



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St. Augustine's Catholic Primary School**

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DfE Number: 803 3437

URN: 109268

Headteacher: Mr Julian Clements

Chair of Governors: Mr Peter Taylor

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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: 9-10<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Date of previous inspection: July 2012

Reporting Inspector: Mr Joseph Skivington

Additional Inspector: Mrs Ann Fowler

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## Description of the school

St. Augustine of Canterbury is a smaller than average-sized primary school with a current roll of 214 pupils, of whom 56% are Catholic. It serves the parishes of St. Augustine of Canterbury, Downend and St. John Fisher, Frenchay, Bristol. Pupils are mainly White British and come from a mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. Pupils join the school with a low baseline level of prior knowledge and experience of religious practice.

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

**Grade 2**

This is a good school because:

- The governing body and all leaders prioritise and promote the school's Catholic life and mission, and successfully sustain and grow its good Catholic ethos;
- It is a fully inclusive school where pupils, their parents and carers, from all faiths and none are made welcome, and all show respect and genuine interest and care towards each other;
- The behaviour of pupils and their care for others is good. They are role models for each other and, led by the chaplaincy group, they contribute significantly to the spirituality and ethos of the school. Their behaviour for learning is positive and they enjoy their RE studies;
- The quality of teaching is good, leading to good learning outcomes for all groups.

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

- The senior leadership team and staff have driven improvement in all areas, and work closely with the diocese and other local cluster schools to seek and to share good practice. The governing body is very effective in bringing proactive support and challenge, particularly through outstanding monitoring and support procedures which are robust and reliable.
- Through ongoing consultation with parents, staff, and pupils, the school has a realistic view of what has to be done to improve further. Its accurate self evaluation enables strengths and weaknesses to be highlighted quickly, and action taken to improve practice and outcomes. These inform future planning with measurable objectives which are monitored closely and quickly reshaped as appropriate.
- The areas for development noted in the last inspection have been comprehensively addressed. Governance and leadership are now exemplars of best practice, offering very

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effective challenge and support, which is driving progress and improvements. The leadership role of the recently appointed RE coordinator is especially well supported with care and encouragement. INSET days for staff development focus fruitfully on the Catholic life of the school and its mission in the wider context of the Church. The outcomes for RE afford ample evidence that pupils have been given more opportunities to write reflectively and in more depth on their growing knowledge and understanding of scripture.

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

- Review the RE curriculum in order to adapt all areas in the light of the new outcomes for religious education.
- Examine and determine how written tasks in RE are best differentiated in order to support pupils' learning objectives across all abilities.
- Encourage all pupils to take the initiative and ownership of their prayer life by planning imaginative and uplifting worship through variety of activities, music and drama.

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## 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

- Pupils have a secure understanding of what it means to be in a Catholic school and what makes it distinctive. They can articulate for instance, the impact that the prayer life of the school has on their actions and how they relate to and care for others. Comments such as - 'We show the values of our school', or 'RE is not just lessons... we make it stick to us instead', or 'Because we are a Catholic school we treat each other better' - are typical responses. This is a real strength of the school and can be witnessed in their prayer and caring interaction with others, as well as in their books.
- Pupils are fully involved in the whole school community reflection and discussions on the school mission, and helped to develop the school values with their suggestions, following an inspirational day led by Fr. Adrian Porter. They also researched their new House Saints prominently displayed in the assembly hall.
- The chaplaincy team have a high profile and take the lead in many areas of Catholic life, such as the response to Pope Francis' 'Laudato Si', or replying to Bishop Declan's questionnaire on the future of the diocese. They model leading prayer, and plan and present their own reflective assemblies lower down the school, as well as running the chapel or quiet spaces during lunchtimes with meditation and activities. They are becoming more confident through practising the skills of planning and organising their own assemblies and liturgies. The school recognises the need to encourage wider pupil ownership by taking every opportunity where appropriate to pass the initiative on to all pupils.
- The pupils play a proactive part in choosing, planning, and supporting fundraising initiatives for charities both local and global, such as CAFOD, the Friday Fair Trade stall, Mission Together, and are following through their action plan on Making a Difference by supporting 'Harbouring the Harbourless'.
- Pupils contribute not only by their positive behaviour both in lessons and around the school, but also through pupil conferencing, providing essential feedback that is built into the school improvement plans. Pupils increasingly take on a range of responsibilities, which show they are alert to the needs of others, such as the Year 6 buddies who help with the youngest children.
- Pupils have a genuine respect for those from different backgrounds. There is a real sense of belonging and inclusion shared by all regardless of faith or none, which feeds into their understanding of British values and culture.

