



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

Christ the King Primary School  
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DfE Number: 865 3412  
URN: 126423

Headteacher: Mr J McCormack  
Chair of Governors: Mrs M Thomas

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**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

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Date of inspection: 15-16 March 2018  
Date of previous inspection: 3-4 December 2012

Lead Inspector: Mrs A Barrett

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## Description of school

Christ the King is an average sized primary school with 236 pupils on roll, which serves the parish of Christ the King Amesbury. The percentage of Catholics is 27% with 38% from other Christian denominations and 3% from other faiths. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who receive special educational needs support and those who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above the national average. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is below average.

The school has specialist provision for children with speech, language and communication needs which was set up by the local authority in 1997 for children living in the southern part of the county.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staffing and since the end of January 2018, a full-time consultant headteacher has been deployed. The substantive headteacher was absent for the inspection due to ill health.

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

**Grade 4**

This school is inadequate because:

- The action points from the previous inspection, which all relate to teaching and learning, have not been effectively addressed and still remain areas of concern. Consequently, there has been a steady decline in the teaching of RE and pupil outcomes.
- Leaders and governors have not engaged in systematic monitoring and evaluation of the provision for the school's Catholic life and religious education to enable them to effectively plan and implement improvements to outcomes for pupils.
- Evaluation is ineffective and does not result in a clear development plan for RE which is shared and understood by governors and the whole school community.
- Staff turnover, compounded by changes in the co-ordination of RE and lack of appropriate training in the teaching of RE, has had a negative impact on pupil progress, with a significant number not making progress in relation to their age and starting points.
- Too much responsibility has been delegated to the RE co-ordinator and those individuals covering her maternity leave.
- There have been no opportunities for staff professional development in liturgical formation or the planning of prayer and collective worship.

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The school has the following strengths:

- The newly formed governing body, led by a highly experienced chair, is keen to bring about improvements to the school's Catholic life and RE, and recognises it will need significant support from the diocese in implementing change.
- Pupils are generally attentive and show interest in the prayer life of the school. They are willing to take on responsibility for different aspects of the Catholic life.
- The RE co-ordinator, and those who have covered for her during her maternity leave, have endeavoured to promote RE and the school's Catholic life.
- Links with the parish are good and there is a desire to strengthen those links.

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

- The newly constituted governing body recognises that the promotion of the school's Catholic life and RE needs to be an area which is strengthened and supported in the future. They are prepared to work closely with the diocese and their Catholic partnership, in order to bring about change.
- Recent changes to the leadership of the governing body bode well for the future. They understand the need to monitor the RE and Catholic life of the school.

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

- Leaders and governors should establish and embed robust systems and processes to enable the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of actions taken to promote Catholic life and religious education, and implement improvements to outcomes for pupils.
- Senior leaders should ensure that governors are provided with regular progress reports regarding the school's Catholic life, RE and pupil outcomes in order to make strategic decisions.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school, in order to accelerate pupils' progress, to enable them to achieve age-related expectations or above, by:
  - improving teachers' specialist knowledge of RE by providing ongoing training and support both in-house and through attendance at diocesan courses;
  - improving teachers' understanding of what constitutes a learning objective, as opposed to a task, so that they can appropriately move pupils on in their learning;
  - ensuring that learning objectives are sufficiently challenging and building on prior knowledge in order to deepen understanding, so that they become leaders in their own learning.

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- Improve the quality of the prayer life provided by the school by ensuring that all staff receive appropriate training in how to develop and support pupils' prayer life so that the majority of pupils are skilled and equipped in leading prayer.

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## How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

Grade 3

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

- Pupils understand some of the elements that make a Catholic school distinctive. They recognise that for some people religion is important, and they co-operate when the school raises funds or organises activities to address the needs of others.
- Pupils understand that helping others within the wider community and the local community is important. For example, the chaplaincy team, under the leadership of the RE co-ordinator, has been active in supporting the local charity, Julia's House. In addition, all pupils participated in fundraising for CAFOD on Funny Fish Tie Friday in 2017.
- The inspector was impressed by the chaplaincy team's honesty, openness, thirst for learning in RE and eagerness to take on responsibilities and play a part in developing its Catholic life when these opportunities are offered.
- Members of the chaplaincy team are able to articulate the school's distinctive nature and have some understanding of the links between the school's Mission Statement and Golden Rules. However, other pupils are less clear regarding this linkage.
- Pupils accept the school's Catholic ethos but have difficulty in articulating what it means to be in a Catholic school and how it differs from other schools.
- Pupils review the school's Mission Statement annually, but it is unclear what impact this is making in enabling them to contribute to the Catholic character of the school.
- The excellent initiative on behalf of the chaplaincy team in which they organised a presentation to staff on Christian meditation has sadly not been followed through by teachers. Another initiative, with younger pupils being part of a Prayer Council has wilted.
- The chaplaincy team checks RE prayer tables in the classroom but this group is at a very early stage in developing the confidence and skills to take ownership of their liturgies and assemblies.
- Teachers have not had appropriate training in developing pupils' prayer life as well as the confidence to let the children take some initiative.
- Overall, opportunities to participate in the Catholic life of the school are at an early stage. Pupils are beginning to develop an understanding of what it is to be part of a Catholic school. They are eager to take on responsibilities and play a part in developing its Catholic life if these opportunities are offered.

