



# DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

incorporating Section 48 and Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Southwark

URN 118771

St Richard's Catholic Primary School

Castle Avenue

Dover

CT16 1EZ

Inspection date: 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Chair of Governors: Mr Andy Rogers

Headteacher: Mr James Blomfield

Inspectors: Mr Stephen Beck

Mrs Shirley Hulme

## EDUCATION COMMISSION

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Director of Education: Dr Simon Hughes



### Key for inspection grades

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

## FULL REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Richard's Catholic Primary School is a one form entry primary academy within the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership becoming an academy within the partnership in October 2014. It is in the Dover Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The principal parishes which the school serves are The Good Shepherd (St Paul's Dover) and Our Lady of Dover, Buckland. Around 12% of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which is lower than the national figure. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds (42.1%) is higher than nationally. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) at 40.4% is significantly higher than the national average. The largest pupil groups are White British (56.4%) followed by any other White background (29.5%). The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities supported is 6.0% and is below the national average. There are currently two pupils supported through an Education Health and Care plan (EHCP). The school's deprivation indicator is in the highest quartile at 0.31.

The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages and the proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics has remained steady at 58%.

Publication Date 19th February 2019



## SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St Richard's is a good Catholic school because:

- Pupils, teachers and governors have created a set of key values that sum up what the school believes in. These have been designed to spell out the word 'enrich' with each initial letter defining a meaning; Education: To love *learning*, Nurture: To *care and protect*, Resilience: To *get back up*, Imagination: To *be creative*, Christ as our guide: To *follow Jesus* Healthy, in mind, body and spirit: To *look after our thoughts, our fitness and our beliefs*. These are understood and actively lived out by the school community.
- The subject leader for Religious Education and the headteacher are fully committed to providing high quality Religious Education. They are skilled practitioners who have high aspirations for all pupils.
- Acts of Worship are fully inclusive and it is clear that Collective Worship and prayer play a large part in the life of the school. Prayer areas in classrooms were evidently valued by pupils.
- The home-school-parish partnership is very strong. Innumerable parents commented on how happy their children were at St Richard's and as a result make good progress. Pastoral support for vulnerable pupils and their families is a priority and this is underpinned by excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Ensure that planning for Religious Education is a central part of the school's development work so that pupils have more opportunities to link their learning directly to scripture
- Provide opportunities for pupils to plan and lead Collective Worship on a regular basis.
- Develop the current strong school leadership to incorporate more opportunities for a distributive approach in Religious Education and thereby tap into the strengths of individual staff and secure succession planning for Religious Education.



## Overall Effectiveness

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

### Catholic Life

1

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

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

1

### Religious Education

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

2

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

2

### Collective Worship

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the schools' Collective Worship.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship.

2

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

2



## CATHOLIC LIFE

**The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding**

- Pupils are conscious of the part they have to play in living out the school's well understood Mission Statement 'Together towards excellence with Christ as our Guide', which is embedded in the approach taken by all members of the school community in their involvement in the life of the school.
- Pupils greatly benefit from the Catholic Life of the school. Christ is at the centre of the school community at St Richard's. Gospel values permeate through all school life. Pupils are at the heart of an embedded culture of care and concern promoted by governors, leaders and the whole staff team.
- Pastoral support for vulnerable pupils and their families is a priority; this is underpinned by excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. An example of this is the very wide range of clubs available to pupils.
- Pupils are proud to be part of St Richard's Catholic Primary School, are very well behaved, appreciative of the staff and are appreciative of all the opportunities they provide, including sport and music. Pupils are provided with opportunities to experience the awe and wonder of their surroundings in the Kent countryside through use of, and visits within, their local area.
- Pupils talk eagerly about how their understanding of religion helps them to make 'good' choices and about the need for forgiveness when good choices are not made. They treat others with respect and acknowledge that their behaviour always has consequences.
- Pupils are reflective and respectful of those with beliefs different to their own. They are well aware of the needs of other people and seek to support them, for example by fund raising for different charities both locally and internationally.
- The school has worked on developing opportunities for them to play an active part in planning and leading the liturgy in assemblies and Collective Worship. This is already showing an impact with pupils creating and leading assemblies with growing confidence. They have hands-on experience of designing their own liturgies in class Masses and special occasions. For example, they planned and led a special assembly to commemorate the life and work of Fr Peter, a former parish priest.
- Opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss ways forward for their faith in the school and ask, 'What are we doing well? What do we need to do to improve?' An example of this is pupil voice on Religious Education displays.
- The school has an active Spiritual Council that meets weekly and plans are in place to develop a 'Mini-Vinnies' group. The Spiritual Council look after the spiritual welfare of the school by monitoring prayer spaces. They take actions. For example, the Spiritual Council has been responsible for designing and decorating the new School Children's Chapel. They have also been involved in administering a £150 donation from the Dover Catenians group to furnish the chapel. The Spiritual Council do termly learning walks



