



DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH

INSPECTION REPORT

St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School, Pymore Road, Bridport Dorset, DT6 3TR

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DfE Number: 838/3400

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Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Terrey

Chair of Governors: Mrs Georgina Coombes

This report to the Bishop of the Diocese under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law is also the report to the governors of the school on religious education. For Catholic maintained schools, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Date of inspection: 23 March 2023

Date of previous inspection: 2018

Reporting Inspector: Mrs C Collett

Additional Inspector: Miss N Slack

Description of school

St Catherine's is a smaller than average-sized rural primary school serving the parish of Bridport, Chideock and Beaminster. It currently has 118 pupils on roll with a higher-than-average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. 25% of its pupils identify as being of the Catholic faith. It is part of Plymouth CAST multi academy trust which was formed in April 2014. The current Head Teacher has been in post since March 2020 and the Religious Education lead since January 2020.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Grade 2

This is a good school because:

- Leaders at all levels are committed to ensuring that the Catholic life and Religious Education take high priority within the school's overall development plan and vision and are rigorous in the monitoring of progress towards the identified priorities.
- The school has made good progress since its previous inspection and has clearly identified the next steps, to progress further.
- Both pupils and parents/ carers speak highly of the school and its pastoral care for the individual child.
- The school is fully inclusive, welcoming those from all faiths or none.
- The school has ensured that in reviewing its wider curriculum offer, Catholic Social Teaching has been incorporated meaning the Catholic Church's mission is central to the education of its pupils.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop is good because:

- There is strong leadership at both school and governance level.
- The accelerated progress over the past two years to address the areas identified in the previous inspection evidences the skills of the current leadership team to bring about further improvement.
- The implementation of an effective and rigorous approach towards the tracking of improvement in all areas ensures progress is made.

What the school should do to improve further

- provide opportunities for the more able pupils to demonstrate their level of knowledge and understanding during lessons through:
 - effective adaptation of the current scheme
 - ensuring that learning objectives are not identified tasks.

- developing strategies that quicken the pace of lessons and develop independent and deeper learning that leads to good progress being able to be consistently achieved and evidenced in books.
- develop further opportunities for all pupils to become actively involved in the planning and delivery of prayer and liturgy and includes a variety of approaches.

Catholic Life

Grade 2

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

- There is a strong sense of community across the school with pupils commenting that ‘no-one is judged’ ‘all are respected’ and ‘it does not matter what religion, race or gender you are’. This stems from the leaders ensuring that the mission of the church to treat all equally and support the vulnerable is now at the forefront of the school’s vision.
- The school’s mission statement has recently been reviewed to ensure that its Catholic identity and character is clear, and pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be part of a Catholic school and community; ‘it gives you knowledge about God and Jesus’, ‘it teaches us about other religions so we can respect others’, ‘it’s inclusive’
- Pupils speak positively about the care and support they receive from staff. They feel safe and happy and enjoy coming to school. They appreciate the school’s strategy of using a class worry box where their daily concerns can be placed, and teachers can respond.
- The school’s chaplaincy, also known as the Growing in Faith Team (GIFT), whilst small and active in Year 5, contributes to the prayer life of the school through the reading of prayers during collective worship and Masses. The school should now ensure that all pupils are able to take responsibility and benefit from such activities and consider further using a range of collective worship approaches as expressed by pupils themselves for example: reflections and mediation, in order for all to actively benefit.
- The school fosters a sense of worth and respect for pupils themselves and others. They understand that they are called not only to be aware of the needs of others but also to actively provide support. They participate in CAFOD – Family Fast Day, Walk for Water, Mary’s Meals and support a local care home. Some older pupils take on the responsibility of being Physical Education ambassadors and supporting pupils in the playground when they are upset.
- Pupils make links with the wider parish through its links with the parish priest and some of the school’s foundation governors when they visit or support prayer and liturgy. However, this should be further developed to incorporate the wider parish community.
- Pupil voice is considered when meetings are held with the senior leaders or governors. Clarity of follow up actions would support the pupils further in knowing that their comments are taken on board.

b) The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school:

