

**DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH**  
**VICARIATE FOR FORMATION**



St. Catherine's Catholic Primary School  
Pyemore Road,  
Bridport,  
DT63TR

**URN 113823**

Head Teacher: Mrs Frances Guppy  
Chair of Governors: Mrs Ethna Jenkins

**S48 INSPECTION**  
**July 2013**

## **Introduction**

St. Catherine's was inspected by Ofsted in June 2013 and was judged to be a good school. The Diocesan Section 48 inspection identified the key strengths of St. Catherine's School and also identified areas of focus required to further strengthen the life and work of the school.

The inspection was conducted by Sarah Adams (Diocesan RE Adviser for Schools) working closely with the Headteacher, and the governors. The outcomes of the inspection are based on the following areas:

- documentation made available in school;
- scrutiny of pupils' work;
- observation of lessons;
- discussion with the RE Co-ordinator
- meeting with the School Council which has pupils representing all ages within the school;
- meeting with the Parish Priest
- Meeting with the RE governor who is also the chair of governors and two other governors.
- participation in a whole school celebration assembly
- Participation in a year 1 class Act of Worship
- Meeting with the Head Teacher

## **Key Findings**

St. Catherine's is an effective Catholic school with a clear sense of vision rooted in the values of the Gospel.

- The leadership team is committed to the school's Catholic ethos and to ensuring high standards in all areas of the school's life.
- Teachers have embraced a new strategy for teaching RE and have high expectations of the children. Lessons are engaging and interesting.
- The liturgical life of the school is growing and the adults are growing in their own confidence to offer children rich and meaningful spiritual experiences.
- Children speak highly of the pastoral care within the school and feel safe and happy at St. Catherine's.

## **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.

- Teaching and learning in RE is developing well. It will be enhanced by ensuring that there is a clear on-going programme for staff on how to plan for a topic and formation in their own knowledge and understanding of scripture and other theological concepts present in topics.
- Ensuring that marking is consistent and focused on how children move on in their learning.
- The development of a Catholic Ethos team to support the RE Leader in her work and to develop further the Catholic life of the school and in particular its liturgical life so that children are developing their skills to prepare and lead liturgy.

## **Context for the Inspection**

St Catherine's is a smaller than average-sized primary school with mainly white British children. Although the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding) is below the national average the proportion of pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. Over the last few years there has been and continues to be a steady increase in the number of children attending the school.

## **Leadership and Management**

St. Catherine's has seen a considerable number of staff changes since the last S48 in 2009, including a number of changes in leadership and management. The current Head was appointed as acting Head in September 2010 and took up the permanent position in March 2011.

- The appointment of the current Head to the school has brought with it a new energy and commitment to providing a rich and focused school experience for the children who attend St. Catherine's.
- High standards and expectations, coupled with a deep commitment to the Catholic life of the school have lifted its profile and make it an attractive and sought after school for families in the area.
- With the addition of two assistant Heads the leadership team is growing into a strong and dynamic entity committed to raising standards and ensuring that the needs of all children are catered for.
- St. Catherine's has a strong governing body, committed to ensuring that they offer appropriate support to the leadership team and clear about the way forward.

- The support of the Parish Priest is strong and links with the Parish community are growing. Children enjoy seeing the Parish Priest when he visits the school, which he does regularly.

## **Religious Life**

- After a long period without a Catholic Head Teacher, the school is now becoming a confidently faith orientated community. Children understand their school mission statement, 'Live, Learn and Love Together' as a reflection on the Gospel and life of Christ.
- Children in the school respond well to opportunities to pray and sing to God. They have a respectful capacity to be still and reflective. They sing with enthusiasm and join in with prayers confidently.
- Throughout the school there is a greater sense of its religious life. Artefacts, particularly those created by the children are evident throughout. These speak creatively of the ethos of the school. An example would be the way some children spoke with enthusiasm about the images of Mary that had been created by children from reception. Topic work is displayed in all the classrooms and is alive and engaging.
- Mass is celebrated regularly in the school and children also go to Mass in the parish. The parish priest is very committed to helping the children understand what is happening at Mass so that it is a meaningful experience for them.
- Engaging with variety of prayer styles is encouraged within the classroom and can be linked with RE topic work or PHSE. The presence of a class prayer book full of prayers written by the children is a rich reflection of the children's capacity to express their needs and the needs of others.
- Through the prayer life of the school the children are developing their capacity to appreciate the needs of others and have a commitment to reaching out to those in need. The children were very keen to show what they have been doing to support UNICEF through a variety of charitable activities.

## **Teaching in RE**

- Children speak positively about their RE lessons. They describe them as fun and interesting and they learn 'a lot'.
- Of the lessons observed it was clear that teachers are employing a variety of tools to engage children and develop their learning. When they do not do this children can become dis-engaged and do not respond as well as they might.
- The employment of appropriate building blocks allows most children to make progress and in particular it was evident that children were developing their capacity to learn from and respond to the teaching. For example in one lesson following a lesson on marriage vows, the children were able to consider and reflect upon the reality of marriage and what it might take to make a marriage

work or not. They showed empathy and a deepening appreciation of what is important in a relationship.

- Attainment is progressing in RE because of the attention that is being given to planning and efforts to differentiate appropriately. Further work in the area of target setting will enhance this progress.
- Differentiation in RE is a challenge for the teachers but it is clear that this is being thought about. With further training the confidence of teachers is likely to result in more effective learning and progress.
- All teachers observed were clear about their expectations for behaviour and learning outcomes. They had positive routines and children responded quickly to what was asked of them.

### **Pastoral Life of the School**

- St. Catherine's is a warm and friendly school where children feel safe and well-cared for.
- Children believe that on the whole bullying is not an issue but if and when it arises the adults in the school respond well to the situation and deal with it.
- Adults and children respect one another and for the most part children behave well. They are polite and courteous and very keen to show off their school.
- The school is very committed to reaching out to the local and wider community. They engage in many charitable events and enjoy thinking up new and exciting ideas to raise money for those in need.
- The school has excellent grounds and the children appreciate the opportunities they have for gardening, swimming (the school has its own pool) and other activities which foster positive and creative relationships between adults and children.

### **Conclusion**

St. Catherine's is a school with enormous potential and one that is making tremendous progress. The drive and vision of the Head Teacher has brought confidence and a sense of purpose to the school. Her hard work is paying off and although there is still work to be done there is no sense that either the governors, the Head Teacher or the SLT will shirk from this responsibility. St. Catherine's is a school where children are happy and proud to say that this is their school. The Parish in its turn can be proud of its school. It is a credit to the Diocese.

Sarah Adams  
July 2013