



**DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION
REPORT**
(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

on

**THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL
AND
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

School: St. Charles' Catholic Primary School

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School URN: 120212

Headteacher: Mrs Frances Smith

Chair of Governors: Mr Tony Foster

Inspector: Mrs Jane Monaghan

Date of Inspection: 15 January 2014

INTRODUCTION

The inspection of this school was carried out on behalf of the Bishop of Nottingham under Canon 806 of Canon Law and Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in accordance with the Diocese of Nottingham Schedule for Section 48 Inspections. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. The process begins with the school's own self-evaluation and the inspection schedule is in line with the criteria set by the National Board of Religious Inspectors and Advisers (NBRIA).

During the inspection, the inspector observed 5 Religious Education lessons and 1 Act of Collective Worship.

Meetings were held with the headteacher and senior leadership team including the subject leader for Religious Education, the chair of governors and the parish priest. Discussions were also held with pupils and parents.

The inspector scrutinised a range of documents including the school improvement plan, Religious Education assessment information, monitoring information and the Religious Education subject leader's files. The inspector also scrutinised work in pupils' Religious Education books.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than the averaged sized primary school serving the parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, Ashby de la Zouch and St. Charles Borromeo, Measham. 69% of pupils are baptised Catholic, 23% are from other Christian denominations, 3% are from other world faiths and 5% have no religious affiliation. The school population is mainly White British with a third of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has doubled in the last two years and is now in line with the national average. The majority of these pupils are from Eastern European backgrounds.

The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. This is additional funding provided to schools for children in the care of the local authority, those children known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups. There are currently no children who are looked after by the local authority.

The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average.

INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

2

CATHOLIC LIFE

1

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

2

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

KEY FINDINGS

- St. Charles' is a good Catholic school where the sharing of its Catholic mission and vision is seen as a priority by staff, pupils and governors.
- The Catholic Life of the school is outstanding.
- Pupils' academic, spiritual, moral and social skills are developed effectively by the headteacher and the senior leadership team.
- Pupils are developing an awareness of the impact that their faith has in their lives and those of others. They make a strong contribution to the school's ethos and its mission.
- Collective Worship is central to school life, is appreciated by pupils and staff alike and as such is good.
- The headteacher and the subject leader for Religious Education are good role models and provide good leadership for all, leading to the effective delivery of Collective Worship.
- Religious Education is good overall. Pupils achieve good standards in Religious Education by the end of each key stage. Given their low starting points on entry, pupils make at least good progress in Religious Education. The majority of teaching is good with some outstanding practice. Greater familiarity with and understanding of the requirements set out in the 'Levels of Attainment' document will ensure that all teaching is challenging. The senior leadership team has a good overview of the school's strengths and areas for development.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- To ensure that all teaching in Religious Education is least good by continuing to develop a regular programme of robust monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice.
 - To ensure that Religious Education objectives are fully reflected in the learning activities for pupils so that misconceptions are avoided and learning is cohesive.
 - To build the confidence levels of staff in using the 'driver words' as a vehicle for assessment for learning so that pupils' learning is accelerated further.
 - Through careful planning, to ensure that whole school Acts of Collective Worship are pitched at the correct level to engage the youngest learners through to those in upper Key Stage 2.
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CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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Pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school to an outstanding level. They do this because the school's mission and ethos is tangible and central to all undertakings both in school and increasingly in the parishes it serves. Pupils speak highly of their school. They have a strong sense of belonging and they are keen to promote St. Charles' in the parishes and wider community. Good behaviour of pupils and openness to reach out to others less fortunate than themselves enhances the Catholic Life of the school even further. The majority of pupils feel well supported by staff and the headteacher which impacts greatly on their confidence and security. Pupils can articulate what makes their school special: 'we care for everyone and we pray for everyone', 'it's like a big family', were some of the positive comments given by them. They treasure the outward signs of St. Charles' Catholic identity. The school engages with diocesan celebrations and is a presence at diocesan functions.

The school's mission statement reflects fully the educational mission of the Church. Thoughtful activities are provided for the pupils to help them understand the sentiments expressed in the mission statement, this results in the school community having ownership of it. Morale at all levels is high, policies and structures are in place and pastoral care for all groups of pupils is a high priority. The school works hard in providing pastoral support for staff. Well thought out mentoring systems are in place and the headteacher and senior leadership team are excellent at communicating the school's high expectations. Behaviour policies reflect the mission statement, they emphasise personal responsibility which in turn impacts on the school community as a whole.

