



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School  
Blackswarth Road, Redfield, Bristol BS5 8AS  
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e-mail address: school@stpatricksbristol.org.uk

DfE Number: 801 3411  
URN: 138465

Headteacher: Mrs M Marshall  
Chair of Governors: Mrs F Bradley

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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: 27-28<sup>th</sup> September 2018  
Date of previous inspection: June 2013

Reporting Inspector: Mr J Skivington  
Additional Inspector: Mrs A Barrett

## **Description of school**

St Patrick's is a Catholic Stand-Alone Academy Converter with 210 pupils on roll, of whom 90.9% are baptised Catholics. It serves the parish of St Patrick's, Redfield. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups, and pupils with English as an Additional language (EAL), are both well above average at 66.19% and 57.14% respectively. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) / Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) is 10.5%. Close to 11% of children receive the pupil premium. There have been significant changes in staff since the last inspection.

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

**Grade 1**

### **This is an outstanding school because:**

- The outcomes, the provision, and the leadership and management of Catholic life are overall outstanding. The pupils' care and respect for each other make an excellent contribution to the ethos of the school, particularly in the positive role modelling of the older pupils for the younger children.
- The outcomes, the provision and the leadership and management for religious education (RE) are good. The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding practice and is closely linked to pupils' achievement and progress. The leadership and management of RE in monitoring and planning for improvement is good.
- The provision for the prayer life of the school and the pupils' wholehearted response are outstanding. The effectiveness of the leadership and management in monitoring and evaluating the provision for the prayer life of the school is good.

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

- The outstanding leadership of the head teacher, and the deputy head teacher (who is also the RE subject leader), has very successfully maintained good standards since the previous inspection, despite the significant changes of staff in the intervening years. The area for development highlighted in the previous inspection – greater pupil ownership and involvement in collective worship – is being successfully addressed and continues to be an ongoing priority for the chaplaincy group. There is at present a stable teaching staff who are highly committed to the mission of the school, and who are successfully undertaking, with enthusiasm and determination, the relevant training and courses to improve their subject knowledge. Staff morale is high. Parental approval, appreciation, and support for the school is unanimous.

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

- To secure even more rigorous and challenging systems of monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life, RE, and Prayer life, particularly by the governing body, in order to more closely and fruitfully evaluate the impact of improvement planning on provision and pupil outcomes.
- To model and share examples of outstanding teaching practice, with particular reference to developing pupils' learning from religion, and their ability to analyse and evaluate their learning.
- To further implement chaplaincy across the school, enabling almost all pupils, in a planned and systematic way, to lead and contribute to the Catholic Life of the school.

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

- Pupils appreciate the Catholic life of the school, as expressed in the school's mission statement: 'Learning together with God'. They have come to own it as theirs. This is particularly evident at the start of the school year where they reflect, discuss, and contribute their understanding of what the mission entails. They are able to articulate what is special about being in a Catholic school and are able to express their opinions through Pupil Voice. The school is planning to provide even more opportunities for them to be more effectively involved in evaluating Catholic life.
- The pupils' excellent behaviour, conduct and attitudes around the school reflect its Catholic character. Their care for one another, particularly the older pupils for the younger children, is an embedded behaviour and reflects the values inculcated by the school. They willingly assume roles of responsibility and through this have a growing understanding of vocation.
- Pupils take on positions of responsibility and leadership of Catholic life, and in the local community, through the school council and the chaplaincy team. They live out the mission through their outreach to others in the community and beyond, through charity work such as CAFOD Sharing the Journey, Missio, and WaterAid, as well as local involvement with the Redfield community. The Macmillan Coffee morning saw a large number of parishioners and local people supporting the event organised by the wider school community.
- The links with the parish are very strong and uniquely close. Pupils are involved in parish activities with over half attending the Sunday Masses. They contribute significantly to the life of the parish and are active participants in an exceptionally cohesive parish community which has links with 40 organisations.
- The chaplaincy team meets regularly, and increasingly takes the lead in the daily prayer life of the school, both in class liturgies and assemblies. It is, however, an area of development for them – for example, they do not yet keep their own meeting and planning records. However, there is evidence of their review of their planning and presentations, in order to improve the impact on their listeners. They have set up and decorated their own prayer and reflection room which is well used. The chaplaincy now needs to be extended further to include almost all children, rather than limited to the team and the older pupils.
- Pupils are happy, well- rounded individuals and well prepared for the next stage of their physical, emotional, and spiritual development.