to monitor Religious Education displays and prayer tables, giving verbal feedback to teachers. This enhances the outward reflection of faith within the school.

### **The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is good**

- It was recognised at the time of the last inspection that St Richard's had stabilised after an unsettled period and was flourishing under new leadership.
- It is commendable how the school has maintained an ethos of seeking ongoing improvement in order to secure the very best provision for pupils.
- The relatively new headteacher has done an excellent job in building on the school's strengths and its strong vision for Catholic education.
- The school's own self-evaluation, as outlined for this inspection, reflects a strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development that the inspectors have been able to validate. This would now benefit from more strategic and measurable aims and objectives.
- Within the school, a 'Faith Team' comprising of teachers and teaching assistants, has been set up to promote an ethos of togetherness and community. The Faith Team meet termly and enables staff to be involved in the celebration of faith throughout the school. They plan special religious events in school including Mass and liturgies, as well as the coordination of pupils at the Masses.
- The school celebrate the variety of cultures represented at the school and plan to extend this further.
- Links with both parishes are extremely good. The headteacher is an active participant at St Paul's and Our Lady of Buckland, singing in the choir as well as being a Eucharistic minister. As a result, many initiatives get shared with parishioners. For example, copies of Stations of the Cross illustrated and recorded by pupils are displayed in both parishes as well as around the school. The headteacher presented these after Masses and explained how parishioners could use their smart phones to scan and listen to the pupils reciting the prayers for each station.
- Members of the parish come up to the school to meet students who present and discuss their work with them. They are also invited to share their skills and talents in school. For example, a published writer came to teach a poetry class based around the values of the school.
- Teachers from St Richard's are collaborating with staff from *Sculoa Maria Ausiliatrice* – an international Catholic school in Rome. This facilitates the sharing of the school's Catholic faith and school values, as well as improving friendship across Europe.
- The headteacher is clearly steering the school forward and, together with the Religious Education leader, has established a consistency of approach to Religious Education. This is having an impact on pupils' outcomes. As this becomes embedded and opportunities for more devolved leadership evolves, curriculum provision will be further strengthened and will impact on the wider faith life of the school.
- As a parent wrote on their questionnaire return, *'I can see a tremendous improvement in the school with a developing Catholic ethos providing my child with greater exposure to religious experiences, good role models and experience of leadership'*. Another wrote, *'The school supports the children to develop their faith and understand the world through it. I am so grateful for the teaching my children receive as they are thriving and their christian beliefs are the pure food of their education'*.



### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is outstanding**

- The school has an extensive and innovative website that provides information about the school's Religious Education curriculum. It also reflects the school's strong Catholic ethos, celebrating the imaginative range of opportunities for pupils to experience life as part of an explicitly Catholic community.
- All leaders of the school community are committed to the school values and mission statement.
- To focus on these guiding principles, every pupil in the school has made a clay tile, under the direction of local artist (and former pupil) Frazer Doyle. The tiles will become part of a new frieze on the outside of the school.
- A designated Foundation Governor for Religious Education who is also the Parish Deacon and Vice-Chair of Governors makes regular visits to the school and meets with the headteacher, staff and subject leader. He has monitored Collective Worship and assemblies. The Catholic Life of the school is shared with all Governors and has recently been added as a regular agenda item within governor meetings.
- The headteacher is acutely aware that he is the only Catholic member of the school leadership team and as such strives to model and promote Catholic leadership which he does with great skill, as marked by the school's explicit Catholic ethos, which is expounded by all staff. This is further supported through close links that have been forged with other Catholic schools including Stella Maris and St Edmunds in order to further model Catholic leadership by establishing meetings between leadership teams.

