



INSPECTION REPORT

Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School

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Executive Head teacher: Mrs Helen Taylor

Chair of Governors: Mr Julian Mobsby

**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**

Date of inspection: 5th October 2017
Date of previous inspection: December 2012

Reporting Inspector: Mr Joseph Skivington
Additional Inspector: Mrs Anne Barrett

Description of the school

Corpus Christi is an average sized Catholic primary school with 201 pupils on roll, 76% of whom are Catholic. The school serves the parish of Corpus Christi in Weston-super-Mare. Around 45% of all pupils have English as a second language (EAL), rising to 55% in Early Years. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with Pupil Premium support, make up 6.5% and 9.15% respectively. The level of prior attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectation.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Grade 3

This is a school which requires improvement because:

- Governance is not able to articulate or provide evidence of a clear understanding of the provision and outcomes for pupils in RE. In-school structures to sustain the recent progress made by the newly appointed interim executive headteacher are not yet sufficiently embedded to show sustained and long-term impact

However:

- The pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They demonstrate thoughtful care and respect for each other, and they have a positive attitude to learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning across the school enables most pupils to make good progress in RE.
- The pupils, particularly in the chaplaincy team, make a good contribution towards Catholic life and pupils' response to the prayer life of the school is good.
- The newly appointed executive headteacher provides excellent leadership, which is rapidly transforming the quality of Catholic life and religious education.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop requires improvement.

- Since the last inspection, the school has not consistently addressed its strengths and weaknesses in order to improve practice and outcomes. There has been a significant turnover of staff in recent years, with challenges particularly regarding teachers' RE subject knowledge.
- The executive headteacher and senior leader are establishing clear and effective processes for the monitoring of Catholic life and religious education, and there is a new sense of focussed direction and accountability which has been lacking in recent years.
- The several areas for improvement noted in the last inspection have not all been fully addressed and accounted for by the governing body. The school has done some good

work in improving the use of assessment and recording to support pupils' self evaluation skills, and in supporting teachers through diocesan training to improve subject knowledge. Assessment, however, is still not always used to set challenging targets, especially for the more able. The role of RE coordinator was successfully developed, but at present the coordinator is non-teaching, only in school one day a week. The school has had more success in engaging more fully with the diocese and this is benefitting governors, school leadership, and staff, who are open and willing to look for and follow diocesan advice and guidance.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the critical role of the governing body, in order to ensure more knowledgeable and rigorous monitoring of the provision and outcomes of Catholic life and RE, by embedding stable structures which foster accountability at all levels of leadership and governance.
- To ensure consistency and challenge in the marking of pupils' work, and to encourage a more reflective pupil response to teachers' formative comments.
- To establish and develop the role of a full time RE subject leader, and to sustain the academic profile of the subject to match that of the other core subjects.

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

Grade 2

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

- Catholic life and the pupils' contribution to it are a strength of the school. The pupils have internalised the values promoted by the school and their living out of these values, through their behaviour and positive attitude to learning, has helped, in no small way, to sustain the Catholic ethos of Corpus Christi through recent times of change. They are a real credit to the school. They can express what makes a Catholic school special but would benefit further from the opportunity to revisit the mission of the school more formally, with the rest of the school community, and contribute their own interpretation of what it means to them.
- Pupils can articulate the impact that the prayer life of the school has on their view of life and their relationship with others, understanding the links between faith and action, reflected also in British values. Each class saint has been researched and the pupils try to follow their saint's example and reflect on their lives. The beautifully presented Class Worship folders have many examples of pupil involvement and are a reflection of their journey in prayer, as well as their spiritual and moral development. Since September the children have worked with Fr. Kevin to plan and prepare their own class Masses.
- The chaplaincy team take the lead in promoting the prayer life of the school, and are developing the skills of planning and organising their own liturgies. They are also excellent role models for the other pupils especially when they lead prayers in the Reception and Year 1 classes. Over forty pupils applied to be chaplains, an indication of their willingness to become more involved in sharing the responsibility of nurturing the Faith.
- Older pupils increasingly take on a range of responsibilities. They mentor the younger children and are alert to the needs of others. They lead the playground Positively Energetic Play. Their feedback through Pupil Voice helps the school to make improvements. They play an important role in raising money for charities both locally and globally, such as CAFOD, Harvest, and the Shoebox Christmas Appeal. These were inspired by the Year of Mercy, and are promoting this year's 'Making a Difference'.
- Pupils have a genuine respect for those from different backgrounds. They have a growing understanding of different faiths, which they have studied and reflected on at some considerable depth in RE. There is a real sense of belonging and

respect for others, regardless of faith or none, which is an outstanding aspect of this warm, inclusive school.

- The links with the parish are strong. Pupils are involved in parish liturgies and the sacramental preparation programme is led from the parish with the school. The recently appointed parish priest is already proving a welcome and inspiring support for the spiritual life of the school community.