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

- The provision for the Catholic life of the school is commendable. The school's mission and Catholic ethos are at the centre of all the school does and is very evident in the environment and the colourful displays around the school. This is

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more widely shared through the parish and on the school's website. God is very evidently at the centre of school life.

- St Patrick's is a welcoming and inclusive community where all are valued and invited to participate. As a result, all have a strong sense of belonging to a community that celebrates difference and diversity. Some of the pupils multi faith work on Sikhism, Judaism, and Hinduism are beautifully displayed around the school. There are also multi cultural images of Mary, and the school Value of the term -Hope- is prominently displayed.
- Highly effective pastoral support and care is given to all and is a real strength of the school. This is effectively modelled by the headteacher and deputy head, who, in turn also model and nurture the spiritual and prayer life of the school. All staff are helped through example and professional development to understand the Catholic nature of the school, and as a result they become fully committed to its mission and are effective role models for the children.
- The quality of the Relationships and Sex Education programme '*Journey in Love*' is fit for purpose, ratified by the governors and shared with the parents. The school provides many opportunities for the pupils' spiritual and moral development right across the curriculum, sometimes discretely.
- Improved provision and new ideas are well supported by the school's fruitful links with the local Catholic schools' Aquinas partnership. Group Inset is shared and aspects such as Catholic Social teaching and the challenge of food poverty are jointly discussed, and solutions explored.

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

- Leaders and governors are strongly committed to promoting the Catholic ethos of the school as their first priority. They are closely involved in the school. They have established an annual Missioning Mass and blessing for staff at the start of every academic year. There are strong links with the parish and both leadership and governors regularly attend Sunday Mass and parish functions. They offer excellent models of good practice as leaders of Catholic life.
- The quality and frequency of induction and professional development for staff to enhance their understanding and commitment to the Church's and the school's mission is very effective, with frequent Inset both in school, and with the Aquinas partnership.
- The governors monitor the quality of Catholic life through the Ethos and Mission committee. They visit the school and attend assemblies and liturgies both formally and informally. However, their evaluation of Catholic life, in terms of the quality and range of opportunities for pupils' and staffs' spiritual and moral development, and their understanding of it, needs to be more systematic, rigorous, and evidenced in writing.
- Leaders and governors are well regarded by the parents and are seen as offering models of good practice and commitment to the Catholic ethos of the

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school. There is an annual parent questionnaire which has a different focus each year.

- Governors are aware of the Pastoral Vision for the Diocese –*Future full of Hope*- and keep themselves fully involved through diocesan training, such as the Foundation Governors Focus day. They are open to advice and collaboration with the other partner Catholic schools in the Aquinas Partnership.

