



DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

Our Lady of the Rosary

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Acting Headteacher: Mrs Wendy Marriot

Chair of Governors: Mr S Herron

**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: 19th/20th March 2015
Date of previous inspection: 1st/2nd December 2009

Reporting Inspector: Mrs A Fowler

Additional Inspector: Mrs C Dolan

Description of School

Our Lady of the Rosary is a one form entry primary school which serves the parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary, Lawrence Weston, Sacred Heart in Westbury on Trym and St Anthony's in Henbury. The school is currently oversubscribed. Over the last few years there has been a significant rise in the number of EAL pupils rising to 63% in reception. This has had the effect of increasing the percentage of Catholic children within the school. Numbers of pupils with pupil premium are falling from 21% in year 6 to 9% in reception. The school is undergoing a difficult period with regard to staffing. Five new teachers have been appointed during this academic year. At present the school is led by an acting Headteacher, who is an experienced Local Authority Head. The day to day management of the Catholic life of the school is the responsibility of one of the assistant heads with strategic direction and oversight being provided by the Governing Body. The previous chair of the governing body resigned from that post and a new chair is in place. It was not possible to meet with the new chair during the course of the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; **Grade 2:** Good; **Grade 3:** Requires improvement in order to be good; **Grade 4:** Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Grade 2

This is a good Catholic school because:

- Pupils are motivated to do well with nearly all pupils enjoying their Religious Education lessons. They are proud of their school and value the Catholic nature.
- Pupils behave well, are concerned for others and understand the values of the school.
- Staff are reflective in their practice and concerned to improve their performance.
- Standards of work are good and the Religious Education department is well led.
- Opportunities are provided for pupils to participate in, and in some cases lead, the prayer life of the school
- The governors are committed to the Catholic nature of the school and to developing its distinctiveness

The school is not yet outstanding overall because:

- The governors do not yet have systems in place to monitor and evaluate the Catholic life of the school.
- The pupils need to be given greater opportunities to be part of the monitoring and evaluation process and become more independent learners.
- The expectations of what pupils can achieve in RE is, in some areas, not sufficiently challenging and the balance between teacher led and pupil led activities needs to be addressed.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

- Parents, pupils and staff are extremely supportive of the school.
- Teachers want to ensure the best outcomes for pupils and are committed to doing this
- Governors are aware of the need to reform their practice.
- The acting headteacher has the analytical and reflective skills necessary to effectively evaluate the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- The governing body needs to review how it monitors and evaluates the Catholic life of the school so it can set a strategic direction.
- Continue to develop the leadership role of pupils in all areas
- Ensure consistency of practice in RE so that all teachers use clear learning objectives, success criteria and mark for 'next steps'.

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

Grade 2

Pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school. They are all proud to be a part of the school. They feel safe and regard the school as a family where all are welcome. They value the relationship with the teachers whom they see as always trying to do their best for them. They understand some of the elements that make a Catholic school distinctive; in particular that prayer underpins who we are as a community. They demonstrate high standards of behaviour and link this to the call of Jesus to love and care for one another. They understand that helping others within the wider community and the local community is important. They have the opportunity to take on responsibilities. Examples included older pupils talking about supporting younger pupils during a wet break by helping to look after them in the classrooms and *Huff and Puff* with older pupils helping to run organised play activities for the younger ones. They also talked enthusiastically about their work in the eco club. However, although they have the opportunity to be part of the school council pupils feel they are not given sufficient responsibility for events within the school. In particular, they do not yet have an opportunity to help with the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school. The pupils themselves express a wish to take on more responsibility in this area.

Pupils see the school as a family, taking their responsibilities seriously and believing that “everyone is expected to comfort lonely people”. One boy who joined the school in year 4 explained that though he had been nervous at first, everyone had tried to make him welcome. The pupils interviewed consider that there was no bullying within the school but know that if they had any worries or concerns that, in addition to speaking to a member of staff, these could be placed in a special box and would be dealt with. They understand the need to learn about, and from, those from other faiths and different communities. They speak with confidence about their recent International Day where they had enjoyed learning about different cultures with pupils from different ethnic groups (or their parents) helping to lead part of this event. Through its charity work pupils are encouraged to be aware of the needs of others and of their responsibility to make a difference. They support a variety of charities including, CAFOD, Water Aid, and St Peter’s Hospice.