- A review of the school's mission statement by staff and governors has been instrumental in ensuring that the Catholic ethos and identity is now evident to both parents and pupils. It takes prominent position on the school's website which also contains a good range of information that supports the schools work and approach to prayer and liturgy, Religious Education, Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) and its pastoral support.
- The school environment clearly reflects the school's Catholic identity and is centred around the liturgical year. Displays around the school and in classes are engaging and those within the classroom, whilst linked to Religious Education topics, also ask bigger questions related to the Catholic church and faith in action.
- There is a specific board that is dedicated to the Growing in Faith Team and contains a big book with work that has been undertaken by the team. This shows they are valued.
- All classes have focal tables that support the Catholic seasons and artefacts that support.
- Gospel virtues and British values are visible around the school and the pupils tasked with taking us on a tour were able to talk about them and say that achievement of them is celebrated in assemblies.
- Staff act as positive role models and pupils are supported by well-developed systems for pastoral care, which extend and respond to the individual needs of pupils and families. As a result of this pupils are well behaved showing respect for each other during lessons and moving in and around the school. Inclusivity of all pupils is apparent in lessons and those with specific needs are well supported.
- Current senior leaders have been instrumental to improving and developing the Catholic ethos and provision across the school and are clear on how to develop things even further. There is a cohesive approach to the expectations for both staff and pupils which is supported through the induction process for newly appointed staff and the on-going training that has taken place since the previous inspection.
- The school has reviewed and updated its Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) programmes in line with DfE and Diocesan guidelines and all staff have received the appropriate training.

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

- This is an area that has now become a strength of the school since its last inspection.
- The Head teacher and governors are deeply committed to, and effective in, promoting the Catholic life of the school. They see it as a core leadership responsibility and ensure that it is monitored and reported on regularly at governors' meetings through the Headteachers reports, visits to the school and use of the diocese to validate progress towards priorities. As a result of this the school has made significant progress since its last inspection.
- The link governor for Religious Education can clearly articulate the progress the school has made in improving the Catholic life of the school and the next steps needed to develop it further. She is actively involved in the monitoring of the Catholic life, as is the parish priest, who regularly visits the school and is a well-known and respected support for the school.

- The school has an appointed Religious Education Lead who is effective in providing support to staff in their understanding of the nature of the Catholic life and in supporting the Head with the monitoring process.
- In reviewing the wider curriculum, the leaders have ensured that it contributes to the pupils spiritual and moral development and that strands of Catholic Social Teaching are woven through. One example is in the geography scheme where pupils look at fair trade and the impact of climate change.
- The school works effectively with the diocese ensuring that all Diocesan and CAST initiatives and requirements are implemented and the Religious Education lead engages with the diocese for training as required.

Religious Education

Grade 2

a) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Most pupils state they enjoy Religious Education believing that it provides them with an understanding of God and Jesus through the scripture they read and the discussions they have. It also enables them to respect others who may be of another faith through their studies. They also accept there are people who have no faith but that this does not prevent them learning about a religion.
- Whilst most enjoy the subject some expressed that it would be even better if there was less time spent sat listening and more time engaged in activities, along with a greater range of activities that did not always include writing. The need to act upon this is a recommendation evidenced during lesson visits and the scrutiny of books where pupils' motivation to respond to questioning wanes after a time and work shows a lack of depth or independent learning.
- Whilst most pupils, including those with additional needs make progress in Religious Education, this could be improved and accelerated through the implementation of strategies to develop a more independent approach to learning. In some instances, pupils learning was scaffolded when there was no need, thereby limiting the pupil's ability to show the depth of their actual knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils respond well to the 'Big Questions' showing that they can think ethically and make links between religion and life. This needs to be utilised further as a means of accelerating and extending pupils' progress.
- The religious literacy of pupils overall is good. They make full use of the key words which staff display for each topic of study and can recall and talk about prior learning. Reception pupils were able to talk about Palm Sunday in depth and Jesus being 'the light of the world'. Older pupils were able to talk about the journey of Jesus as he carried the cross, as well as referring to Christ as 'the bread of life'.

b) The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

- Teachers show confidence in the planning and delivery of their lessons based on the diocesan approved scheme Come and See. Adaptation of the scheme is evident. However, teachers need to ensure that when planning lessons and activities the learning objective is clear and is not a task and that the activities enable the learning to be achieved and leads to clear assessment of learning.
- Teachers are enthusiastic in their teaching and show a good level of subject knowledge. Teachers are regularly supported in their knowledge by the Parish Priest and the Religious Education Lead as well as being provided with opportunities to access online learning from the diocese.
- Teachers are aware of the different needs of pupils in their class, and work with a team of teaching assistants to support individual learners. Teachers and support staff provide praise and affirmation to learners which impacts positively on pupil attitudes and behaviour.
- Assessment occurs on a regular basis and teachers maintain a 'monitoring file' where each child is assessed on an individual basis with links to work in books. These are regularly checked by the Religious Education Lead to ensure they are completed. Whilst evidence in books generally matches the assessment recording sheet there are some occasions where the evidence could be clearer or indeed the task does not always fit the assessment outcome.
- The school has implemented the tracking of pupil progress through its use of the CAST used programme 'Insight' and the data is now shared with governors to support the monitoring of Religious Education standards across the school.
- This means that Religious Education is given the same status as English, and Maths.