Publication Date 19th February 2019



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is good

- The school uses the 'Come and See' Religious Education programme, which is in line with the Curriculum Directory of the Bishop's Conference. Teachers adapt plans to meet the needs of their pupils and differentiate appropriately. The school was part of the Diocesan new assessment pilot and teachers show an awareness of this when planning activities.
- The school conducts regular pupil voicing, conducted by the headteacher, Religious Education lead, Chair and Vice Chair of Governors who is the Religious Education link Governor. Pupils could now be provided with opportunities to take a more proactive role in these activities.
- This shows pupils have a positive attitude towards their learning and they report that they enjoy Religious Education. When discussing their work many demonstrate a good understanding of the Catholic faith and of the Mass. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their favourite lesson being Religious Education, which have interesting activities.
- Observations show that pupils are consistently engaged, attentive and articulate about their Religious Education. They enjoy the growing cross curricular approaches being used to engage them in Religious Education lessons, especially when using information and communication technology (ICT), Drama and Craft activities.
- Initial information about pupils' joining the Foundation Stage shows that many pupils have low knowledge or understanding of the Catholic faith or of its traditions.
- Inspectors concur with comments in a monitoring visit by a Diocesan Primary Schools' advisor that noted that books were of a good quality and that some activities are exciting and engaging, resulting in pupils enjoying their lessons and achieving good levels of progress.
- Most pupils continue to make good progress through the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and generally enter Key Stage 2 with their understanding in line with national expectations. This good progress is maintained in Key Stage 2 so that by the end of the Key Stage the attainment of most pupils in Religious Education is at least in line with national expectations.
- In order to sustain and build on current good levels of progress teachers should ensure ongoing external moderation takes place to maintain their secure and consistent judgements.

### The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is good.

- St Richard's takes a holistic approach to Religious Education that includes teaching, learning and regular prayer. They have successfully built a community of Faith, with the message and spirit of the Gospel permeating all aspects of school life.
- Most pupils enjoy Religious Education and can explain its value. They know it is a core subject. They are keen to do well, apply themselves diligently in lessons and work at a good pace.
- Behaviour for learning is excellent and is well managed by teachers.



- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported and are achieving well. Inspection findings show no notable difference between groups of learners and the school is working on the transition in level expectations across all Diocesan schools.
- Pupils are encouraged to think more deeply about their learning through reflective marking. The school is also introducing recorded audio feedback as a means to making feedback more accessible to pupils.
- Detailed assessment is carried out through work sampling of pupils at least once a term. Assessment judgements benefit greatly from moderation at school, deanery and Diocesan level, giving validity to the judgements. The remainder of the class are benchmarked against the focus pupils.
- The subject leader analyses attainment and progress at whole class and group level. This information is then used to inform action planning. Pupils' learning in Religious Education is formally reported to parents in annual reports.
- The quality of teaching in Religious Education in lessons observed, both according to school records and observations during the inspection, is consistently good. On the day of the inspection where the quality of learning was particularly strong, teachers reinforced the learning objectives throughout the course of the lesson. In a lesson on Baptism, for example, the teacher reinforced religious vocabulary linked to the objective. Religious artefacts were also well used for exemplification. An atmosphere of awe and wonder was created by references to being part of God's family and the family of St Richard's.
- In the strongest lessons, teachers skilfully used questions to extend pupils' learning, such as, when a pupil was asked, 'Why do people need to be baptised?' the teacher opened up the question to the class. This provided many very thoughtful and thought provoking answers.
- Questioning is differentiated, which allows pupils to contribute to their own understanding.
- Lessons are well planned and resourced with opportunities developing to ensure the needs of all pupils are met through the provision of more differentiated activities.
- Support staff are very well deployed and contribute significantly to the achievements of many pupils.
- Teaching would be further strengthened by increased teacher confidence in the more explicit use of scripture and opportunities to identify the links between scripture and what is being taught.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is good.**

- Leaders, governors and managers at all levels show a commitment to the Catholic Life of the school and ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each Key Stage, so that 10% of the curriculum time is devoted to Religious Education.
- The subject leader for Religious Education and the headteacher are fully committed to providing high quality Religious Education. They are skilled practitioners who have high aspirations for all pupils.
- The subject leader was on maternity leave at the time of the inspection. It was clear she has implemented systems and continues to manage her subject very effectively.



The headteacher is currently acting as the subject lead, and is maintaining Religious Education as an explicitly core subject. He has support from a Religious Education advisor as well as the network of Deanery and Tri-Deanery Religious Education meetings.

