



INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's Catholic Primary School
Webbs Wood Road, Bradley Stoke, Bristol, BS32 8EJ
Telephone: 01454 866390
E-mail address: admin@stmarysbs.org.uk

DfE Number: 803 3300

Executive Headteacher: Mrs M Mainwaring
Chair of Governors: Mr I Greenaway

**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: 23rd/ 24th January 2019
Date of previous inspection: 26th/27th March 2014

Reporting Inspector: Mrs A Barrett
Additional Inspector: Mr F Toner

Description of school

St Mary's is one of two schools serving the Parish of Holy Family Catholic Church, Patchway Bristol. There are currently 206 pupils on roll, with seven classes. The proportion of pupils baptised Catholic is 77% with 12% from other Christian denominations and 6% from other faiths. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.

The proportion of pupils who have an SEN statement or an educational health and care plan is below the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average and those speaking English as an additional language is also well above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium is well below the national average.

There have been a number of changes to staffing since the last inspection. The previous headteacher (who was the RE lead) left in August 2018. A new part-time RE lead was appointed in the autumn term of 2018. From September 2018, the school has been working in partnership with Christ the King Catholic Primary, Thornbury, with the headteacher from this school acting as executive headteacher for both schools. The chair of governors, link RE governor and deputy headteacher were in post at the previous Section 48 inspection.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

Grade 2

This is a good school because:

- Leaders and governors are committed to the Church's mission and are well regarded by the school community;
- The new executive headteacher, together with her deputy and leadership team, provide secure and effective leadership, building on the school's strong Catholic foundations. Together they are ensuring a smooth transition which will enable the school to develop and grow;
- The school's strong Catholic identity and ethos permeates through all aspects of its life and promotes an inclusive, outward looking community which values the individual;
- The strong systems for providing pastoral care for both pupils and staff are at the heart of the school's mission and are commendable;
- The school's high standard of behaviour engenders a culture of respect among pupils for themselves and others;
- The quality of teaching is good across the key stages and sometimes outstanding;
- The links between parish and school and the ongoing support of the link governor remain excellent;

-
- The collaboration with other Catholic schools is proving very effective in driving up standards in RE, improving teacher knowledge and sharing good practice;
 - Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of the school's life.

The capacity of the school community to improve is good

The capacity of the school to improve is good and should continue to grow from strength to strength under the new leadership team. The three areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection have been effectively addressed but should continue to remain a focus in light of changes to staffing and the new outcomes for RE.

What the school should do to improve further

- Leaders and governors should implement a more formal system for evaluating and reporting on the impact of actions taken to improve the Catholic life and prayer life of the school in order to plan future improvements. In preparation for this, Foundation Governors should attend appropriate refresher diocesan training;
- Build on the successful developments within chaplaincy provision by providing planned opportunities for the team to monitor and evaluate the impact of their work in this area;
- Enable all pupils to contribute in a planned and systematic way to the school's evaluation of its Catholic life, RE and prayer life and develop their skills in initiating their own liturgies;
- Teachers should ensure a more consistent approach to marking (in line with school policy) to enable all pupils to have a clear understanding of what they need to do in order to improve;

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

- Pupils demonstrate a clear sense of belonging to the school, parish and wider community. They are proud of their school and are confident in discussing the recently adopted Jesuit values statements, and in applying these to their everyday lives.
- The school's high standards of behaviour engenders a culture of respect among pupils for themselves and others. This fosters strong relationships and respect for those from different cultures and backgrounds. This is evident in their daily lives and in their positive response to international events, Rosary assemblies in different languages, SARI (Stand Against Racism and Inequality) focus weeks and links with other countries such as Nepal.
- Pupils show interest in the religious life of others and, as they move through the school, grow in confidence in expressing their own views and beliefs whilst valuing the views of those from other faith perspectives. This was clearly demonstrated during the inspection period, when Judaism was focused on as part of the annual multi-faith week.
- Pupils are alert to the needs of others, both within and beyond the school community, demonstrating a good understanding of how to act in the light of Gospel values to support others who are less fortunate. This is evident in all pupils' involvement in class-led CAFOD fundraising events which they have chosen, such as an obstacle course challenge in Reception, a 'Walk the World challenge' in Y4 to a 'Tough Mudder Challenge' in Y6. In addition, two classes were involved in running a Fairtrade Café as part of a Fairtrade fortnight, in which parents were invited to sample refreshments made with Fairtrade products.
- The chaplaincy team, in particular, have benefited from the range of opportunities provided to share their faith and to contribute to the common good in the school and wider community. They have, for example, been involved in leading a harvest festival with a focus on providing donations to local foodbanks and whole school Remembrance Service. In addition, they are involved in Parish Sunday Mass with their sister parish school and are engaged in planning Advent and Lent reflections with children from other school's chaplaincy teams.
- The chaplaincy team provide excellent role models for other pupils and has grown from strength to strength over the years under the excellent guidance of the chaplaincy lead and support from the link RE governor. The role of

chaplainship however, could be further strengthened by providing planned opportunities for them to monitor and evaluate the impact of their work in this area. In addition, consideration should be given to develop further strategies to enable all pupils to contribute in a planned and systematic way to the school's evaluation of its Catholic life and mission and take a lead in planning improvements to it.