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

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- Pupils make poor progress in RE, with many below age-related expectations. This is due to a combination of factors, including turnover of staff, teachers' lack of subject knowledge and training, and disruption in the co-ordination of the subject.
  - Across the board, pupils' progress has significantly declined since the last diocesan inspection, with outcomes not always matching their abilities. Progress is often hindered because learning objectives and tasks are unclear, do not match, or are set at the wrong level. They do not take account of pupils' prior knowledge and ability.
  - Most pupils are able to use some religious language and are beginning to make links between faith and life, but this is ad hoc and inconsistent across the key stages. Pupils' ability to think spiritually and ethically, to draw relevance to their own lives and offer their personal response to what they believe is undeveloped.
  - Pupils highlighted a positive approach to learning in RE but also a desire to be involved and challenged more, especially through art, drama, and imaginative activities. For some pupils RE was perceived as 'boring'.
  - Pupils are unclear about the progress they are making and what they need to do in order to improve. Work in books showed an inconsistency in use of the agreed assessment grids for RE and lack of challenge for the more able pupils. Although it is early days, staff are beginning to respond positively to the new strategies introduced by the new consultant headteacher. There is still, however, a sense of confusion regarding the plethora of outside initiatives which leaders have implemented in the past. This has, in particular, had a negative impact on teachers' assessment in RE.

**c) How well pupils lead, respond to and participate in the Prayer Life of the School**

- Chaplaincy is still an area of growth within the school. As yet the team is not taking full responsibility for leading and organising events within the school community.
- Opportunities to respond to and participate in the school's prayer life are underdeveloped.
- The school benefits from its links with the parish. The school is in the process of working with the new parish priest, with a view to strengthening links between school and parish.
- Most pupils are confident in saying traditional prayers, but opportunities to experience different prayer styles are limited. This, in turn, is linked with a lack of training for teachers in this area.
- Pupils, irrespective of faith background, value opportunities to participate in the routine prayer life of the school, demonstrating respect and reverence during assemblies.
- The sacramental and liturgical life of the church is woven into assemblies and whole school Masses ensuring that all have a basic understanding of the key seasons and festivals. However, many pupils lack confidence in making links between these and scripture, and this must be addressed in RE alongside deepening their understanding of the sacramental life of the church.

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- The chapel is a visible but underused area of prayer in the heart of the school. A remembrance tree is placed in the chapel during the month of November where the children can tie a ribbon on the tree to remember someone special.
  - Prayer tables in each classroom are recognised as a focal point for reflection, celebrating prayers shared, spiritual responses and special times in the children's lives. They reflect the liturgical colour which children take note of and are monitored by the chaplaincy team.
  - The school provides opportunities for whole school and key stage liturgies which they describe as 'calm and prayerful times when our community shares in worship and meditation'. The whole school Gospel assembly is followed up with the 'Wednesday Word', which is sent home to parents.

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## How effective are leaders and governors in developing the Catholic Life of the school?

Grade 4

**a) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

- Leaders and governors have over recent years been supportive of the Catholic life of the school and RE, but have not engaged in systematic monitoring of provision and outcomes to enable them to effectively promote these essential aspects.
- The newly formed governing body, led by a highly experienced chair, has not as yet focused on the school's Catholic life and RE as they have had to prioritise other issues which the school is currently addressing.
- Leaders and governors meet canonical and diocesan requirements but this is adventitious rather than planned, more by chance than design. The structures that are in place have been inherited from past planning rather than being sustained in the present.
- There is no development plan for the school's Catholic life and RE, with clear milestones and action points, which has been agreed by leaders and governors and shared with staff. There are no formal systems in place for leaders to report to governors on a regular basis to enable them to make strategic decisions about the Catholic life of the school.
- There is a lack of infrastructure to support the school's Catholic life, which is overly dependent on the RE coordinator. This lack of structure, compounded by lack of planning, monitoring and evaluation has put its Catholic life at risk and does not take sufficient account of the needs of those pupils who are not Catholic.
- There have been some opportunities to develop staff awareness of the Catholic nature and life of the school but these have been perfunctory and their impact has not been evaluated.
- Provision for staff induction and in-service training, especially in the context of high staff turnover, to help develop understanding and commitment to the Church's mission in education, is poor and not fit for purpose.
- There have been some opportunities for staff to be reflective, such as a retreat day at Kintbury and a team building day, but no opportunities for staff professional development in liturgical formation or the planning of prayer and collective worship.

