



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St Wilfrid's Catholic Primary School**

School Close, Queen Elizabeth Avenue, Burgess Hill, West Sussex RH15 9RJ

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DfES Number: 938 3357

Headteacher: Mr D.Purcell

Chair of Governors: Mrs J.Billings

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> May 2010  
Date of previous inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> November 2007

Lead Inspector: Mrs C.Walker  
Associate Inspector: Mr S.Beck

## **Description of School**

St. Wilfrid's is a Voluntary Aided, two form entry Catholic Primary School. It is situated in the Lewes Deanery of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by the West Sussex Local Authority. The principle parishes, which the school serves, are St. Wilfrid's, Burgess Hill, and St. Edward's in Keymer. There are 408 pupils on roll. The percentage of Catholic pupils is 64%. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is just below the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs is below average. The percentage of Catholic teachers is 58%.

### **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1: Outstanding;      Grade 2: Good;      Grade 3: Satisfactory;      Grade 4: Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

St. Wilfrids is an outstanding Catholic school, which knows itself well. The Mission Statement is clearly understood by all members of the school community. Its values and ethos are visibly reflected in the exemplary behaviour and attitudes of all pupils throughout the school. Spiritual and moral development of the pupils is a strength of the school. The staff are a strong and cohesive team, fully supportive of one another and providing excellent role models for pupils. The school is a warm and welcoming place. Prayer areas are central to all classrooms and the entrance hall displays always involve a liturgical theme. The high standards of work, as evidenced in the religious education (RE) books and spiritual journals, reflect the schools clear vision and strong Catholic identity.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the provision of Catholic education at St. Wilfrids is outstanding. In addition to being an active member of the parish community, the Chairman of the Governors is involved in all areas of the life of the school and places great value on the school being a vital part of the Church's mission. The dedicated and highly motivated headteacher leads the school with a strong commitment to his Catholic Faith. He works with his deputy, RE leadership team and all his staff, in close partnership with his Governors to maintain and constantly improve the very high standards of Catholic education and pastoral support offered to the whole school community.

**Grade 1**

## **Improvement since the last inspection**

The main issue raised during the previous inspection has been fully addressed. There has been a clear focus to continue the development of assessment throughout the school. The RE co-ordinator is a member of the diocesan assessment working party and with the deputy head has developed a range of assessment methods that take account of pupils' different learning styles. A portfolio of different exemplar levels has been developed across the school. Planning now incorporates key level descriptors and termly moderation meetings have impacted on raising staff confidence in levelling consistently across all key stages. There is now an opportunity to further develop pupil self-assessment by including targets in work books to secure a greater understanding of the next steps needed in pupils' learning.

**Grade 1**

## **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

Accurate self-evaluation, effective systems for tracking pupil progress and a strong RE team ensure the school has an excellent capacity to continue to improve and develop.

**Grade 1**

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- There are no significant areas for improvement.
- It is recommended that the school should take account of imminent staff changes and develop succession planning through the religious education team to ensure the school continues to maintain and build on its current, numerous strengths.
- Consideration could be given to developing the current excellent assessment processes to include consistent pupil self-assessment and target setting.
- The school might consider it timely to review the policy for Education for Personal Relationships, including Sex Education. This should involve parents, staff and governors and make reference to the Diocesan Policy for Sex and Relationships Education.

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## **The Catholic Life of the School**

### **Leadership and Management**

The school's vibrant Mission Statement is the driving force and core of all that takes place in the school and is confidently articulated by the pupils. In addition it is visibly displayed and all pupils have ownership of the statement through their RE books. It is incorporated in all school policies. The outstanding leadership and management of the school are reflected in a very strong Catholic ethos. Leaders at all levels set clear direction and have a strong sense of the educational mission of the Church and the role of the school in expressing it. The headteacher is totally dedicated and clearly focused on the school's Catholic mission. His leadership is exemplary. He is very well supported by staff at all levels who, through their vocation, actively endorse and promote the aims and values of the school community. The school maintains high

standards and the fullest personal development of the pupils. The school is very effectively managed in a way that ensures the very best use of resources and by rigorous monitoring and quality assurance procedures undertaken by senior staff. Good links exist with parents and parish to reinforce the high standard of care, guidance and support the school provides to ensure its pupils' safety and general well-being. Child Safeguarding procedures are well established, constantly reviewed and provide outstanding support for all pupils.

The headteacher and senior leaders communicate a strong sense of spiritual purpose with a focus on promoting high standards and the fullest possible development for everyone. They all provide a very clear and focused direction for the school. The inclusion of all learners is a central goal based on the school's Mission Statement. That all are created in the image of God is explicit in the Year 6 version of the Mission Statement which states "Therefore we will love and respect each other and all personalities" This is very effectively promoted throughout the whole extended school community. There is a tangible sense of shared mission amongst all the staff and this is very effectively transmitted to the pupils and the wider community.

**Grade 1**

### **The Prayer Life of the School**

Prayer is at the heart of the school and is outstanding. It is evident in all classes where pupils were seen ably creating their own meaningful prayers. Prayers are said reverently and pupils demonstrate a deep respect. Prayer and Liturgy are regarded as central to the life of the school community with good use being made of a wide range of stimulating resources. Both are further enhanced by a Spiritual Garden that provides pupils with opportunities for quiet reflection and class based learning opportunities.