- Pupils benefit hugely from the long tradition of excellent links between the school and parish, with the parish priest a regular visitor to the school.

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

- The school's recent review of its Mission Statement led to it adopting the Jesuit values statements as its school values system. This has been enthusiastically adopted by both staff and pupils and has proved to be effective in providing a common language for all, linking closely with the school's strong Catholic mission and ethos. This, alongside the strong chaplaincy provision is very effective in promoting the Catholic Life of the school.
- There is a strong sense of community which permeates school life and is evident in the quality of relations that exist between staff and pupils. The school is committed to providing continuing professional development (CPD) in relation to its Catholic identity and mission, through joint training with other Catholic primary schools, alongside a joint retreat day
- The school environment, with its age appropriate icons, statues, RE and values displays (in both classrooms and corridors), is explicit in its reflection of its mission and Catholic identity. The mission statement is displayed in all classrooms and offices and each classroom has a prayer corner. Discussion with pupils indicated that they would value being more involved in setting up these prayer areas.
- The school's strong promotion of high standards of behaviour, steeped in Gospel values, combined with staff who provide excellent role models of mutual respect, is highly effective in creating an inclusive, supportive community for all.
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) reflect Catholic teachings and principles. These programmes are currently being updated with a view to updating the relevant policies when the process has been completed.
- The school is exceedingly attentive to the pastoral needs of both pupils and staff, ensuring that the needs of individuals, especially those with complex needs, are recognised and catered for. The work in this area is to be commended.

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

- Leaders and governors are committed to, and effective in, promoting the Catholic life of the school, viewing it as a core leadership responsibility. The school engages with diocesan policies and initiatives and promotes the Bishop's vision throughout the school.
- Until July 2018, the monitoring and evaluation of provision of the school's Catholic life was undertaken by the previous headteacher, in collaboration with the link governor. This role is now being undertaken by the new executive headteacher in collaboration with the deputy headteacher who oversees chaplaincy and PSHE. Their commitment to developing and growing the school's Catholic life is strong and this bodes well for the future. Together they work in close liaison with the recently appointed RE lead.
- The provision for the Catholic life of the school is given priority and is an integral part of its life. Curriculum and professional development (CPD) has an annual focus relating to the Catholic life of the school. Consequently, staff (especially new ones) are developing a good understanding of the school's mission, enabling them to shape and support it.
- Leaders and governors are committed to the school's mission and Catholic life and lead by example. The link governor, in particular, has provided ongoing guidance and challenge, engaging in learning walks and supporting teachers as appropriate. He also makes an excellent contribution to the school's prayer life, in his role as priest, and acts as health and well-being link governor.
- The school has effective strategies in place for engaging with parents. For example, parents have been sent regular reminders in the school newsletter about how they can support the Jesuit values statements at home. This, alongside the ongoing engagement with parents in its pastoral life, is a strength.
- The new executive headteacher, in collaboration with other leaders and governors, is committed to sustaining and building on the school's strong Catholic tradition, and this remains an ongoing priority for the school. The time is now ripe, as the school moves towards the next stage in its development, to build on and further strengthen systems for monitoring and evaluating its Catholic life in order to measure impact and plan for future improvements. A clear delineation in monitoring Catholic Life, RE and Prayer life is recommended in order to support this process.