Leaders and managers are fully and enthusiastically committed to the mission of the Church, they are good role models and influential in promoting the Catholic ethos of the school. Governors are increasingly involved in monitoring and evaluating activities relating to the Catholic Life of the school. They have a good grasp of the school's areas for development and they celebrate its strengths, thereby discharging their duties effectively. Leaders seek the views of parents systematically. Parents and grandparents reported, 'my child/grandchild loves coming to school, I have no worries about it', another group of parents said their children are very settled in St. Charles' with one commenting, 'I pray my baby can come here too'. Parents feel proud that their children can attend this school.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

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The majority of pupils respond to Collective Worship with confidence, they prepare and lead Acts of Collective Worship to a good standard. Evidence shows that this is an integral part of school practice. However, when planning a whole school liturgy, consideration needs to be given to the needs of both younger and upper Key Stage 2 pupils so that all can participate appropriately. Pupils are skilled in the use of scripture and can choose artefacts and appropriate music to enhance their liturgies. They regard prayer as very much part of their day and they treasure these opportunities.

At most school celebrations prayer plays a pivotal part involving pupils, staff and the local community. Parents appreciate the invitation to participate and enjoy joining their children at school liturgies. Acts of Collective Worship are thoroughly resourced and planned. Staff are becoming increasingly adept in leading and encouraging pupils to plan good quality experiences. Pupils speak about the elements of liturgy and it is evident that they are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding in this area. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for prayer. The travelling crib, prayer bags, homework diaries and sharing the Rosary in the prayer garden are among some examples of instances where children can express themselves through prayer. The impact of all of this provision leads to a growing, worshipping community where all are included.

Leadership at all levels have a good knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship. The Religious Education subject leader, although new to the post, has embraced this element of her role whole-heartedly, ensuring that it has a high priority in school development. Professional development in the area of Collective Worship is a prime focus, staff undertake formation and this impacts both in their confidence to deliver and in pupils receiving good quality experiences. Another priority is to seek the views of parents regarding their involvement in Collective Worship. Leaders, including the recently appointed parish priest are a visible presence in the school. The parish priest, headteacher and senior leadership team work collaboratively to ensure that Collective Worship is an integral part of school life. Ambitious but achievable plans are in place to build on the existing good links between home, school and parish.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers (including governors) monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

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Pupils enjoy Religious Education and value it as they do other subjects. The majority of pupils work diligently in lessons and apply themselves well. In isolated pockets of the school where this is not the case, it is being addressed by senior colleagues. Behaviour for learning is good and in upper Key Stage 2 outstanding. The progress of pupils overall is good with some groups making better progress than other pupils in the diocese given their starting points. Progress for the majority of the youngest pupils is good. In lessons deemed to be good or outstanding, pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding quickly, they are secure in their learning and they work with increasing independence. Where standards of attainment are below diocesan averages this is being monitored closely with efforts being made to close the gap.

Teaching in Religious Education is mainly good with some examples of outstanding practice. Where teaching is less than good, systems are in place to address this. Teachers have a clear understanding of the value of Religious Education as a core subject and this impacts positively on pupils. The majority of teachers have a high level of expertise which they use confidently in planning and teaching Religious Education. This now needs to be shared across the school so that all staff are fully aware of the use of 'driver words' within planning and how these relate to the 'Levels of Attainment' document. In upper Key Stage 2, planned activities involving research of the Dead Sea Scrolls was particularly effective for the pupils, they were thoroughly engaged and enthusiastic. Similar practice was evident in early Key Stage 1 where pupils were engaged in learning about the 'Feeding of the Five Thousand'. The majority of teachers check pupils' understanding throughout lessons by sharing the Religious Education objectives effectively although care should be taken to ensure that learning activities relate clearly to objectives for Religious Education at all times. Tasks are differentiated to meet the needs of groups of pupils, regular marking and constructive feedback from the majority of teachers impacts on pupils knowing what they have done well and where they need to improve. However, greater consistency of this process in all year groups will move pupils' learning on even further. Peer assessment is developing across the key stages and pupils' effort and achievement are celebrated regularly.

A range of monitoring activities led by colleagues from the leadership team are in place. Governors are gaining in understanding in this area of the school's work resulting in the ability to identify the school's strengths and areas for development in Religious Education. The senior leadership team is well informed about current developments in Religious Education, they effectively disseminate this to staff which in turn impacts on classroom delivery. There are robust systems for mentoring in place to address any under-performance regarding quality of teaching. The shared common approach to Religious

Education and good leadership for the subject ensures that pupils' moral and spiritual development is high profile with an increasing awareness of vocation. The school welcomes the presence of outside agencies including the wider community and parishes. The involvement of the parish deacon is much appreciated. Pupils gain first-hand experience of the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. However, in order to allocate the appropriate time to the study of curriculum Religious Education and other core subjects, sacramental preparation with parish involvement should take place outside of the timetabled school day – this must be addressed as a matter of urgency. Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in almost every respect.

WHAT INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS MEAN

Within the report, the following grades are used:

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

In the context of the whole school, the overall effectiveness grades have the following meaning:

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| Grade 1 | Outstanding | The school is a highly effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are exceptionally well met. |
| Grade 2 | Good | The school is an effective Catholic school. Pupils' needs are met well. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | The school is not yet a good Catholic school, it is not inadequate however, there are aspects that require improvement. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | There are features in need of urgent and immediate attention. The school is not meeting the basic minimum requirement for adequacy. The school will receive a monitoring visit within twelve months. |