The spiritual development of both staff and pupils is inextricably linked to the very fabric of St Wilfrid's. The Parish priests are regular visitors to the school. One is a school governor. The other priest makes weekly, timetabled visits to classes to support teaching and spiritual development of pupils. The time commitment given to the school is both appreciated and greatly valued. Spiritual Journals in every class beautifully evidence pupil's' spiritual experiences. Each Spiritual Journal covers a range of experiences extending beyond the liturgical calendar.

Every Holy Day and special occasion is marked with active participation and celebration, which parents described as "wonderful to see with the children participating with enthusiasm and prayerfulness."

**Grade 1**

### **How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?**

This is a welcoming inclusive community where the school fosters a sense of belonging in all pupils, regardless of ethnic background. Pastoral care is excellent. The school regularly supports a wide range of charities; local, national and international, including CAFOD, Cabrini Society, Mission Together, Romanian Christmas Shoe Boxes and Plan, an international initiative where the school sponsors a child in Uganda and one in Egypt. Regular correspondence between these children and the school, enable pupils to evaluate the impact they are having on the lives of others less fortunate than themselves. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on the needs of others are provided within the religious education curriculum and collective worship, witnessed in the whole school ethos. The school has strong links within the local community and within the Diocese. Two representatives from the school council sit on the Burgess Hill Youth Council and are due to visit the House of Commons later this term. One parent commented "I feel that the children are given great opportunities to get to know the Lord and learn how to behave as loving community members."

**Grade 1**

## **Religious Education**

### **Achievement and Standards in Religious Education**

The pupils' achievement in RE is at least good with the majority meeting age related standards at the end of Key Stage Two. An increasing number of pupils are exceeding this level reflecting more targeted differentiation that meets the needs of individual pupils. Pupils are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate across all key stages. The school's strong commitment to inclusion means that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported in RE.

The standard of oral and written work is a strength and the pupils take obvious pride and enjoyment in what they do. The range of pupils' work indicates varied activities demanding good use of ICT, focus on scripture, pupils' own prayers, creative and independent responses as well as those led by the teacher. Challenging questions result in mature responses, indicating pupils' understanding of issues is beyond that expected for their years.

A rigorous approach to monitoring pupil attainment and progress is helping to establish a varied and creative curriculum. Consequently, pupils are interested and responsive during RE lessons. There are secure assessment procedures in place, which incorporate the new Levels of Attainment in RE. The RE team are committed in their determination to support staff development and encourage pupils as independent learners. Assessment and pupil progress would now benefit from a more rigorous whole school approach to self-assessment and individual target setting, in order to give a greater understanding of the next steps needed in pupils' learning.

**Grade 2**

### **Teaching and learning in Religious Education**

Teaching has many outstanding features. The teachers' subject knowledge, commitment, and teaching styles are ably supported and encouraged by exemplary leadership. The level of provision and challenge, stretches pupils, whilst ensuring that their individual needs are met. Teachers challenge pupils to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Very good use is made of the outside environment. This was clearly evident through the use of the school's Spiritual Garden during a Year 5 lesson, where the children were asked to construct their own prayer chains.

All teachers differentiate through planning and delivery. Pupil tasks are varied and clearly explained. All pupils are quietly engaged and remain on focus throughout the lesson. Pupil's work effectively in pairs and small groups and are developing worthwhile skills as independent learners. They have a confident understanding of scripture, as observed in the majority of lessons where pupils used their bibles to further research the theme of "Messengers and Witnesses." They greatly enjoy their RE lessons and take a pride in all they do. They are quietly confident and express themselves in a manner that demonstrates good subject knowledge and understanding. RE is regarded by the school as the core subject and is resourced as such. However investment in new multi-faith resources would further enhance this provision.

Parents are informed and involved in promoting their children's development and understanding through regular RE news letters, which provide information to enable them to support their children's learning. The parents really appreciate the work of the staff and one commented "I continue to be very impressed by the level of commitment shown by the staff towards the pupils with regards not only towards their education, but also their behaviour and social development." Attainment in RE is reported to parents annually and parents are invited to discuss the progress of their children at parents' evenings in the Autumn and Spring terms.

**Grade 1**

### **Quality of the Curriculum**

The school uses the Diocesan Scheme for Religious Education "Here I Am This is supplemented through staff's own creative use of scripture, cross curricular links and additional resources. The curriculum in RE fulfils and exceeds the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. All pupils, irrespective of age and ability, are able to make progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding and to learn to think spiritually, ethically and theologically, and to become aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils' own life experiences and those of the staff are shared in lessons, enhancing the curriculum offered.

Support staff play a key part in ensuring that all pupils enjoy positive peer and adult relationships in school and in enabling individual needs to be met. Teaching assistants have a significant impact on pupils' learning as a result of good liaison with their class teachers.

**Grade 1**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

The overall leadership and management of RE is exemplary. The school is fortunate in having an RE leadership team which gives clear direction and support. Records of planning, monitoring, evaluation and assessment are thorough and detailed. The leadership of the subject is strongly focused on the school's Catholic mission, on raising standards and on promoting the faith development of pupils.

Governors take an active role in the life of the school and are eager to fulfill their duties. The Governors have a clear insight into and understanding of the demands and requirements of the RE curriculum in this Catholic school. This is well supported by the Chair of Governors who is also a link governor for RE.

The high quality support afforded by the leadership team ensures that a shared sense of mission has been established among all staff. Development needs are accurately identified and tackled energetically. The subject is managed very efficiently and, through quality assurance procedures, leaders have a well-grounded understanding of the quality of provision. Good links exist with parents, parish and diocesan agencies to support work in RE. The impact is seen in the good progress made by all pupils.

**Grade 1**