



INSPECTION REPORT

School of Christ the King
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Headteacher: Mr Matt Condon
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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**

Date of inspection: 13-14 February 2019
Date of last inspection: 26-27 March 2014

Reporting Inspector: Mr J Skivington
Additional Inspector: Mr Frank Toner

Description of school

Christ the King is an average size primary school with 207 pupils on roll, of whom 27% are baptised Catholics. The school serves the parish of Christ the King, Filwood, Bristol which is in an area with a higher than average deprivation factor, with many of the children having complex social and language needs. The proportions of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), and of pupils from minority ethnic groups are significantly above average. The proportion of pupils who have an SEN statement or an educational health and care plan and the number of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.

The local community has changed significantly over recent years, with more children entering the school from different ethnic groups. The school has strong links with other Catholic schools in the Aquinas group, and over the last two years has supported two Catholic Primary schools in difficulties. There is an interim Chair of Governors and the role of the link governor for religious education (RE) has been taken on temporarily by the Parish Priest.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Grade 2

This is a good school because:

- The outcomes, the provision, and the leadership and management of Catholic life are all good. The pupils' exemplary care and respect for each other make a very positive contribution to the ethos of the school;
- The whole school community reflects its the mission and values, which are at the centre of all that the school does;
- Leaders and governors promote the Catholic ethos of the school as their first priority, and monitor its quality regularly; Most pupils, from their varied starting points, make good progress in religious education, in each key stage.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with some inconsistencies.
- The leadership and management of RE in monitoring and planning for improvement is good.
- The provision that is made for the prayer life of the school is a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the whole school community and all pupils, irrespective of their faith background, feel welcome to participate in it;
- The leadership and management have been determined and focused, not only in sustaining the spiritual life of the whole school community, but in nurturing and enriching it further.

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

- The school continues to grow and develop under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, strongly committed governing body, staff team and highly supportive parents. The areas for development from the last inspection have been addressed. This is a school that knows itself well, and in its self-evaluation has correctly identified key areas for development which it is successfully addressing within a challenging context.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the level of expectation and challenge in teaching by using more informed differentiated tasks, and learning objectives, which better meet the individual learning needs of the pupils.
- Encourage and develop pupils' independent learning and thinking skills through more challenging questioning in lessons, extended reflective writing tasks, and individual research.
- Provide more frequent and inspiring support for the chaplaincy team in order to increase their confidence in evaluating and contributing to the Catholic life of the school, thus modelling and encouraging all pupils to contribute, and to further develop the skills of initiating, planning, and presenting prayer and worship.

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

- Pupils appreciate and participate willingly in the Catholic life of the school. Their excellent behaviour, both in the classroom and around the school, reflect the values and character of the school. The pupils played a significant part in the renewal and interpretation of the school values and have put their own ideas about the school mission in writing and on the attractive values tree display at the entrance to the school. The school is planning further opportunities for them to contribute and participate in a more planned and systematic way in evaluating the Catholic character of the school.
- Pupils take on positions of responsibility and leadership of the school's Catholic life, through the school council and chaplaincy team. The older ones care for and provide excellent role models for the younger children, as in the Year 5 and Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) buddy system. Pupils demonstrate through their caring behaviour, and sense of pride and belonging, that they are a part not only of a school community but also of the parish family. They take part regularly in parish Masses and events, such as attending retreat days at the local Catholic sixth form college and secondary school, chaplaincy days, and attending curriculum events with other partner Catholic schools in the Aquinas partnership.
- In conversation, pupils were able to articulate what is special about a Catholic school. They clearly understood the link between what they were taught in lessons and assemblies and how the values promoted by the school were lived out in their behaviour and care for others, both in the school and in their home surroundings.
- Pupils make a positive contribution to the common good in the school and wider community especially in planning outreach to others through many charities such as CAFOD, Little Princess Trust, Samaritans Purse, Mission Together and the British Heart Foundation. This outreach to others in need encourages their interest and practical response to spiritual, moral, and ethical issues. Pupils also have an understanding of vocation and recognise the importance of using their gifts in the service of others.

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

- The provision for the Catholic life of the school is good. 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. The mission statement is not formally displayed, being expressed rather through the school values which are prominently displayed in every area of the school and frequently referred to.
- Christ the King 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. This is supported by the multi faith topics in the RE syllabus and the acceptance and respect for all regardless of nationality or background.
- The chaplaincy group are supported on a fortnightly basis, meeting and discussing how they can plan the prayer life of the school. They already are involved in leading prayers in assemblies and class Masses. However, they are a fledgling group and will benefit

from planned provision provided by a member of staff. More frequent support will energise and give them the confidence to become more proactive and imaginative in their role across the school.