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

- Pupils come to the school from varied backgrounds and with different levels of knowledge and understanding. They make a good start in the early years thanks to very effective teaching and a creative use of drama, role play, and art. By the end of Key Stage 1 they make good progress in relation to their starting points. This continues in the later years but with some inconsistencies linked to weaker teaching. However, by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have made good progress, with some making better than expected.
- Pupils with special educational needs or with disabilities are making progress due to the effective support provided by teaching assistants and other planned intervention. There is, however, still a gap between them and their peers, which the school recognises and is addressing. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) quickly catch up with their peers in terms of literacy and make similar good progress.
- There are some impressive examples of reflective writing in different styles both in the class books but also in the beautifully presented Floor Books. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils had a meaningful, questioning discussion, using religious terms with understanding, which was an outstanding and fruitful example of independent thinking and group work.
- Where the progress of learning is sometimes slower it is often because the learning tasks are not sufficiently differentiated, particularly for the less able, or the pupils become passive learners rather than independent and questioning self-learners being stretched to their full potential. However, the extent of pupils' religious literacy develops well as they go through the school, and in discussion they show a good grasp of key concepts. There now needs to be a re-emphasis on learning from religion, making discrete links with their own lives and experiences, and the messages from the Scriptures.
- Overall, pupils enjoy their RE lessons and can learn independently, in pairs, and in groups. Their presentation of work is exceptional in its neatness and quality, indicating the care and pride they take in their work. There is also a good range and quantity of writing and evidence of progress over time.
- The school's track record in supporting teacher assessment is very effective, with delivery of appropriate tasks enhanced by the new diocesan documents for assessment. Leaders address any issues when they emerge in relation to pupils' progress. For instance, a book scrutiny and data analysis in term 3 indicated that standards, in comparison to previous year, required improvement. INSET was swiftly put in place by leaders, with a focus on

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improving teachers' subject knowledge. Improvement became noticeable because of this focused action.

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

- The quality of teaching is generally good and promotes learning, as well as the enjoyment and progress of the pupils. Within this good judgement, inspectors observed teaching that was better than good, but also teaching that required some improvement. Teachers use a good range of strategies including art, music, drama and role play which the pupils enjoy, and which helps them to learn.
- Where teaching is good and better, teachers have a good rapport with the pupils and promote high expectations. Questioning is strong where it checks understanding, but also challenges pupils to think more deeply and provide reasons for their opinions and make links to scripture and their life experience. All teachers would benefit from observing the outstanding practice being modelled by the RE subject leader.
- The school recognises the varying extent of teachers' mastery of the subject. This is highlighted in development planning and is being addressed through INSET both in the school and across the Aquinas partnership.
- The marking policy is well embedded but is not always successful in directing pupils' learning. At times, pupils are not offered the opportunity to improve their work or challenged to think and write independently.

#### **c) How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- The evaluation of RE provision is an area of leadership and management which although good could be more incisive and a better driver of improvement. Leaders and governors monitor and track RE through lesson observations and book scrutiny, and the systems are already in place, but their evaluation and any recommendations for improvement could be more clearly evidenced in writing or seen to be making a difference. There is a need for governance to be more robust and rigorous in employing the systems of monitoring, and a more succinct evaluation of impact upon learning outcomes, which is referenced and evidenced in writing.
- The RE subject leader, the head teacher, and the deacon who is the link governor for RE, are excellent supportive role models for the teachers in developing their subject knowledge. They, together with the positive support provided through diocesan training and collaboration with the other RE leaders in the Aquinas partnership, are rapidly up-skilling teachers new to the subject with growing success.
- The RE curriculum meets the Bishops' Conference requirements, as well as any additional requirements of the diocesan Bishop. The new diocesan system is having a positive and challenging impact and is steadily being adopted. Extra curricular enrichment is in place through visits and events such as the Mosaic Madness day but these opportunities could be extended further.

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- Leaders and governors take into account the views of parents and pupils in evaluating RE through questionnaires and conferencing. Parents are very positive in their feedback to the school and could become even more involved in decision-making and partnership. Their high level of response to the inspection parental questionnaire is an indication of their approval, gratitude and close interest in what the governors and leadership are providing for their children