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

- The quality of pupils' learning and achievement is improving. Pupils come from a variety of faith backgrounds and practice. Most enter the school with levels of knowledge and understanding broadly in line with expectation. They make steady progress in the Early Years where the children have a good introduction to RE through story, prayer and reflection. Most pupils by the end of Key stage 1 have made expected progress with a small number exceeding. Pupils with EAL make slightly slower initial progress because of literacy levels, but make steady progress over time.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have made expected progress relative to their starting points. There are good examples of more extended writing in the upper years, although the more able pupils do not always make the expected accelerated progress. Overall achievement of pupils is good.
- Other groups such as those with SEN, and disadvantaged pupils, make similar but sometimes better progress because of planned interventions and the pro-active support of learning assistants.
- Pupils' ability to learn independently, and with others is developing but they need to be encouraged further to actively seek to improve their knowledge. There is a need to develop a more academic approach to RE as a subject, to explore and to provide the pupils with insights into the scriptures. It is clear, nevertheless, from their written work and discussions, that most can make the connection between what we believe and how we think and act.
- Pupils' are able to understand and critically reflect on our faith story. They do enjoy their learning, but become disengaged when there is repetitive teaching, or little intellectual challenge. As one boy said: 'I like it when my teacher makes it harder'.

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

- All pupils irrespective of faith background participate fully, and feel included, in the prayer life of the school. They show reverence, attentiveness, and willingness to play their part. They are ready and eager to be more involved in the organisation and presentation of their liturgies and class assemblies. Nearly all children have had the opportunity to prepare and lead class assemblies.

- Pupils already have the examples and role modelling of the chaplaincy team, with their high profile around the school. They could develop their role further by imaginative guidance and suggestions as to what else they could do, perhaps tapping into wealth of chaplaincy ideas and practice within the Dunstan partnership.
- Pupils value the many prayer opportunities during the school day. They make good use of class and school reflection areas for personal prayer. They have a good, progressive knowledge of the traditional prayers and have some understanding of ritual and prayer different from their own through their study of other faiths. They compose their own prayers and reflections, displayed on the prayer tables and in their books. They are beginning to review their assemblies in order to improve presentation and impact, with feedback such as 'Get people involved in doing something' or 'Put more expression into the readings'.
- Pupils were attentive and prayerful in the excellent assembly on Judaism. The whole school over a week produced an amazing amount of research on Judaism, producing colourful records and displays. The assembly was an opportunity for every class to approach the front and explain what aspects they had studied. It was very well prepared and delivered, and the hall was packed with parents. Everyone in the room learned something new and improved their knowledge and understanding. This was exemplary practice in terms of depth and impact of learning.
- The sacramental and liturgical life of the school is reflected in the assemblies, the class and whole school Masses, and the celebrations throughout the Church's liturgical year of the life of Jesus, and the saints. This extends to the adjacent parish church, where pupils are involved as readers or servers in the Sunday Mass.

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

Grade 3

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

- Governors have managed to sustain the Catholic ethos of the school through a period of instability, but have not articulated clearly enough a vision for the school nor shared this with the staff, pupils and parents. The areas for development at the last inspection have not been tackled robustly.
- The current body of governors, including the link governor for RE, is relatively new, but they are taking full advantage of diocesan training to enable them to become fully effective and knowledgeable. They are aware that their monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life is not yet sufficiently robust.
- Without robust processes of self-evaluation, judgements on Catholic life are not reliable. In conversation governors were unsure, for example, if the staff ever prayed together, or how they could support the chaplaincy team better. The school's self-evaluation document talks of planned monitoring visits but with little evaluation or evidence of impact.
- The school has asked parents, staff and pupils, through discussions and questionnaires, their views and suggestions for improvement, and consequently it now has a realistic view of what has to be done to improve and grow.
- Provision for staff induction and in-service training to develop staff understanding and commitment to the Church's mission is in place. Links with the parish are strong and the parish priest is a supportive and welcome presence in the school. There is at least one Inset day annually devoted specifically to Catholic life and spirituality.
- Leaders are open to advice from outside agencies, including the diocese, and share a renewed determination to move the school forward in close collaboration with the other Dunstan partnership schools. There has been recent partnership training run by the diocese.
- Parents are very supportive of the spiritual life of the school, with many attending the assemblies and Masses when they can, and providing feedback through parental questionnaires, which are almost all positive and appreciative of what the school does for their children.

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

- The executive head teacher and senior leader have placed RE firmly back in its place as a core subject, and created a real drive for improvement. However, the role of RE lead teacher needs to be reviewed. The existing RE data and monitoring information is being more fully and effectively used to evaluate the school's performance in order to plan future improvements.
- Governors receive regular RE reports through the executive headteacher. The RE coordinator has made sterling efforts to keep the subject running despite the recent turbulence caused by staff turnover and the need to give significant support to often less experienced teachers with limited RE subject knowledge.
- However, the governors' own level of rigorous challenge of RE is unclear from conversation and their minutes, as is their understanding of the impact of their learning walks and scrutinies in order to drive improvement on teaching and purposeful learning.
- A new and welcome staff stability, however, is beginning to emerge and morale is positive. Present leadership is very helpful and supportive especially in inducting the new teachers with training such as the CCRS courses and Aspiring Leadership programme. The impact of book scrutinies carried out in February of this year, and followed up in April, showed a significant improvement in terms of quantity, quality, and presentation, reflecting teachers' own determination to improve, and setting the school on the path to outstanding – but only if these strategies can be embedded and maintained.