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

- Pupils enter the school with low levels of attainment and understanding of religious knowledge and practice. In Key Stage 1 they make expected progress – with a particularly strong start in the Early Years class. Progress at Key Stage 2 matches the quality of the work seen in the earlier years, so that by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have made expected progress. There is a growing understanding of the theology behind each topic, and pupils become more confident and more able to reflect on the meaning of the Gospel accounts and on making links between scripture and other areas of their lives.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress because of effective, planned interventions and the proactive support of teaching assistants. This success is a reflection of the school's care to provide support for less able pupils. This support could be further enhanced by more differentiated written tasks and activities. The same could be said in providing extra challenge for the more able pupils.
- Discussions with pupils and responses in their written work show clearly that, as they move up the school, they become more confident in using religious language in a meaningful way. Their ability to learn independently, and with others, is developing steadily, and opportunities for pupils to discuss more deeply in lessons and to write more reflectively could be encouraged even further with higher teacher expectations and challenge, especially in the well-embedded 'next steps' formative marking.
- Pupils are proud of their achievements and demonstrate a positive interest in learning new knowledge and ideas. They feel confident in expressing their own opinions. When asked, pupils were very positive about their learning and enjoyment of RE.

**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 as observed in the award assembly, where they also sang enthusiastically, but also in their class prayers and reflections.
- Pupils are becoming more involved in the planning and preparation of their liturgies and assemblies. The liturgical calendar is at the core of the planning process and this is evident in the pupils' growing understanding and use of religious liturgical terms, and in the liturgy planning sheets and reflection books in each class. The pupils are also able to evaluate the impact of their presentations and offer suggestions as to how these could be improved. Teachers are becoming more confident in enabling pupils to take the initiative, knowing when to intervene helpfully, or to step back. The

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school now needs to move forward on enabling all pupils to develop skills of initiating and planning collective worship.

- Prayer is at the core of the St. Augustine's school family and the school is intent on involving parents in its spiritual life. The pupils value the many prayer opportunities which punctuate the school day. They compose their own heartfelt prayers and reflections, which are displayed on the pupil-monitored prayer tables. The chapel and the lovely reflection inner courtyard are well used for prayerful activities and pastoral support led by the chaplaincy team.
- The sacramental and liturgical life of the school is reflected in the assemblies, Masses, and the celebrations throughout the Church's liturgical year of, the life of Jesus and the saints. However, the pupils are less confident in their understanding and ability to speak about the sacramental life of the Church. The school needs to secure this topic within the curriculum so that the pupils come to a progressively deepening understanding of the theology behind the Sacraments.

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

Grade 2

**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 very effectively promote, nurture, and sustain the Catholic ethos of the school which is the main focus of their strategic planning. The inspiring head teacher has been unflagging in his efforts to secure stability, continuity, and growth since the last inspection and has successfully communicated a vision for the future of the school on its journey to become outstanding.
- The governing body is a knowledgeable and practical influence in the life of the school. They meet all statutory, canonical, and diocesan requirements fully. Their outstanding processes for monitoring the quality of Catholic life and RE are highly effective, and are a real strength of the school. These exemplary procedures, which include learning walks and lesson observations by the link governor, keep them well informed and proactive in all aspects of school life, and enable them to challenge and support effectively, because they can ask the right questions based on their detailed knowledge of both provision and outcomes.
- The school frequently asks parents, staff and pupils their opinions as to what could be better. Parents are kept well informed and have been given the opportunity to comment on the governors' Strategic Plan for the school. As a result of continual feedback, the school leadership knows itself very well, can more accurately assess the impact of its actions, and can quickly reshape its improvement planning when necessary.
- The spiritual life of the staff is nurtured and celebrated. Staff prayers, retreat, and INSET days on spirituality and RE are an integral part of the timetable. Staff from local Catholic schools joined together for the inspirational talks by Fr. Adrian Porter. The staff pray together and have the opportunity to lead prayer and read from the Lectio Divina in turn. This helps bind staff together in commitment and unity of purpose, sharing the same goals and values of the school's mission. The parish priest is a frequent and supportive presence in the school. working to strengthen the links with the parish.

**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**

- Leaders and governors use data and monitoring information intelligently and effectively, exercising careful oversight of the curriculum and learning outcomes.

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The governors receive regular reports from the head teacher but are also kept closely informed through feedback from the link governor who is a frequent visitor working closely with the recently appointed RE lead teacher.

- The subject records are comprehensive with great attention to detail and to the wider picture. The parents are invited to be part of their child's education. Their views and the views of the pupils are frequently elicited through conferencing, and any issues or problems arising are properly addressed. These are resolved with respect, genuine dialogue, and reassurance.
- Subject development plans are drawn up and used as working documents, which are added to or reshaped during the course of each term. They are evidence based and lead to positive action for improvement. There is always work to be done in these areas and the leadership is determined in its push to improve the quality of both teaching and learning.
- The RE coordinator is growing confidently into his role and is able to model and share good practice with the other teachers. Assessment procedures are more secure, with his present work on matching RE level descriptors to the Target Tracker used by the other subjects. The provision for staff induction, in service training and diocesan training is particularly supportive for the teaching of RE. This has resulted in teachers becoming more confident in assessment and in setting lesson learning objectives.