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

- Overall, pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities across the key stages with no significant variation between groups of pupils. Pupils of all ages, enjoy their learning in RE because of the excellent relationships promoted by their teachers and their commitment to the teaching of the subject.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary, with their extremely positive attitudes to their learning in RE making a positive impact on the progress they make. They respond quickly to instructions from their teachers and are confident to ask for help when needed. Pupils' good conduct reflects the school's efforts to promote high standards within a strong culture of respect for the individual within a safe, caring and inclusive environment.
- Pupils are able to use religious language in a meaningful way and most understand the implications of belief for everyday life. They are also aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and are encouraged to reflect spiritually and think ethically as they progress through the school. The depth and extent of this is, however, an area for ongoing development in light of the more challenging new content of the curriculum.
- The quality of pupils' current written work is good overall and a particular strength in upper KS2. In addition, the school's strong Catholic ethos, prayer life and parish links play an important role in supporting and developing pupils' religious literacy.
- Pupils respond positively to the range of activities provided by their teachers. They speak enthusiastically about their enjoyment of those activities which engage them in their learning, allowing them to take a more participatory role within it. For example, the very successful Y5 visit to the synagogue (as part of Judaism Faith Week), enabled them to develop an understanding of 'walking in the shoes of a Jewish believer', encouraging empathy and understanding from another believer's perspective.
- As teachers continue to develop in their knowledge and understanding of the new Age-Related Expectations (AREs), they should feel confident in challenging pupils further in their learning especially in relation to AT2 (learning from religion) and AT3 (analysis and evaluation).
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' progress and attainment is in line with diocesan guidance. The school, under the aegis of the previous RE leader, has established a good track record in assessing standards of progress and attainment which is being built on by the current post holder. This should

remain an ongoing focus, especially in the light of the new AREs, with a particular focus on supporting teachers to provide accurate and quality assessment.

- Pupils focus well on their learning because teachers reinforce expectations for conduct and set clear tasks that challenge pupils.

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

- The quality of teaching is good across the key stages and sometimes outstanding. Teachers are effective in ensuring that pupils are consistently interested in their learning and making progress and employ a wide range of appropriate teaching strategies to enable this. Overall, learning activities are well matched to pupils' needs but, at times, they need to be more carefully constructed to ensure that they are clearly understood and accessible to pupils of all abilities, especially the less able.
- Teaching assistants are effective in providing support for individual pupils and play an important role in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive adaptations which enable them to participate fully in lessons. As a result of their support, many targeted pupils make good progress in RE, which is effective in helping them to catch up with their peers.
- Teachers are becoming more confident and competent in the teaching of RE and are committed to improving their subject knowledge and pedagogy in this area. Although they have found some aspects of the new content challenging, they are, with the support of the previous and current RE lead and link governor, working hard to address this. Teachers value the support and training that the school has provided and, in particular, their opportunities to train with colleague in other Catholic schools.
- Teachers expect and encourage all pupils to work with positive attitudes so that they can apply themselves and make good progress. They are respected by their pupils and are very effective in creating a 'can do' culture within their class with a strong focus on celebrating achievement. This, in turn, secures good levels of motivation on the part of pupils.
- Teachers endeavour to develop, consolidate and deepen pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills within the context of the new, more challenging, AREs. These, in turn, are dependent on good subject knowledge on the part of the teacher and require 'catch-up' for pupils on subject knowledge which, under the new scheme, will have been covered in previous years.
- Overall, teachers provide appropriate feedback to pupils but, at times, it is not always clear, in relation to their written work, what they need to do in order to improve. Consequently, (in line with school policy) there is a need for a more consistent approach across the board.

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

- Leaders and governors ensure that the religious education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference in every respect and in each key stage. The school follows the approved diocesan materials and God Matters programme. The RE policy should, however, be updated to reflect the changes in relation to the new AREs.
- Overall, the school is committed to providing a broad and balanced curriculum with a clear focus on promoting the development of the whole child. This not only enhances the RE provision but makes an important contribution to fulfilling the school's mission: 'Celebrating Excellence through our Faith and Learning'.
- RE is effectively monitored and informs an RE action plan, with plans in hand for the new RE lead to engage in monitoring activities with the link governor. In addition, RE data is gathered and scrutinised on a regular basis to identify areas of strength and areas for development.
- The school engages in moderation of pupils' work with other Catholic primary schools and this will remain an ongoing focus. This is especially important, given that all schools are in the early stages of implementing the new diocesan units and much can be gained from working collaboratively.
- The new RE leader has readily embraced her new role. She is keen to develop and grow, welcoming appropriate training to support her in this, especially in relation to monitoring and evaluation, leading CPD for staff and engaging in moderation work. This bodes well for the future.

