demands on her and are willing and able to respond to the need for self-evaluation, searching analysis and monitoring. They care enough about the school to work with her to bring about the necessary changes.
 - The school has excellent relationships with the wider community. School and parish links have developed significantly since the Head Teacher took up her post and have been maximised by the support of the governors and the RE leader. The Parish Priest is a much-loved member of the community and children value and appreciate his presence in and around the school.
-

THE SCHOOL AS A TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMUNITY

REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT

- Teachers and support staff have excellent relationships with children. They engage positively with them and encourage them to do well.
- Children enjoy their RE and talk positively about their lessons. However, they can struggle to articulate what it is they do in RE. Most lessons ensure that children are consistently on task but the range of activities is mixed and too frequently insufficiently challenging. As a result in some lessons children are not given the opportunity to shine or achieve to their potential.

- Most classes are close to giving the children their 10% entitlement for RE. However, the organisation of lessons means that some children receive all their RE at one time in the week. In others, lessons are bunched together at one end of the week. This reveals a lack of appreciation of the importance of RE in a Catholic school and how children learn best. Spreading lessons across a week allows children to assimilate knowledge and make sense of their learning over time.
- Working walls in classrooms are being used in some lessons to support learning. Most show evidence of the learning journey and are engaging for children. However, in other rooms RE displays take the place of learning walls and whilst these enhance the environment they do not necessarily support the learning.
- Some teachers work hard to deliver engaging and paced lessons which ensure that children make progress. Differentiation is evident in these lessons and, as a consequence, this provides children with opportunities to achieve at greater depth. However, 50% of lessons observed did not do this. In these lessons the pace was often too slow, there was a lack of differentiation, the work was not challenging and there was little opportunity for children to develop their thinking and application of concepts.
- Not all teachers mark consistently with sufficient effectiveness. Marking of literacy instead of RE is to be seen in some books. Presentation and quantity of work is missing in other books. However, where there is effective marking it is because teachers are engaging with children, seeing how they can challenge them and it is focused on RE not literacy. Teachers need to ensure that religious language and theology is marked and children given the opportunity to extend their thinking.
- Most teachers are using the teaching resources from the Diocese. Some use these very effectively but others are not adapting these sufficiently to meet the needs of their own children or their own teaching style. A lack of understanding of some of the theological concepts causes teachers to be confused and anxious about what they are teaching. Although this is a supportive community of teachers where people feel they can ask questions, some more in-depth training prior to the teaching of units would be advantageous if teachers are to deliver effectively. Ensuring that all teachers are supported to be confident about the theology they are teaching is essential. Equally teachers need to take responsibility for seeking guidance in areas which they feel insecure.
- Many of the lessons observed showed teachers focusing on Attainment Target 2 (learning from religion) but an insufficient knowledge of the subject matter made this difficult for children to engage at any depth.
- Monitoring of RE is not yet sufficiently embedded to ensure that teachers know how they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Teachers need to be given clear messages about their strengths and areas for development so that they can adapt their teaching to meet the needs of the children.
- Assessment for learning (AFL) is not a strength. In order for lessons to be effective and challenge all children, differentiation based on AFL needs to be embedded.
- Teaching assistants work supportively to enable children with particular needs to access lessons and stay on task.

THE SCHOOL AS A CELEBRATING COMMUNITY (WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT)

Outstanding

- All aspects of school life at St. Catherine's contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. They are open to God's presence in all that they encounter.
 - At the heart of the school is the concept of nurture, lived out in a variety of ways but specifically by every class participating in a nurture breakfast at least twice a year. Croissants, drinks and specially laid tables form the basis of these occasions to which parishioners are invited to share with the children – a class at a time. These have been immensely successful and have led also to providing opportunities to speak about the Catholic life of the school. Children, staff and visitors value these occasions very much.
 - With such a strong relationship between the school and the parish the means to engage with the traditions and practices of the Catholic Church, provides a positive context for all aspects of school life. They enrich worship and promote spiritual and liturgical development of all the community.
 - The weekly programme of liturgies and prayer times offer staff and pupils a variety of experiences to engage in meditation, contemplative prayer, ritual and a variety of experiences which are supported by the local and the CCG.
 - Worship is inspirational. Children speak positively about the experiences they are offered. They speak of liking to sing all the songs, reflect on God's word, how they can apply the Gospel to their life and having time for silence.
 - Care with resources and focal points contribute to pupils' awareness of the sacred and create a spiritual atmosphere.
 - Scripture is at the heart of prayer and its relevance is understood by children and adults alike.
 - All members of the community pray together and it is heartening to see an increasing number of parents and parishioners participating in opportunities for prayer.
 - The school's liturgies enable the children and adults to reflect on and be grateful for the gifts they have received from God.
 - Year Five had been given the opportunity to have a retreat day at a local independent school. This was a positive experience and one which it is hoped can be developed.
 - Throughout the school artefacts, classroom focal points and displays in common areas point to the fact that this is a Catholic School. As a result children are proud of their school and believe that its ethos helps them to grow as people. Children know the difference between right and wrong and act with a sense of justice when difficulties arise.
 - Pupils relate worship to their everyday lives and are sensitive to the needs and beliefs of others. They can talk about why they choose to support one another and how important it is to live the Gospel in their local community and further afield.
-

Conclusion

St. Catherine's has many positive attributes and is a school with much to offer the local community. It has a strong vision and is rooted in the Gospel. The need to develop the academic side of the school's life is understood by all. Once this happens, St. Catherine's will be able to say that it lives the Mission of the Church in all its fullness. The school should be proud of what it has achieved and feel confident about its capacity to move forward and embrace this latest challenge.

Sarah Adams

Helen Brown