



INSPECTION REPORT

St. George's Catholic Primary School
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DfE Number: 5207
URN: 126481

Headteacher: Mrs Louise Croker
Chair of Governors: Mr John Foster

**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: 2-3rd May 2018
Date of previous inspection: 22-23rd May 2013

Reporting Inspector: Mr J Skivington
Additional Inspector: Mrs C Baron

Description of school

St George's is a smaller than average primary school with 171 on roll, of whom 46% are baptised Catholics. It serves the parish of St. George's, Warminster and takes pupils from the town and outlying villages. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is 16%. Taken together, 44% of children are recipients of Pupil Premium and FSM, while a further 20% have SEN support. Warminster is a garrison town and there are 21 service children on roll. The school has appointed a new head teacher starting in September due to the retirement of the current head.

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' 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.
- Outcomes for religious education (RE) are generally good. The quality of teaching is variable and is closely linked to pupils' achievement and progress. The leadership and management of RE in monitoring and planning for improvement needs strengthening.
- The provision for the prayer life of the school and the pupils' wholehearted responses are good. The leadership and management are fully committed to, and successful in, sustaining and nurturing the rich spiritual life of the whole school community.

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

- The existing head teacher who has successfully led the school will be retiring at the end of this academic year. In its own self-evaluation, the school judges itself to be good and the inspection has validated this. The areas for development highlighted in the previous inspection - assessment for learning, and pupil self-assessment - have improved, with well embedded structures evident in the pupils' work books. The full impact of these structures on pupil achievement in RE across all year groups is not always consistent, but is making a real difference especially when next steps to improve are understood by the pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Secure a more systematic and rigorous monitoring and evaluation process of RE by governors and leaders, in order to plan and implement improvements in provision and pupil outcomes.
- Ensure that learning objectives and tasks are clearly differentiated and challenging, in order to meet the specific learning needs of all groups of pupils.

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

In its own self-evaluation, the school has rated itself as 'good', which the inspection validates however there are aspects which are moving towards outstanding. Pupils appreciate and participate willingly in the Catholic life of the school, not least by their outstanding behaviour in the classroom and around the school, which reflects the values and character of the school.

Pupils take on positions of responsibility and leadership of Catholic life, particularly the chaplaincy team, which is composed of 12 juniors and 6 infants, and is built on the previous Prayer Council. They participated in the diocesan-led Chaplaincy Team Development day, and came away with ideas which they have incorporated into their Chaplaincy Development Plan, reflecting how they can 'bring hope to others'.

They plan to strengthen mission through their outreach to others in the community and beyond, through charity work such as Cafod, the Mini Vinnies, the Harvest Festival food bank and Mary's Meals. The chaplaincy contribution to deepening the prayer life includes designing a prayer garden and taking a leading role in liturgies and assemblies, as well as visits and retreats.

Further opportunities for all pupils to contribute and participate in a systematic way in evaluating the Catholic character of the school are beginning to be implemented. Helpful pro-formas for pupil feedback and review of the impact of their planning and presenting have been introduced. The new Mission Statement being discussed and prayed about is to include pupils' insights and suggestions, couched in child friendly language. The pupils have also produced an excellent video to demonstrate and explain to new parents what is special about school life in St. George's.

Although there are some aspects which are moving towards outstanding, the school needs to strengthen further the involvement of all pupils evaluating and articulating its Catholic life.

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 evident in the environment and the colourful displays around the school.

The chaplaincy group are positive role models for the rest of the children particularly in their living out of the values which the school seeks to instil. The school increasingly welcomes their feedback, and that of their parents, through review and questionnaires, such as the recent (March) parent survey on how they see the identity of the school.

St. George'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, especially during multi faith week. Some of the pupils' work on Islam and Hinduism are appropriately displayed around the school.

Very effective pastoral support and care is given to all. This is effectively modelled by the head teacher who also helps to nurture the spiritual life of the staff. They are helped

through example and CPD to understand the Catholic nature of the school, and as a result they become committed to its mission and are real role models for the children.

The quality of the Relationships and Sex Education Programme 'Journey in Love' is appropriate, ratified by the governors and published for the parents. The school provides many opportunities for the pupil's spiritual and moral development right across the curriculum.

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 frequently, through the Ethos and Mission committee. Governors visit the school and attend assemblies and liturgies when they are able; for instance, they carried out a monitoring visit of classroom assemblies in November and gave positive feedback to the teachers and pupils. However, the evaluation of Catholic life and outcomes is not always systematically recorded in order to plan for future improvements through clear, measurable objectives. This is an issue which needs to be addressed.

Leaders and governors are well thought of by the parents in their feedback, and they offer models of good practice and commitment to the Catholic ethos of the school. They are aware of the Pastoral Vision for the Diocese, "Future full of Hope", and keep themselves involved through diocesan training. They are open to advice and collaboration with the other partner Catholic schools in the Emmaus hub.