- The 'Come and See' programme is creatively integrated into the whole school curriculum and is enriched by a positive experience of faith in the wider Church and local community.
- Pupils and their families attend school led Masses in the parish and participate in a range of worship.
- The headteacher's skilful action planning and review, undertaken with senior staff, ensure that they have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. These are exemplified in the good school self-evaluation document provided for this inspection which identifies areas for development and demonstrates a clarity of vision for the future. Taken alongside the School Development Plan it is clear the subject is being well led and managed.
- Governors are well informed. They visit the school often and keenly challenge and hold leaders to account. They are very supportive of the school, but are also confident and questioning in their approach.

Publication Date 19th February 2019



## COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- The quality of Collective Worship is good. In the Act of Worship observed, most pupils responded with reverence, sang joyfully and were fully engaged.
- There are a variety of opportunities for prayer and worship in the school. The School Council have written their own Council prayer. There are designated prayer leaders in each class. Recently the prayer leaders in Reception class shared their class prayer and this has been used within whole school assemblies.
- Pupils say morning, lunch and afternoon prayers and recently Year 4 have introduced the *Angelus* reflecting the broad range of prayer known by pupils, both traditional and contemporary. They understand the value of prayers to their lives and identified opportunities provided for reflection.
- Pupils are encouraged to write their own prayers and there are prayer boxes in each class. During the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations pupils particularly enjoyed the outside Mass concelebrated by the Bishop.
- Acts of Worship are fully inclusive and it is clear that Collective Worship and prayer play a large part in the life of the school. Prayer areas in classrooms were evidently valued by pupils, but they are currently inconsistent in regard to expectations as to how they should be used.
- Pupils fully embrace opportunities for prayer in school, for example a Rosary club was well attended by pupils and because of the demand, the club has now been extended to include a club for other aspects of Collective Worship.
- High quality resources are used and the planned development of a prayer garden to enable worship outside, at the front of the school, will further enrich Collective Worship.

**The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Governors, priests, parents and teachers work in close co-operation to build up a worshipping community.
- Mass is celebrated numerous times throughout the school year. In addition, the school has introduced class Masses once a term.
- Rosary beads and cases have been bought for every pupil and member of staff in the school. These were distributed to each class by the Spiritual Council. Pupils and staff have become confident in saying the rosary and have become aware of the positive effects of saying the rosary.
- The school has a rota of 'prayer breakfasts' that has been devised to involve all staff (Catholic and non-Catholic) in raising spiritual awareness and reflection amongst staff. Each term a different class hosts the prayer breakfast before school.
- Pupils, staff, governors and parents speak positively about their experiences at Mass in school and other forms of Collective Worship. A parent felt that worship in school had *'really encouraged her in her faith'*. Another stated *'The school and teachers have exceeded my expectations in everything they do. I am really pleased to see how much*



*my child knows about the two parishes and the parish priests. I could not be happier I sent my child to St Richard's. They love school which offers such a welcoming environment'.*

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is good.**

- Leaders and governors place high priority on the school's Collective Worship. The school benefits from great support from both parishes. Fr. Jeff, Fr John and Deacon Barry are regular visitors to the school. They support teachers in planning Masses. The headteacher also does this.
- The Religious Education Governor monitors assemblies and gives verbal feedback to the headteacher. The headteacher monitors and ensures that there is a variety of opportunities for worship through assemblies, Masses, and prayer.
- Following the last inspection, leaders have monitored and ensured that there is a cohesive approach to planning and preparing assemblies so that they are based on the liturgical year.
- Through its own self-evaluation process the school has identified the need to increase pupil participation in planning and preparing liturgies and as a result the Spiritual Council was developed during the last academic year. This is enabling pupils to become more involved and independent.
- Plans are in place to introduce a series of seven class Masses at St Edmund's Chapel during terms 4, 5 and 6 to celebrate the life and works of St Richard, whose relics are buried there. These celebrations will be prepared and led by pupils.
- The school also plans to promote St Richard its Patron Saint and his significance to the school in visual ways involving the pupils, which can also be used as a focus for prayer. This includes plans (with their partners at East Kent College) to involve their students building a wooden statue of St Richard designed by the pupils. In addition, plans are underway to create a whole-school artwork based on the life and works of St Richard to be displayed above a stairwell.