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

- Pupils behave reverently during Masses, reflections, services and assemblies. They are at ease when praying with their school community and appreciate what is taking place. Their excellent behaviour is underpinned by Gospel values and supported by a clear behaviour policy and the 'Good to Be Green' initiative to encourage good choices of behaviour.
- Prayer and collective worship are an integral part of the school's life, are valued by both pupils and adults, and supported by parents. There are regular opportunities to participate in Mass as part of the whole school and with members of their class.
- Pupils' involvement in preparing and leading worship has improved since the last inspection and remains an ongoing focus for the school. In particular, members of the chaplaincy club, act as role models for their peers in helping to plan, organise and take part in liturgies and reflections. Pupils respond positively when given opportunities to write their own prayers to share with others.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the church's liturgical year, its seasons and feasts with the whole school prayer plan acting as a useful guide for both teachers and pupils to ensure that the themes chosen reflect the liturgical year and the Catholic character of the school. In particular, members of the chaplaincy team are developing a good understanding of the approaches required in the planning of appropriate worship opportunities. This now needs to be extended to a wider range of pupils.
- Pupils readily respond to opportunities for prayer and worship, and discussions with them indicated that they would hugely benefit from more planned opportunities to become involved in reviewing the prayer life of the school.
- The Chaplaincy team is now fully embedded in school life and takes an active role in leading assemblies, reflections, Masses and fund raising activities throughout the year. They respond positively to opportunities to work with children from other chaplaincy groups. This includes planning joint Lent and Advent reflections, which they, in turn, lead in their own school.
- The next stage is for the school to move forward in building on the success within chaplaincy to involve all pupils in the preparation of whole school worship. This will, however, require a focus on staff training on developing spirituality and preparing for class Masses and liturgy. This training should

ensure that appropriate progression is built into liturgies and services for all pupils across the school.

- Links with the parish are strong with well planned, interactive, opportunities provided by the parish priest for pupils to visit the church during Lent and Advent. The parish priest helps plan these visits and ensure that pupils are provided with an opportunity to ask and answer questions in order to develop their understanding further.

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

- Praying together is a daily and regular experience for pupils and staff. Prayer and collective worship form an integral part of the school's life and are included in almost all school celebrations. Every pupil in this inclusive community, irrespective of his or her faith background, is welcomed and encouraged to participate fully in the school's prayer life.
- There are regular opportunities for pupils to attend Mass. The school benefits hugely from the ongoing support of the parish priest who has enabled pupils to experience a child friendly ' Parish Mass' which they attend (on a rotational basis) on a Wednesday morning. This is highly effective in enabling them to grow in their understanding of the Eucharist as being central to Catholic life. In addition, as mentioned above, members of the chaplaincy club are actively involved, in a triannual celebration of Sunday Mass where parents are invited. Pupils' prayer life is further enriched through opportunities to participate in retreats in year 4 and 6.
- There are opportunities provided by the school for staff to support their own prayer life which includes a weekly staff reflection and attendance at a joint retreat day with their other Catholic schools.

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

- Key leaders have a good understanding of the liturgical year, seasons and feasts and set high standards for other staff to emulate. Other staff willingly accept responsibility for leading prayer and involving pupils in their class. However, strong consideration should be given to enhancing their knowledge and understanding of the purpose of prayer and to develop their skills in the wide variety of methods and styles of prayer. This is especially important for new members of staff and those who are not Catholic.
- Leaders and governors continue to develop and improve the engagement of parents and other adults in the community in the school's collective worship.

-
- The school has rightly recognised the need to make more use of liturgical music and movement to enhance its prayer life. This, however, will need to be supported with appropriate INSET for staff and could be combined with training on leading prayer with young children.
 - Leaders and governors are committed to sustaining and building on the school's strong tradition as a prayerful community. The time is now ripe, as the school moves towards the next stage in its development, to build on and further strengthen systems for monitoring and evaluating its prayer life in order to measure impact and plan for future improvements. As mentioned (in relation to the school's Catholic life) a clear delineation in monitoring Catholic Life, RE and Prayer life is recommended in order to assist this process.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 80 parental questionnaires received. They were extremely positive about the school and their children's education. However, some parents considered that they did not receive sufficient information about what is taught in relationship and sex education (RSE) or their child's progress in religious education (RE). Some typical responses included:

Some typical responses in relation to why they chose St Mary's for their child/children included:

"There is a strong culture of community learning and achievement. The atmosphere in the school is one that is likely to cultivate a solid education and grounding for our child"

"This school is lovely, very good relations between children and staff. Everyone helps each other. Also I like the connection between school and Holy Family church"

"As Catholics, I want my children to grow in faith and this school strongly embodies that culture and values I cherish"

"The attention to each individual, considered as a unique child who is supported to achieve their potential"

"The close knit family feel, the genuine and consistent focus on spiritual development and the way individuals are valued"

"The fact that it puts faith at the heart of what it does makes the school special"

"It achieves good outcomes and promotes positive values. It is a warm and friendly school"

"I chose St Mary's because children are taught the key gospel values of the Catholic church and they feel safe and happy"