Chaplaincy is an area of growth within the school with members of the chaplaincy team being commissioned by Bishop Declan in October 2014. The team meets regularly, with the help and support of one of the governors, and older pupils support younger ones in these activities. As yet the team is not taking full responsibility for leading and organising events within the school community.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually. They have, for example, a faith day each year with all pupils going to Westonbirt to engage in a variety of activities including a faith programme where pupils are given an opportunity to explore issues in greater depth. Although pupils, staff and parents value these opportunities it is not clear what the impact of these programmes is and the school needs to involve pupils in evaluating these activities.

Pupils all said that they enjoyed their learning in RE and felt that being able to discuss things with each other helps them to learn. They showed enthusiasm for their work. Although pupils make good progress overall, there are variations between year groups which the school is aware of. The school uses data to track and monitor the progress of all groups within the school but some of the assessment data at the higher levels is inaccurate requiring the school to relook at their moderation procedures. Pupils are encouraged to use subject specific words from an early age with displays of these words within the classroom helping focus their attention and enabling them to use technical words competently and become increasingly religiously literate as they progress through the school. Good questioning skills, in some of the lessons observed, encouraged pupils to make connections between faith and life. Those pupils interviewed said that they were learning 'how to live out the message' (of Jesus). Although they always want to do their best and take a pride in their work, pupils are more limited when it comes to being independent learners. There are w limited opportunities in the classroom for them to develop their own skills in evaluation and analysis.

All pupils know the basic prayers of the church. They show respect when prayer is taking place and believe it is important to pray during the day. Within assemblies they take part by singing, joining in the prayers and responding enthusiastically to questions. They are less secure however, when it comes to understanding the concept of prayer itself. The emphasis is on prayer as writing, or speaking to God and less on reflecting on the purpose of prayer. However within the faith programme they are encouraged to explore different types of prayer including meditation. In order to provide further opportunities for spiritual development the school needs to encourage more reflection and evaluation. They have the opportunity to lead assemblies with each class group organising an assembly on a rota basis. The older pupils also help model the skills needed for younger pupils. Within assembly they also act as monitors making sure that equipment is out and working the powerpoint system. This helps encourage a sense of responsibility and reinforces the importance of prayer.

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

Grade3

Governors are deeply committed to the Catholic life of the school. They understand the need to embed Catholicism in every aspect of school life. Their concern to see prayer take place throughout the day is an example of this commitment. They are present within the school, endeavour to be role models for staff and pupils and are extremely supportive of different activities within the school. Religious Education is a priority for them and does receive its full time allocation. However governors are not effective in their monitoring and evaluation, focusing more on doing things rather than being clear about purpose and the need to evaluate the impact on outcomes for pupils. New systems and approaches are only just beginning to be put in place. Governors' main evidence base has been through the headteacher's report, informal discussions with staff, observations when present in school and through the presentation of reports on different curriculum areas. In the past the headteacher's report has not provided them with the data and information which would have allowed them to identify risk areas, judge the impact of actions and plan effectively for improvements to outcomes for pupils. As a consequence their ability to be effective has been severely limited. They have not had formal systems in place for seeking feedback from pupils, parents or staff. The acting head has been able to provide the governors with more effective information about the life of the school in general and governors are now aware of their need to urgently re-evaluate how they carry out their role. The acting head has been proactive in helping to make the school a more effective, self-evaluating community. However, governors lack the knowledge needed to develop and evaluate the Catholic life of the school so whilst the acting head is in post the governors should learn from her the skills needed to be able to transfer these to evaluating its Catholic life. Although new initiatives are now in place, it is too soon to say if these will be effective. Governors have just moved to a committee structure and they need to consider carefully which committee will take responsibility for the Catholic life of the school. They should now review the Catholic life of the school in the light of guidance from *Bishops' Conference*. A pleasing development however, is the encouragement of staff to attend courses and the awareness of the need to enter into partnership activities with other schools. These are beginning to impact on the school and provide a more evaluative approach.

