



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Greys Hill, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 1SL

Inspection dates:

10-11 February 2020

Lead Inspector:

Ben McArdle

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Good

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- The commitment of all stakeholders to the headteacher's vision for the school is strong. Staff, pupils and parents work together to continue the development of the school's Catholic Life.
- There is a genuine commitment to sharing the Gospel.
- Teachers plan lessons that are always at least good. As a result, pupils' attainment in Religious Education is very high and most pupils make good progress.
- Pupils display deep reverence when praying. Through being still and reflective, they create effective prayerful environments.
- Parents are well engaged in the Catholic Life of the school. They embrace invitations to attend key events and their feedback is regularly sought by school leaders.
- The support provided by the parish priest contributes significantly to the development of Collective Worship and is treasured by members of staff.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- The development of Catholic Life is led almost exclusively by adults.
- Pupils who are above average ability in Religious Education are not always given the opportunity to attain more challenging assessment objectives.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other religions and faiths is limited.
- Opportunities for pupils to prepare and lead acts of Collective Worship are infrequent.

FULL REPORT**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Enable pupils to contribute to the evaluation of Catholic Life in a planned and systematic way and to lead aspects of its improvement planning.
- Consistently plan for greater challenge in Religious Education, particularly for those pupils who are more able.
- Deepen pupils' knowledge of, and respect for, people of other faiths and religions.
- Equip pupils with the knowledge and skills necessary for them to routinely plan and lead creative acts of Collective Worship.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

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**

- Most pupils understand the mission statement, 'To grow in wisdom and in grace'. They are able to explain what this means and why it is important. As such, most pupils understand that through learning, they get to share in God's love and have a responsibility to share it with others.
- Staff wholeheartedly support the mission of the school. They are enthusiastic and dynamic in the way they embrace school life and challenge the pupils to make the most of every opportunity.
- Pupils are afforded opportunities to actively participate in the mission of the school through initiatives such as the buddy system and fundraising activities. They grow in wisdom and knowledge through becoming librarians and the office prefect system. Consequently, the mission is something that is lived and experienced by all.
- Because pupils have a firm understanding of right and wrong, they are clear about the school's expectations regarding their behaviour and readily meet them.
- Leadership opportunities for Catholic Life come predominantly through the school council. Members contribute significantly to decision about charity and outreach work. Opportunities to raise money in response to international crises and instigating a formal partnership with a local dementia care home see pupil leadership come to the fore. The school council has also contributed to improving the condition of the school site through the construction of a new pathway.
- Pupils are acutely aware of the need to work towards the common good and view this as important because, "by being less selfish, you become a better person". They show respect for themselves and each other, particularly during lesson time. However, when explaining their motivations for looking out for the needs of others, they do not always demonstrate awareness of Jesus' command for us to do so.

- Pupils' response to chaplaincy is encouraging and new opportunities have recently been introduced. For example, Year 6 pupils go on retreat to Stonor House, which is a successful initiative introduced by the parish priest. Pupils enjoy this experience and gave positive feedback to school leaders about the impact it had on them.
- The provision of chaplaincy is outstanding in supporting the Catholic Life of the school. The parish priest is a frequent and treasured member of the community who visits the school regularly to guide people on their development. He is an asset to the school.
- The level of pastoral care provided to pupils is outstanding. There is an explicit and concrete commitment to ensuring that all pupils, as God's creations, are loved and cared for. As a result, the school is a community in which all pupils can thrive. This care has an inclusive approach; pupils with additional needs are well provided for with personalised support and are embraced by their peers.
- The highest regard is paid to the pastoral needs of all members of staff. There is a strong feeling of community and effective working relationships exist between colleagues at all levels. Staff value the care and attention of senior leaders and, as a result, they thrive in their work. This contributes significantly to a happy working atmosphere.
- Staff are good role models for pupils in terms of behaviour and relationships. They always emulate the standards of behaviour they want from pupils. This approach to role modelling is consistent amongst all staff. During the inspection, an inspector witnessed a fantastic example of relationship restoration, in which a member of staff facilitated a restorative conversation between two pupils who had upset one another. As a result of her skilled intervention, the two pupils restored their relationship by focusing on forgiveness and reconciliation.
- Because relationships and sex education (RSE) is taught firmly within the context of the Church's teachings, pupils are secure in their understanding of the need to respect the dignity of the human person.
- Pupils have an awareness of vocation and are enabled to reflect on the concept that God calls people to particular tasks. However, this awareness is often limited to ordained and religious vocations. Staff should now work to widen pupils' understanding of vocation as a calling from God to holiness, and to the mission of evangelising the world, by including a focus on lay vocations.
- Good links with the parish have been established, particularly through sacramental preparation and a monthly Mass in the parish (for which the school choir leads the singing). Consequently, the school and its pupils are well known in the local community and their contributions valued.
- There are visible signs and symbols around the school that demonstrate that Sacred Heart is a Catholic community. There is an expectation that classrooms display prayers and feature a well-maintained sacred space. Furthermore, shared key stage areas also display prayers and quality examples of work produced in Religious Education. Because of these, pupils are frequently reminded of the challenge to grow in wisdom and in grace.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social, vocational and cultural (SMSVC) development is afforded through incorporating Catholic Social Teaching across the whole curriculum. Rightfully, this is an area that leaders are currently evaluating so that further improvements can be made.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school

- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. The development of Catholic Life is viewed as a core leadership responsibility. The headteacher is a source of inspiration for pupils, staff and parents.
- Continual Professional Development (CPD) relating to Catholic Life is planned each year and staff are developing their understanding of it and all that it entails. However, more frequent opportunities for staff to deepen their understanding of Catholic Life would enable them to contribute towards the further enhancement of the school's provision in a more precise way.
- The monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life is planned at the start of each year, with different foci each half term. Therefore, leaders and governors are always aware of the impact of developments and use this knowledge to inform improvement planning. For example, recent monitoring resulted in the headteacher using assemblies to further educate pupils about the school's mission and the meaning of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- Governors are steadfast in their commitment to developing the Catholic Life of the school. It is of paramount importance to them and they are well informed of key initiatives that promote Catholic Life. They provide effective challenge and support, which is valued by senior leaders.
- Governors have identified the succession of Catholic teachers as a priority area for development and have strategies in place to address this need.
- The school works well to capture the views of parents and have built effective working relationships with them. Consequently, the school gathers many opinions, both in a planned, formalised way and more informally, which influences some decisions. For example, the parent teacher association has been rebranded and re-launched as Sacred Heart in Partnership (SHiP), whose key aim is to deepen the connection parents have with the school. This has resulted in each class having a parent representative.
- Senior leaders are taking action to ensure the school is ready to meet the new statutory legislation being introduced regarding RSE.
- Senior leaders, including governors, fully meet the bishops' requirements relating to Catholic Life.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education	Good

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- Pupils make very good progress in Religious Education throughout Early Years and Key Stage 1. Pupils generally start school with a low baseline knowledge of key religious facts, and teachers work well to ensure the majority of pupils meet or exceed expectations soon after they start school.
- The good progress made in Key Stage 1 is maintained into Key Stage 2.
- The attainment of pupils in Religious Education is excellent. High levels have been sustained over a period of time and are in line with other core subjects.
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education; during the inspection, the pupils frequently said it was their favourite subject. They appreciate the time they are given to reflect on the issues they study and to think about how these apply to their lives. Pupils are given appropriate time to complete their work and, as a result, their understanding of core concepts is sufficiently mature.
- The quality of work in pupils' books is at least good. Because class teachers manage their time well, written work is always completed, consequently pupils treat Religious Education with the integrity and respect that it commands as a core subject.
- Behaviour in Religious Education lessons is almost always excellent. Because teachers provide a wide variety of engaging tasks, and have high expectations, the vast majority of pupils remain focused on their work and are keen to complete work to the best of their ability.
- Class teachers consistently plan good lessons. Planning identifies key questions to ask pupils, which are designed to consolidate and extend their knowledge, though in practice these thoughtfully planned questions are not always asked.
- Teachers plan activities that are matched to the needs of pupils, using the *3-heart strategy*. This new approach is designed to enable pupils of all abilities to make progress each lesson by providing three tasks, each increasing in difficulty, for them to choose from. Whilst this strategy has improved outcomes in Religious Education, teachers need to ensure that tasks are planned against the assessment objectives of each unit of work. In particular, attention must be given to the activities designed for more able pupils, to ensure they are provided with the opportunity to meet the more challenging objectives.
- There is a clear vision for what teaching & learning in Religious Education should look like at Sacred Heart, and all teachers are delivering this to pupils.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and contributes well to pupils' own knowledge development.

- In some classes, knowledge of the Bible amongst pupils is not as strong as in others. As a result, there are times when pupils do not realise that key messages and historical events originate from scripture.
- Opportunities for pupils to be involved in evaluating how well they achieve in Religious Education are rare. Consequently, they are dependent on their teachers for informing them about their success and how to build on it.
- There is evidence of some outstanding teaching of Religious Education in the school. In these instances, teachers plan activities matched well to the needs of the pupils. They re-shape their questioning to test pupils' understanding before challenging them to meet the more demanding assessment objectives. When this happens, pupils have an acute awareness of what they need to do in order to make further progress.
- Resources are generally well designed to facilitate effective learning. However, sometimes resources do not meet the needs of all pupils and their success is determined by the length of the work they produce.
- Teaching assistants work extremely well to ensure that the Religious Education curriculum is fully accessible to pupils with special educational needs. As a result of their intervention, such pupils are fully engaged in their learning and are enabled to attain the learning objectives.
- Feedback provided by teachers enables pupils to reflect on how they can learn from religion by applying it to their own lives, as well as posing questions to consolidate knowledge. As a result, pupils are secure in their understanding of the importance of the topics they learn about.
- Teachers celebrate the success of pupils through the use of verbal affirmation and written feedback in their exercise books; the celebration of achievement is also a central feature of Friday assemblies. Pupils are well motivated because of their teachers' encouragement.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