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 and make good progress from their starting points, so that by the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have reached their expected level of attainment and achievement. Progress continues in the later years, but there are some inconsistencies linked to weaker teaching. However, by the end of key Stage 2 most pupils have made the expected level of progress.
- There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils with special educational needs or with disabilities, thanks to the help they receive from very supportive teaching assistants, and planned intervention. There are some good examples of reflective writing in different styles in some year groups. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils had a meaningful, questioning discussion, which was an outstanding and fruitful example of independent thinking and group work.
- Where the progress of learning is slower it is often because the learning tasks are not sufficiently differentiated, particularly for the less able, but also for the more able pupils who are insufficiently challenged.
- The extent of pupils' religious literacy develops as they go through the school although there are gaps in their understanding of some key concepts. In discussion, for instance, they were able to name the seven Sacraments, but found it difficult to articulate what a sacrament is.
- Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and can learn independently, in pairs, and in groups.

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 the inspection observed teaching that was better than good, but also teaching that required some improvement.
- Where teaching is good and better, teachers have a good rapport with the pupils and have high expectations of effort. Questioning is strong where it checks understanding, but also challenges pupils to think more deeply.
- The marking policy is embedded but inconsistently successful in directing pupils' learning, especially in the varying quality of the teachers' comments and the pupils' responses. In the best lessons observed pupils are offered the opportunity to improve their work with guidance from the teacher.
- The assessment of pupils' work is carried out regularly and levels of attainment are in the pupils' books. The pupils know what they have learned in any task or topic, but often less aware precisely how they can move on to the next level. Although data is collected on the progress of pupils' progress, it is not always used effectively to plan for future improvements.

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

- This is an area of leadership and management which needs strengthening.
- There is a need for; more robust and rigorous systems of monitoring, better planning for improvement and a more informed evaluation of impact upon learning outcomes. Data gathered needs to be used more effectively in planning for improvement.
- The subject leader has already proved to be a supportive role model for the teachers in developing their subject knowledge. There has been some monitoring of the quality of RE teaching through lesson observations, learning walks, and book scrutiny, but the data gathered needs to be used more effectively as a tool for planning and improvement. The positive support provided through diocesan training and collaboration with the other RE leaders in the Emmaus hub is readily taken up and proving invaluable.
- The RE curriculum meets the Bishops' Conference requirements, as well as any additional requirements of the diocesan Bishop. The school is currently attempting a mapping exercise to assess how better to enrich the present curriculum using elements of the God Matters syllabus.

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

- Within this section there are aspects which are outstanding, particularly the pupils' attention and demeanour during prayer.
- 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 joyful willingness to play a part in assemblies and whole school celebrations. Their demeanour, body language, and attentiveness at prayer are outstanding.
- The assemblies observed during the inspection were uplifting, led confidently by the chaplaincy and older pupils, with enthusiastic singing and dance, but also pause for reflection. The school is building on this powerful 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 but it is not yet fully embedded.
- There are useful planning sheets to guide the pupils in their worship preparation, and these include space to review and evaluate their efforts and suggest improvement. This 'even better if' self evaluation is the next step 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, an understanding of the structure of the Mass as well as Saints' days and the liturgical year. The prayer areas in each class are an attractive, reflective focus for daily prayer and have examples of the pupils' own prayers and poems, such as those based on 'Alleluia', the 'Exsultet' and 'Rejoice in the Resurrection'.
- The parish priest is a frequent and encouraging presence to the children and there are strong links between parish and school.

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 the school's whole environment, with appropriate statues and colourful displays, including the Seven Sacraments and St. George's Dragons. An area for an outside prayer garden has been identified and the chaplaincy team encouraged to become 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 Nativity, 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.

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
- The spirituality of the staff is well supported through days of training and reflection. They are also supported in planning for worship and becoming more knowledgeable about the liturgical rhythm of the Church. This ensures that the staff become more confident to model, and then pass on ownership of the initiating, planning, and presenting of liturgies to the pupils themselves.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 32 parental questionnaires received. All were very positive about the school and their children's education. Some typical responses included:

'It is a school with an inclusive nature and acceptance of individuals from a range of different backgrounds.'

'The school encourages a relationship with God and an awareness of our responsibilities to the wider world..... there are children of other nationalities and children who aren't Christian. In spite of this, the school feels inclusive of everyone and the children are accepting of each other. This is very important in our world today.'

'I am happy to see my daughter is growing up without fear, with confidence, belief and awareness of reciprocity and the needs of others.'

'We really value the way our children are learning about their faith and it is our hope and prayer that they will carry this into their adult lives.'

'It is a very welcoming school and everyone feels included. There are lots of events that involve parents, and lots of charity work.'