- The exemplary pastoral provision provided by the school gives every child, (but especially the more vulnerable) invaluable support to ensure that they are ready and equipped to learn. Pupils are referred by teachers to the Pastoral Support team (including the SEND coordinator and Learning Mentor) on a regular basis.
- Pastoral support and care is available for all in the school community, including new staff who are helped, through example and continual professional development (CPD), to understand the Catholic nature of the school. As a result, they are fully committed to the school's mission and are effective role models for the children.
- The quality of personal, social and health education (PSHE) and relationships and sex education (SRE) is good and is closely linked with pupils' spiritual and moral development. The school is looking at alternative resources to improve further these elements in the curriculum. Parents are unanimous in their appreciation of the pastoral care and attention given to each child.

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

- Leaders and governors promote the Catholic ethos of the school as their first priority and monitor its quality regularly. The chair of governors and the parish priest are a frequent, supportive, and welcome presence in the school. Governors visit the school and attend assemblies and liturgies when they are able. They also follow an established and more focused cycle of monitoring visits, which provides a robust and reliable picture of both provision and outcomes. Feedback in terms of evaluation and planning for future improvement is systematically recorded.
- Leaders and governors are aware of the Pastoral Vision for the Diocese 'A Future full of Hope' and keep themselves involved through diocesan training. They are open to advice and collaboration with the other partner Catholic schools, with the headteacher chairing the Aquinas Mission and Ethos Committee. Leaders and governors are themselves models of good practice and committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and are highly regarded by parents. Governors have ensured that the school values are integrated into and across the curriculum so that they contribute in a planned way to pupils' spiritual, moral, and vocational development. Through frequent Inset and CPD, the leaders and governors promote staff engagement and their understanding of the Catholic life of the school.

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

- Pupils come to the school from widely differing cultures and backgrounds and with different levels of knowledge and understanding in religious education. The work in pupils' books show that they make a good start in the early years, and given their starting points, pupils make good progress over time, so that by the end of Key Stage 1 most have reached their expected level of attainment and achievement. The generally good progress continues in the later years, with some inconsistencies linked to less effective teaching strategies. However, by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have made good progress.
- There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils with special educational needs or with disabilities, thanks to the significant help they receive from well planned intervention and supportive teaching assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) quickly catch up with their peers in terms of literacy.
- Pupils' religious literacy develops well as they go through the school, although there are gaps in their understanding of some key concepts which teachers, who are less experienced in their subject knowledge, do not always pick up and correct or explore sufficiently in depth.
- Pupils say they enjoy RE lessons because they find the subject interesting. They are confident in working by themselves, in pairs and in groups. However, less able pupils would benefit from more differentiated tasks and closer questioning to ensure they fully understand what is taught. The more able pupils, in particular, are ready to be stretched with more challenging research-type learning so that they actively seek to improve their learning and become competent independent learners.

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

- The quality of teaching over time is generally good and promotes learning, as well as the enjoyment and progress of the pupils. Where teaching is good, teachers have a good rapport with the pupils and have high expectations. Questioning is strong when it checks understanding and challenges pupils to think more deeply. So much depends, however, on the depth of the subject knowledge and understanding of the teacher.
- The expectations of teachers regarding the quality and quantity of work varies, particularly where, in some cases, the quantity of written work does not always appear to match the allotted curriculum time.
- The marking policy is well embedded, and, in the best practice, pupils are offered the opportunity and time to improve their work with guidance from the teacher and learning assistant. Occasionally the teachers' comments do not have the desired impact on progress or elicit a reflective response from the pupils.
- The assessment of pupils' work is carried out regularly. The pupils know what they have learned in any task or topic and are increasingly aware of how they can move on to the next stage. The school is working successfully to employ and embed the new

assessment criteria with extra training and valuable support from the Aquinas Partnership.

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

- Leaders and governors ensure the RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. There are well embedded processes to gather and analyse progress, and this data is fed into the subject development plan for future improvement. However, a more rigorous approach to learning walks and book scrutiny would ensure greater impact on raising the quality of teaching and learning. Also, more frequent monitoring of the weekly time given to RE by individual teachers would ensure that the amount and quality of written work, or referenced contributions by the pupils, more clearly matches the time allotted to the subject, and therefore provides clearer evidence of their progress over time.
- The positive support for new and relatively inexperienced teachers of RE is provided by leadership and through diocesan training, CPD, and collaboration with the other RE leaders and teachers in the Aquinas Partnership. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence in teaching a specialist subject like RE is well supported by the subject leader and the parish priest (the current link governor for RE) and is rapidly improving.
- The curriculum and schemes of work are suitable for the learning and progress of different groups as they move through the school, and while the units and topics are effectively evaluated with the other Aquinas schools, more thought needs to be given to the setting and sharing of appropriately differentiated tasks within these units in order to meet every pupil's specific learning needs.