- Religious Education fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales and the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop.
- Governors ensure that the Religious Education is comparable to other core subjects in terms of resourcing, staffing and status.
- Leaders, including governors, discharge their canonical duties towards Religious Education effectively.
- Self-evaluation is frequent and planned. As yet, the findings of monitoring activities do not always lead directly into improvement planning because the next steps are not always clearly identified. After evaluating the findings of monitoring activities, leaders should determine the actions that will be undertaken to further improve the school's provision and agree a timescale for their implementation.
- The subject leader is a valued member of staff who supports colleagues in their planning, offering bespoke support for their individual needs. She has very much fostered a collaborative team culture within the school in relation to Religious Education.
- The subject leader is committed to developing Religious Education and cascades important information back to staff. Although relatively new to post, her leadership is positively impacting the teaching of the subject in the school.
- Leaders need to analyse the progress of different groups of learners, to ensure that improvement planning is accurately targeting their needs.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship	Good
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	Good
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship	Good

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

- Prayer is a central feature of school life. Consequently, prayer contributes to the spiritual and moral development of all pupils.
- Pupils, regardless of their backgrounds, are very reverent during acts of worship. Their attitudes facilitate a genuine raising of the heart and mind to God, which all pupils are very mindful of.
- There has recently been a whole school focus on improving the preparations for the celebration of Mass. This is the main way pupils are involved in the leadership of prayer. An increase in teachers' knowledge of the requirements for Mass, coupled with a re-modelled approach to organising Mass, means that all pupils are involved in its organisation, including the writing of prayers, throughout the year. This is the main way pupils are involved in the leadership of Collective Worship.
- Opportunities for pupils to lead and plan other forms of prayer are in their infancy. Staff need to develop their personal confidence in teaching pupils how to lead prayer and then allow pupils the independence to plan their own liturgies.
- Pupils' enjoyment of Collective Worship is particularly demonstrated through their enthusiastic singing. Pupils respond well to the instruction of St Augustine, "he who sings, prays twice." As a result, a choir has been formed, which currently serves the local parish on a monthly basis. Their role in school could be even further increased.
- Collective Worship is clearly a regular, systematic part of school life. It has a clear purpose and senior leaders ensure that pupils always take away a challenge, so that they have the opportunity to apply the message of the worship to their own lives.
- Whole school acts of worship, including those which are part of assemblies, are particularly inspiring and engaging. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they are provided with and value their contribution to their personal spiritual development.
- Pupils respond well to the guided meditation opportunities their teachers provide. Because of teachers' abilities to create sacred spaces for prayer, pupils readily respond to the opportunities they are presented with. Pupils would further benefit from experiencing a wider range of prayers, including the use of scripture, religious artefacts, liturgical music and other forms of prayers - both traditional and contemporary.
- Although pupils do write their own prayers, which are sometimes displayed, they would benefit further from opportunities to participate in voluntary acts of worship.
- Because Collective Worship is planned against the liturgical year by leaders and the parish priest, pupils have a good understanding of the key seasons and feasts within of the Church.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship

- The headteacher is a strong and inspiring leader of prayer. She is a good role model for other staff and pupils.
- Senior leaders' understanding of the liturgical year is very secure. As a result, there is a natural rhythm of prayer within the school, which ensures that the worship of God is at the core of its work.
- Procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship are in place and impact positively on the school's practice. For example, as a result of evaluation, leaders reduced the number of Masses celebrated in school and engaged the parish priest in order to raise the standard of their preparation. Subsequent monitoring has identified an improvement in Mass preparation and the quality of pupils' responses.
- Governors are involved in the monitoring of Collective Worship through their regular attendance at key events and celebrations.
- The promotion of pupil leadership is mainly centred around the Mass and pupils using resources that teachers provide for them. This must now extend to class-based and voluntary acts of worship, in which pupils are enabled to design their own age-appropriate paraliturgies and lead them independently.
- Leaders ensure that the school engages with diocesan initiatives relating to Collective Worship. As a result, the school is fully compliant with the additional requirements of the diocesan bishop in this area.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	123204
Local authority	Oxfordshire
<i>This inspection was carried out under Canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Fitzpatrick
Headteacher	Rachel Gavin
Telephone number	01491 572796
Website address	www.sacredheart-henley.co.uk
Email address	office.3820@sacred-heart.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	April 2015

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- Sacred Heart Catholic Primary school is a smaller than average primary school serving the parish of The Church of the Sacred Heart in Henley-on-Thames.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 49.7%
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average.

- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is in line with the national average.
- Attainment on entry is average.
- Since the past inspection, a new headteacher and a new Religious Education subject leader have been appointed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors: Ben McArdle & Mary Daniels.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across six Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, parish priest and all teaching staff. Inspectors spoke to parents both in the playground before school and after the celebration of Mass.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, class based Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance data, the Inspection Data Summary Dashboard, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and pupils' exercise books.