**a) How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's prayer life**

- Every pupil regardless of faith background feels welcome to participate fully in the school's prayer life and collective worship. The pupils show great reverence at prayer and a willingness to play a part in assemblies and whole school celebrations. Their demeanour, body language, and attentiveness at prayer are outstanding. Many are also involved significantly in the prayer life and worship in the parish, particularly at the Sunday Mass.
- The assemblies observed during the inspection were planned and led by the chaplaincy and older pupils, with enthusiastic singing, but also pause for reflection and response. The school is building on this chaplaincy modelling, so that in time all the children can become equally confident in planning, preparing, and leading worship, starting in their own class assemblies. This is already beginning to happen as they move from a predictable structure of question and answer, followed by bidding prayers, to a more colourful, reflective, and uplifting experience.
- There are useful planning sheets to guide the pupils in their worship preparation, and these include reviews and evaluations of their efforts and suggested improvement. This 'even better if' self evaluation is an excellent strategy and to be encouraged and embedded more securely.
- The prayer life of the school contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the children. As pupils move through the school there is a corresponding progression in prayer, including the traditional Catholic prayers, and an understanding of the structure of the Mass as well as the liturgical year. Pupils have opportunities to study the lives of the Saint patrons for each class and House.
- The prayer areas in each class are an attractive, reflective focus for daily prayer and have examples of the pupils' own prayers and poems, including the very insightful reflections in the Floor and Worship books.
- The parish priest is a frequent and inspirational presence to the whole school community with strong, fruitful links between parish and school. The adjoining church is an ideal resource for the pupils and an ideal alternative venue for their special assemblies and liturgies.

**b) The quality of the prayer life provided by the school**

- The provision for the prayer life of the school makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual life of the whole school community, and is part and parcel of every school day. This is evident not only in the Masses and assemblies reflecting the Church's liturgical year, but also the school's whole

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environment, with appropriate statues and colourful displays. An area for an outside prayer garden has been identified, and the chaplaincy team expressed an enthusiastic interest in becoming involved in the planning process.

- The centrality of prayer life reaches out to all pupils, regardless of faith or family background, and includes both staff and parents. Significant moments, such as Harvest, Remembrance Day, Advent and Lent, and traditional Catholic practices, are celebrated as a whole community and are well supported by parents and parish. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to go on retreat, for example to St Brendan's Catholic Sixth Form, and other shared chaplaincy days with the Aquinas partnerships.

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

- Leaders and governors sustain and nurture the prayer life of the school community well; and ensure provision and opportunities for prayer and collective worship are in place. There are planned procedures to monitor, evaluate, and further enrich prayer life, but there could be more written evidence of systematic appraisal, review and evaluation in documentation such as the governors' minutes, or school improvement plans.
- The spirituality of the staff is well supported through days of training and reflection. They are also supported in planning for worship and are becoming more knowledgeable about the liturgical rhythm of the Church, and more confident in modelling high quality worship experiences.
- A class assembly in Year 6 was an excellent example of this, with the pupils beginning to lead and be inspirational and thought provoking, not least because the teacher had modelled this, and had the confidence to let the pupils organise themselves.

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## Summary of Parental Questionnaires

*There was a significantly high number of parental responses, with 137 questionnaires received. All were very positive about the school and their children's education. Some typical responses included:*

***'Each child is known by name. The ethos of the school shows my children the values I would like there to be through life'.***

***'This school models for the pupils' kindness and compassion, and teaches them the real values through out the world'.***

***'School and church work very close together, which is great most of the time, but can sometimes be too closely intertwined'.***

***'Amazing reputation locally and across Bristol'.***

***'Our son is "known" and cared for, encouraged and championed. This is not only good for him, but we feel the same care as a whole family'.***

***'I have had children in the school for 14 years. They form such a moral strength and faith that it remains strong through the difficult teenage years.... There is a noticeable sense of justice and kindness'.***

***'The school offers a Christian vision of reality, a set of values based on the loving, caring, challenging mission of Jesus.... the school supports the formation to mature in the faith through the school's chaplaincy. The school feels like a family...it is not an exam factory but more like a garden where young people's physical, moral, and intellectual development is tended to, with care and diligence'.***

***'I am very happy with the values the school promotes. I am a Pentecostal Christian and highly value my child being taught the Bible values'.***