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## How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Grade 2

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

- Teaching is effective in promoting purposeful learning, the engagement of the pupils, their enjoyment and their overall good results. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning have a strong impact on their progress and achievement. Teachers have established a good rapport with their charges. Teaching assistants are involved in planning lessons with the teacher, and these interventions have a positive effect on these pupils' good progress over time.
- Teaching is good with some strong practice. A good range of teaching styles are employed, including paired and group discussion, the use of art and a variety of activities. Teachers' questioning skills ensure pupils' concentration and engagement. However, this quality is not yet fully consistent across every class, with the result that pupils' misunderstanding or plainly incorrect statements are not always picked up and corrected. This inevitably hinders the teacher in securely establishing prior knowledge and understanding to inform next learning objectives.
- Where teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of work and effort, the pupils rise to the challenge and are able to contribute their own arguments and opinions in class discussions, while the more able pupils write reflectively and at some length. Where tasks are not so well targeted and challenging, pupils are not able to move forward so swiftly. For instance, on occasion pupils in one year group have similar lesson/learning objectives to pupils in Year below them.
- The marking of written work is securely embedded across the school and often generates a fruitful discussion between pupil and teacher. There is some inconsistency in the quality of teachers' comments and the pupils' responses, but there is also good practice illustrated in some thoughtful extended answers to the teachers' challenging comments. This is a fruitful teaching strategy, and it is worth devoting significant time to allow pupils to think through what they are writing.
- Teachers' skills and expertise in assessing pupils' progress are being successfully improved so that they can arrive at reliable judgements on individual achievement and progress over time. This is well led by the RE coordinator who is disseminating and implementing best practice through cross partnership moderation with other Catholic schools, and building up a portfolio of this moderated work to ensure consistent and reliable assessment across the school.

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

- The RE curriculum meets all Bishops Conference requirements. It is broad and balanced so that pupils can explore and develop their own values and beliefs. They

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discuss themes such as compassion and justice, which they then link to the objects of their charity fundraising, and outreach to others in society who are more needy. The RE curriculum will need to be adapted in the light of the new outcome requirements.

- There is generally consistency and continuity in progression through the curriculum, and closer monitoring should ensure that there is appropriate time allocation for all elements of the RE syllabus, and a closer focus on meeting the needs of the children in order to promote and ensure improvements in learning.
- The study of other world faiths is covered adequately, with time given to get a basic understanding of other major world religions, which promotes tolerance, respect, and understanding of others' beliefs, enriched by visits to other places of worship such as synagogue and temple. This inclusive school celebrates and appreciates the diversity and richness of other faiths and cultures within the school community.
- Provision for sex and relationship education is currently being reassessed and programmes such as 'Journey in Love' are being considered as more relevant for the pupils. Choices will be approved by the governors adhering to diocesan guidelines. The wider curriculum successfully promotes spiritual, moral and vocational development, and is taught through the lens of the Faith.

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

- The outstanding prayer life of the school is inclusive and joyful. Prayer punctuates the school day and is part of every celebration. A well-planned timetable of Masses and assemblies follows the liturgical year, including traditional Catholic practices such as the Rosary, Advent and Lent celebrations, and the Stations of the Cross. There is a clear intent to encourage more pupils to organise and lead collective worship, using the excellent role modelling of the chaplaincy team.
- The parish priest makes an important and valued contribution to the spiritual life of the school, supporting its role in the wider mission of the parish and the universal Church. The adjacent parish church is an excellent resource and draws the school into the life of the parish.
- Teachers and pupils have created colourful and thought-provoking displays around the school, which remind the whole community of the liturgical cycle and the topics the pupils are currently studying. The chaplaincy team organise the chapel and outside reflection areas, which are popular and are proving an excellent daily support for the pupils' spiritual development.
- Parents and carers are invited to attend Mass and assemblies, and many do. The school is keen to encourage more parents to become involved in the prayer life of the school and their children. Every opportunity is taken for joint worship with other partnership schools.

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- Clear and critical processes for reviewing the quality and impact of assemblies and liturgies in order to make them even more uplifting and prayerful are in place and are developing, in order to ensure that they always have a spiritual content.

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## Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 26 parental questionnaires returned. All were positive about the school and the quality of their children's education. Some typical responses included:

***'We wanted our children to be brought up with their faith at the heart of everything. St. Augustine's helps us as parents to foster a caring attitude in our children by always looking at the effects of what we do – how will it help others?'***

***'It is a very caring community. Polite children. It is a lot more organised and structured than it used to be. The new uniform is smart and distinctive'***

***'A strong relationship between the school, parish, and families. Our children feel safe in a Catholic environment. The head teacher has made such a difference in all aspects of the life of the school'***

***'The children are enthused and inspired by the teaching and develop spiritually'***

***'Children get praise for helping others, being good friends of one another and for respecting all around them'***

***'Being a Catholic family we wanted a school that reflected the values we have at home and that supported our child's development in faith as well as education. It is calm, welcoming, and inclusive – a very nurturing environment'***

***'A school that makes any walk of life feel welcome. A school that values every individual and treats them with respect and kindness'***

***'What is distinctive is the spiritual values that embody the whole school. We loved the Lenten activities the children have participated in, and also welcome the respect the children develop towards other religions'***