The leadership of Religious Education is carried out by the coordinator. This is an area of strength. Through a planned programme of observations, book trawls and discussions teachers are both knowledgeable and accurate about the strengths and weakness of Religious Education. Staff have great confidence in the leadership provided by the coordinator and believe that moderation exercises and informal discussions are helping them improve their own teaching and outcomes for pupils. A development plan is in place and has identified areas for improvement. Recent partnership initiatives and attendance at courses has also increased the confidence of staff. Data in Religious Education is collected on a regular basis and used to highlight areas for development. Leaders and governors need to continue to ensure that the coordinator has sufficient time to effectively carry out their role. An additional strength of the school is the way in which all teachers take responsibility for leading RE within their own classrooms and in relation to their own practice. They are extremely reflective practitioners who are able to analyse their own lessons and recognise where improvements are needed. This can only lead to improved outcomes for pupils.

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Grade 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and motivated to succeed. They take pride in their work and perceive RE as an important subject. All lessons were well planned and resourced. All staff demonstrated a secure subject knowledge. Where teaching was at its best there was a clear focus to the lesson with success criteria clearly linked to the levels of attainment and shared with pupils. Questioning was skilled and used to develop pupils thinking, challenging pupils by asking 'why do you think' this or 'give reasons for your answers'. Talk partners were used effectively to increase the quality of discussion. In all lessons observed there was a focus on religious language with teachers constantly referring to key words to reinforce pupil understanding. Where appropriate, staff referred back to previous learning to reinforce the pupils' understanding of the concepts. In some lessons the balance between teacher led activity and pupil work was not correct. Pupils need more opportunities for independent learning and tasks at the higher levels need to pay more attention to developing the skills of critical reflection and analysis. Behaviour was excellent and there was a very positive relationship between pupils and staff. Pupils' attainment is regularly assessed. Marking is not consistent across the school with some marking placing the emphasis on literacy work or simply not diagnostic enough. It rarely provided comments to enable pupils to take the next steps. There was however some encouragement to do this through oral feedback in the classroom. The syllabus matches the aims of the *Curriculum Directory* and follows the programme of study outlined in *Come and See* though there are areas of learning which would benefit from more explicit attention. For example, although pupils were able to recall, with great confidence stories from the Bible, they were not always clear about what the Bible is or how we approach it. Although all pupils are able to make progress there is a need to make sure that work is clearly progressive and irons out any inconsistencies between year groups. Data is used to track progress and monitors the progress of different groups. On occasions, particularly at the upper end of KS2, data can be inaccurate. The curriculum does cover other faiths and work and encourages pupils to think about the need to respect people from other faiths and cultures. Relationship education is taught within the school, mainly in year 6. It needs to be reviewed to ensure it is appropriate for all pupils and is a developmental programme across all year groups. Some parents commented that they do not feel sufficiently informed about the relationship curriculum and the school needs to address how it consults with parents. All policies should carry a review date.

A variety of opportunities both formal and informal are offered to pupils to help develop their own spirituality. Through the Faith programme, through being part of the Chaplaincy team, through prayer during the day and through the more formal pattern of assemblies. Classes all contain focal areas however care needs to be taken that these are clearly visible to pupils and a real focus of the classroom. Not all focal areas reflected the liturgical year so an opportunity to reinforce learning and make connections has been lost. Most focal areas were put together by staff and pupils should be encouraged to take a leadership role here putting the displays together themselves. Some of the displays around the school did reflect the liturgical year. Pupils within their forms are encouraged not only to participate but to help lead and plan assemblies. However the assembly pattern needs to be rethought with stronger connections made with the liturgical year. Assembly areas also need a clear focal point. The parish church is very close to the school and the priest a frequent visitor. The school helps animate Masses on Sunday. Pupils sing at Mass, play musical instruments and generally have an active role in the liturgy. One of the sisters from the convent also visits the school and helps to prepare pupils for their involvement in the parish mass. Pupils also sing at the local parish mass. Pupils have

the opportunity to attend diocesan events, for example year 6 leavers mass. Pupils now need to be encouraged to formally review these activities. They do understand that for believers prayer underpins life. These activities all contribute to pupils' awareness that they are part of a larger diocesan community.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

34 parental Questionnaires were received during the inspection. The majority of these reports were supportive of the school commenting on the supportive teachers. A very small minority expressed dissatisfaction with the current leadership structure feeling that something of the Catholicism was being lost. However this was balanced by an equal number of responses saying that the school was now better. One parent stated, 'it (the school) placed more focus on the needs of pupils and less on the SAT's results now'. Most parents felt they were not fully informed about the school's relationship policy. Some parents expressed the view that school needs to consult with or gain the views of parents on a more regular basis.