**b) How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the curriculum for Religious Education and relationship education, and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils**

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- Leaders and governors have not engaged in systematic monitoring and evaluation of the provision for religious education to enable them to effectively plan and implement improvements to outcomes for pupils.
  - The action points from the previous inspection, which all relate to teaching and learning, have not been effectively addressed and still remain areas of concern.
  - Evaluation is ineffective and does not result in a clear development plan for RE which is shared and understood by governors and the whole school community.
  - Too much responsibility been delegated to the RE co-ordinator and those individuals covering her maternity leave. Their attempts to work together to try to ensure continuity and support for staff have been constrained by a lack of direction from senior leaders and governors. This has been compounded by significant staff turnover and lack of training. Consequently, there has been a steady decline in the quality of teaching of RE and in pupil outcomes.
  - Staff turnover, changes in the co-ordination of RE and lack of appropriate training in the teaching of RE has had a negative impact on pupil progress. A significant number of pupils are not making progress in relation to their age and starting points.
  - The school is unaware of current diocesan developments in relation to the teaching of RE and assessment. The accuracy, consistency and rigour of tracking pupils' progress is not fit for purpose.

### a) The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

- Overall, teaching requires improvement, and is sometimes inadequate, because the sustained lack of a stable teaching staff has greatly militated against raising standards in RE. Teachers' insufficient subject knowledge has prevented pupils from developing an appropriate religious literacy and an ability to use religious language in a meaningful way.
- The support by the RE coordinator/s and resources provided ensures that the RE scheme of work is covered but, due to the lack of teachers' subject knowledge, training and high staff turnover, pupils do not always make the progress they should.
- Over time, teaching has not enabled pupils to make good progress. Progress in different year groups has been variable. Teachers do not consistently provide learning which is matched to pupils' needs, nor challenge or support groups of learners effectively enough.
- There is too much ineffective teaching. Lessons are too teacher directed, have low expectations of pupils' intellectual effort and hinder progress by setting low-level tasks which provide little challenge, especially for the more able.
- Pupils' ability to learn independently and through group and class discussions is largely dependent on the quality of teachers' knowledge, skills, challenge and confidence. This has not been effectively addressed by the school.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is often inaccurate.
- Overall, pupils lack the encouragement and challenge to take ownership of their own learning. Where there is good learning, pupils can be insightful and questioning and able to express themselves at length, both verbally and in writing, as evident in a Y3 lesson on parables and Y4 lesson on self-belief and sacrifice. In these lessons, teachers generated positive attitudes, encouraging pupils to apply themselves. In these lessons pupils were provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. However, good practice in class was not always mirrored by their written work.

### b) The extent to which the Curriculum promotes pupils' learning

- The RE curriculum follows the Come and See programme and meets the Bishops Conference requirements. However, cross-curricular links are insufficiently developed. Senior leaders and governors need to ensure that they are up to date with diocesan and national developments relating to the new end of key stage outcomes, which will replace levels of attainment.
- Provision for relationship and sex education is in place and approved by the governors. However, the policy document should be updated to make reference to the recent

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diocesan guidance. The school uses the Journey in Love scheme of work, but appropriate training should be provided for new members of staff to ensure that it is taught appropriately.

- The study of other world faiths is included in the RE programme. It helps to promote understanding and respect for others' beliefs.

**c) The quality of the Prayer life provided by the School**

- There are opportunities for participating in prayer throughout the school day, including class morning prayer, at lunchtime and at the end of the day. Pupils are taught traditional prayers and how to respond appropriately in Mass and in liturgical celebrations such as Ash Wednesday, Harvest, Stations of the Cross and start of term liturgies. The school attempts to use a balance of prayers, including those written by pupils. However, this area needs to be developed further, with more planned opportunities for encouraging pupils' leadership.
- A prepared programme of assemblies and worship (based on the Come and See worship programme) for both key stages and for the whole school, is integrated within the context of the liturgical year.
- Key seasons of the Church's year are celebrated, with parents invited to join celebrations.
- The school endeavours to ensure that all children, irrespective of their faith background, are included in the school's prayer life, feel comfortable and can join in at their own level.
- The school has tried to enrich its partnership with parents in this area by sending home an RE newsletter and prayer calendars for Lent and Advent.
- Prayer tables in each classroom are recognised as a focal point for reflection, celebrating prayers shared, spiritual responses and special times in the children's lives. They reflect the liturgical colour, which children take note of, and are monitored by the chaplaincy team.
- There has been a strong tradition of involvement of the parish priest, and this mantle has recently been taken on by the new priest, who is a member of the newly formed governing body.

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## Summary of Parental Questionnaires

58 parental responses were returned. They were broadly supportive of the school but a significant minority raised concerns over the reporting of RE and information about relationship education.