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Grade 2

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

- The quality of teaching and purposeful learning across the school enables most pupils to make good progress in RE. The stronger teaching promotes purposeful learning, engagement, enjoyment and the best progress that the pupils are capable of making. The subject knowledge of some teachers is not always secure and this prevents them from leading their pupils to a deeper understanding and insight into the topics covered in RE.
- Learning assistants are closely involved in planning lessons with the teacher, so that interventions have a positive effect on progress. On occasion, the less able pupils have the same whole class tasks without the much-needed differentiation.
- Teachers need to encourage more independent learning through challenging tasks, which better meet the pupil's individual abilities. The school is also aware of the constant need to encourage pupils to write more reflectively and at length. The more able especially could achieve this by looking at examples of levelled work to guide and inspire them.
- Where teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of work and intellectual effort, the pupils rise to the challenge and are able to contribute their own arguments and opinions. This existing good practice needs to be shared across the school.
- More effective systems for the tracking and monitoring of pupil progress over time are evolving. The assessment and marking policies are in place and making a difference on progress over time. The school along with the Dunstan partnership is beginning to develop a portfolio of levelled written work.
- The marking of pupils' work is often helpful in showing them how to improve, but is not consistent in all classes. The impact on progress over time would be enhanced enormously by more challenging teacher comments, which elicit a more extended, thoughtful response from the pupils and require real intellectual effort. There is some very good practice higher up the school where thinking, questioning, and debating are being successfully encouraged.
- Assessment is not yet consistently informing the learning objectives in lessons. Greater attention needs to be placed on the learning challenges inherent in the lesson objective.

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

- The curriculum provides continuity and progression between key stages to ensure that pupils, whatever the starting points, are able to make appropriate

progress. The syllabus needs some attention in order to shape relevant learning objectives which engage and challenge all pupils in their learning.

- The RE curriculum meets all Bishops Conferences requirements. It is broad and balanced so that students can explore and develop their own values and beliefs. They explore themes such as fairness, compassion and injustice, which they then link to their charity fundraising and their outreach to needier members of society.
- The study of other world faiths is given great importance in this inclusive school because it promotes tolerance, understanding, and respect for others, especially cultural and religious differences. This is a real strength of the school. The whole school devoted a week to Judaism with enthusiasm, using research skills and building different aspects of the religion which came together in the aforementioned whole school presentation.
- Provision for sex and relationship education is in place and approved by the governors adhering to diocesan guidelines.
- The curriculum design promotes spiritual, moral and vocational development and is taught through the lens of the faith. Pupils have the opportunity to go on retreats, and pilgrimage such as the day in Glastonbury.
- The sacramental preparation programme for First Holy Communion is run in the parish in close collaboration with the school.

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

- The prayer life of the school is good. It is fully inclusive and joyful. Prayer punctuates the school day and is part of every celebration. There is an ongoing plan to develop more pupils' skills in organising and leading collective worship, building on the good modelling of the chaplaincy team and older pupils.
- Pupils experience the regular Masses and the celebration of the feasts in the Church's calendar, as well as the special seasons of Advent, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. There are also opportunities to learn the traditional Catholic devotions such as the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross. The prayer methods and styles used by the school are age appropriate. There are retreat opportunities for the older pupils.
- There are colourful and thought provoking displays around the school which remind the whole community of the liturgical cycle, the topics the pupils are currently studying, and are supportive of the school's vibrant Catholic life. They are attractive, and reinforce the mission and values of the school.
- Parents and carers attend Mass and assemblies when they can, and the provision for the engagement of parents, local parishes and other faith communities is good.

- The school's prayer life is closely monitored and evaluated and leads to action for improvement, such as the prayer areas and places for quiet reflection.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

All 79 returned parental questionnaires were very positive about the school and the quality of their children's education. Some typical responses included:

'We have noticed how calm and respectful the children are'.

'Helpfulness is the distinctive feature of the school. A strong teacher and pupil bond. The school listens to parents' views and acts on them straightaway. The spiritual life is very good, taught, and acted out by the pupils'.

'We like the school because of its Christian values and for the language support as a foreigner we have had'.

'Jesus is incorporated in all that the school does, for example, the awards in assembly. The wonderful buddy system demonstrates the values and attitudes of the children'.

A welcoming environment where I know my son will be taught by others who have the same spiritual and moral approach that I have. Christianity is embedded throughout the school and within the actions and approach of everyone'.

'The discipline and behaviour of the pupils is outstanding. The teachers can be very proud of their pupils – they are a real credit to the school'.

'Good communication between school and parents.....strong links with parish'.