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

- Pupils show reverence and respect during prayer time, both in lessons and in assembly. Even the youngest have quickly learned attentive stillness and make the sign of the cross with care. This is due in no small measure to the excellent modelling of the staff and older pupils.
- Pupils are willing not only to participate in acts of worship but to be part of the planning and presentation, composing their own prayers or leading prayer in the classroom. The school is focusing on providing opportunities to develop these skills further and to enable pupils to identify and evaluate their contribution to the school's prayer and Catholic Life.
- The example of the chaplaincy team in encouraging and modelling prayer throughout the school is vital but there is still work to be done to skill them up and inspire their self confidence. A more frequent, more immediate support on top of the present fortnightly support would be enormously helpful in getting the chaplains to actively initiate and plan their own liturgies and prayer opportunities. They already have a prayer area where they can foregather, for example, at lunchtimes and invite others to voluntary prayer such as a Rosary group, or prayerful support in times of bereavement.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Mass, the liturgical year, and a variety of traditional and informal prayers appropriate to their age. Members of the chaplaincy team have had training on implementing prayer in the classroom. Daily prayers and reflections actively involve a good number of pupils in one role or another. Every pupil regardless of faith background feels welcome to participate fully in the school's prayer life and collective worship. The prayer areas in each class are a reflective focus for daily prayer and display some examples of the pupils' own prayers and reflections on the school values.
- The chaplaincy team could be charged to monitor these class prayer areas to make them more prominent and attractive, or perhaps design an attractive outdoor garden or reflection area. There could also be useful planning sheets to guide the pupils in their worship preparation, including time to review and evaluate their efforts and to suggest improvement.
- The prayer life of the school contributes significantly to the spiritual and moral development of the children. Their 'moral compass' is sensitive and informed for their age, as seen in their discussion and writing about living out the values promoted by the school, the meaning of the parables, or on choices and consequences. As pupils move through the school there is a corresponding progression in prayer, including the traditional Catholic prayers, and specifically a growing understanding of the structure of the Mass as well as Saints' days and the liturgical year.

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

- The provision for the prayer life of the school is a significant contribution to the spiritual life of the whole school community, and 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 through the school's whole environment, with appropriate statues and colourful displays. The school is currently using the diocesan 'A Year of Prayer' as an opportunity to strengthen prayer life throughout the whole school and parish community.

- The centrality of prayer life reaches out to all pupils, regardless of faith or family background, and includes both staff and parents. The parish priest is a frequent and encouraging presence to the children and there are strong links between parish and school. Significant moments in the Church's liturgical year are celebrated as a whole community and are well supported by parents and parish. The programme of hymns and music is uplifting and adds joy and celebration to the well-planned assemblies and liturgies.
- The pupils' knowledge and understanding of prayer and Catholic liturgy is secure, with progression in the traditional prayers as they get older. They are taken carefully through the structure of the Mass, and strong prayer links with the parish particularly during the sacramental preparation programme. Their prayer life is further enriched through days on visits or retreats. For example, the spiritual outdoor experiences such as the day on the Malvern Hills, and joint experiences with their peers in the Aquinas partnership.

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

- Leaders and governors understand liturgy and worship, how to ensure its quality, and how to sustain and nurture the prayer life of the school community. This is led by the headteacher, the deputy head teachers (who is also the RE coordinator) and the parish priest. There are formal procedures to monitor, evaluate, and further enrich prayer life, and some written evidence of systematic appraisal in documents such as the governors' minutes, which evidence the impact of evaluation on improvement. This area of continuous evaluation is highlighted for development in the school's own self-evaluation document. Leaders offer models of good practice themselves and this patently influences the ethos of the whole school community.
- The spirituality of the staff is well supported through Inset days of training and reflection both in school and with the Aquinas group. This supports them in planning for worship and enables them to become more knowledgeable about the liturgical rhythm of the Church.
- Parents and parishioners are kept well informed and engaged with the school, by the daily morning welcome given on the playground by the head and deputy head, by newsletter and the school's very informative and inclusive website. The group of parents met during the inspection were fulsome in their praise and gratitude for the care, concern, and openness the school shows towards them and how closely and swiftly it supports them in times of difficulty.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 140 parental questionnaires received. All were positive about the school and their children's education. Some typical responses included:

'The school is promoting values that I would like my children to live by. The school is exceptionally helpful and supportive'.

'The school supports each child to become an engaged and curious learner and confident'.

'The school provides opportunities for my child to develop spiritually'.

'All of the teachers go out of their way to help each child reach their goal'.

'Very grateful to all staff for the atmosphere and environment they create through their faith'.

'I liked the atmosphere when I walked in the first time'.

'Teacher and pupil relationships, kind and supportive staff'.