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

- Leaders and governors now ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and that the required amount of curriculum time is allocated. As a result, the quality and quantity of work produced by pupils has parity with other subjects.
- The newly implemented scheme and resources for the teaching of Relationship and Sex Education was appropriately shared and discussed with governors who established a working party to support their decision making.
- Leaders understand the importance of monitoring and assessment. They have established well-understood and effective systems for the tracking of pupil progress and ensuring that the needs of different groups of pupils are met.
- Working in partnership the Head and Religious Education Lead have a clear system for monitoring the delivery of Religious Education. This involves regular work scrutiny, lesson observations, pupil conferencing, tracking pupil progress and moderation within the

school and with the diocese. Findings from the monitoring and that of the diocesan adviser's monitoring is shared with the link governor and full governing body.

- The link governor has a good understanding of the school's approach to the teaching of Religious Education and has undertaken independent pupil conferencing activities which she has reported to the Full Governing Body.

Collective Worship

Grade 2

a) How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Pupils are given the opportunity to pray together regularly throughout the day and over the week. Each class has a focal table which reflects the liturgical year. In speaking with pupils, they say that during class worship they are given the opportunity to read prayers, usually provided by the teachers, and that the GIFT team regularly lead during whole school collective liturgies and Masses.
- Pupils spoken with say they appreciate the opportunities to pray and overall enjoy the time, but some said they would welcome a greater range of collective worship opportunities, such as reflections or mediations.
- The members of the GIFT team – Year 5 - are valued by other school members in terms of the contribution they make during acts of collective worship and the members themselves enjoy being given some responsibility. The school shows the importance and value they place on the GIFT team through providing them with specific sweatshirts that clearly identify them in and around the school.
- Collective Worship is appropriately linked to the Church's liturgical year. A collective worship following the journey of Jesus as he carried the cross was led by pupils themselves and saw pupils responding reverently.
- Whilst pupils actively assist in the reading of prayers and scripture there is a need for all pupils to be provided with the opportunity to contribute to the planning and delivery of such.

b) The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- There is recognition of the need to ensure that quality collective worship needs to be purposeful and that all community members need to be involved. As a result of this it is well planned on a termly basis, makes links with appropriate themes and makes use of appropriate resources. The school uses Ten Ten as the basis for this.
- Budget constraints are a factor in being able to allocate funding for resources on a regular basis but through financial support from the parish resources to support this aspect of school life have been able to be provided.
- Following COVID the school has been able to reintroduce Masses which is welcomed.

- The First Holy Communion programme is delivered by the parish and for the first time in several years pupils directly from the school are part of that programme.
- The Parish Priest is a regular visitor to the school and is well respected and valued by the community. He speaks highly of the pupils who he reports are keen to answer questions and engage in the liturgies in which he is involved. A foundation governor from the parish is also a regular visitor to the school and contributes to supporting the provision of collective worship.

c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor, and evaluate the provision for the prayer life of the school.

- The Head and Religious Education Lead are at the forefront in promoting and modelling prayer and liturgy and provide support to teachers to ensure that all take responsibility and participate in this aspect of school life.
- Through visits to the school and their attendance at prayer-based events governors can speak about how well pupils behave during these events and how they support their delivery. Governors and leaders recognise that all pupils need to further develop their involvement in the planning and full delivery of prayer and liturgy.
- Whilst Collective Worship is monitored a focus now on progress towards pupils at all levels taking responsibility and an active role in this aspect of school life should occur.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

29 parental responses were received, and it was overwhelmingly positive with comments such as;

'The leaders and staff work incredibly hard to support the children every day'.

'We are Catholic, and they recognise the importance of the faith and the teaching of RE'.

'It's a loving school which teaches morals'.

'Has a strong sense of community'

'Staff that do their best to give every child the attention and help they need.'

A small minority of parents felt they were unable to comment on the progress the children were making in Religious Education and what is taught in Relationship and Sex Education.