



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

INSPECTION REPORT

St.Philip's Catholic Primary School

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DfES Number: 834/3343

Headteacher: Miss Fran Morrison

Chair of Governors: Mrs Melanie Gaughan

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection 27th September 2012
Date of previous inspection: 22nd October 2008

Lead Inspector: Mrs C Walker
Associate Inspector: Mrs A Ireland

Description of School

St. Philip's is a one-form entry school for pupils aged 4 to 11. There are 212 pupils on roll, 50% of pupils are Catholics. The school is situated in the Mayfield Deanery and is maintained by East Sussex Local Authority. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and has been in post since January 2010.

The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is average; these pupils represent a wide range of different backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. A very few of these pupils join the school at the early stages of learning English. In some cohorts there is a higher proportion of girls than is usually seen. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average, including those on school action plus and those with a statement of special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

St Philip's is a good Catholic school, which knows itself well. The mission statement "The child is the focus of the school and is valued as an individual and is one of God's children" is clearly understood by all members of the school community. The school values and ethos are visibly reflected in the exemplary behaviour and attitudes of all pupils throughout the school. Spiritual and moral developments of the pupils are a strength. The staff are a strong and cohesive team, fully supportive of one another and providing excellent role models for pupils. The school is a warm and welcoming place. Displays of pupils work contribute to the learning environment and enhance the school's Catholic ethos. Prayer areas are central to all classrooms and the entrance hall displays a prayer book based on the theme "God's love is all we need". The headteacher's clear vision and direction means that the school is rapidly moving forward. The standards of work seen are a result of good teaching, leadership and management and therefore the school's overall effectiveness is judged as good.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

Religious Education has been on the school development plan for the last two years. Accurate self-evaluation ensures staff at all levels are clear about areas for development. Religious Education is monitored regularly in line with the schools monitoring procedures. Teachers are more confident in planning and using scripture to support their teaching. Development needs have been tackled energetically and good improvement has been made to address key issues since the previous inspection. The school's own self-evaluation is very accurate and thorough. The strength of the whole staff team ensures the continued commitment to raising standards.

Grade : 2

What the school should do to improve further

Build on the work underway to provide a wider range of challenges for the more able children.

Continue to embed the use of constructive marking that has begun this year so it is used consistently across the whole school.

Develop opportunities for assessment for learning. These should include pupil self-assessment and peer assessment.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Strong leadership and management underpin the school's success and provide a clear vision for the future. The headteacher, acting deputy and governors work very well together to promote and celebrate a strong Catholic ethos. The headteacher has successfully created a calm, reflective community in which pupils' spiritual, moral and social development flourishes. She leads a united team, which is committed to the well being of every pupil. The school's distinctively Catholic identity is at the very centre of the life of the school. The governors know the school's strengths and areas for development. They contribute well to the school's development plan and the school's self-analysis and take a full part in the life of the school, making frequent visits to assemblies and other events. A parent commented, "St Philip's is a wonderful place to learn, work and pray." Another parent echoed this by saying "The consistency of leadership of Church and school are the hallmark of its continued success."

Grade : 2

The Prayer Life of the School

Pupils have many opportunities to take part in a varied programme of masses and liturgies throughout the year. There are special prayer groups during Advent, and a Rosary group twice a year. Pupils' spiritual development is further enhanced at the end of Key Stage 2 through their participation in a retreat during the summer term. Engagement in prayer is encouraged through the quality prayer tables evident in each classroom. They are age appropriate and provide a focus for quiet contemplation. Prayer lies at the very centre of the life of the school. Prayers are said at significant times of the day and are incorporated into Religious Education lessons.

Pupils compose their own prayers, which are often incorporated into class prayer time. Opportunities to pause for thought and quiet moments of contemplation are facilitated by the introduction of a new school chapel. There is a great depth of spiritual awareness seen in many classrooms. This is the direct result of the importance placed on pupils' spiritual development. This was clearly evident during the whole school assembly. Pupils were encouraged to reflect on the importance of their grandparents through the use of I.C.T. Attitudes to worship are extremely positive with staff and pupils demonstrating high levels of participation in worship. All pupils enter respectfully, sing tunefully, listen attentively and participate appropriately. They particularly enjoy going to the local church on a weekly basis.

Grade 2

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

St. Philip's is a very inclusive school. The school and parish work very effectively together; sharing events and fund raising opportunities. These have included a joint parish and school Christmas fair, CAFOD and various other charities. There is also a well established and growing connection between the school and parish.

The Religious Education programme, which includes the study of world faiths, encourages pupils in their understanding of how other faith traditions can enrich their own. Other faiths are taught from Year 1 to Year 6 following the programme of study in 'Here I Am.' In addition pupils learn about a variety of festivals from other faiths and cultures. The school has a long association with a school in France. As a result of this twinning project the local town of Uckfield has now signed a charter, which has officially recognised this partnership and twinned the town as well. The school is actively involved within their own local community supporting various charities such as 'Hats for Hospices' and 'Sports Relief.'

Strong links exist between the deanery schools that meet regularly to share good practice and staff training opportunities.

The School Council plays an important role within the school community, talking to visitors, initiating fund raising activities and proposing ideas for development.

Communication and consultation with parents is very good. Regular parents' discussion groups give parents a voice. Parents are proud of the school and their role within it. One parent summed this up by saying 'pupils are developing a real sense of worth and an understanding of who they are.'

Inclusion of all is a central goal and shared vision. Pupils and staff have a common sense of belonging, to the school, to the parish and to the wider community. The school community respect difference, value diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all.

Grade 2

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Pupils start school with average expectations of attainment. They make good progress throughout school. Their attainment is good in AT1 (knowledge and understanding of religion) and AT2 (ability to reflect on meaning).

Pupils' books demonstrate their ability to record in a variety of ways. They take great pride in their work. Skills gained from other curriculum areas are applied to Religious Education to strengthen their understanding and help their progress.

Pupils have very positive attitudes and are enthusiastic about the 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme. A pupil explained, "It is fun. We learn more about the Bible and our religion and other religions". Without exception behaviour across the school is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate great kindness and respect towards one another both in lessons and around the school.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Lessons are well planned and schemes of work are well differentiated. Pupils say they enjoy Religious Education lessons and this is seen in the exemplary behaviour and attitudes to their learning. Subject knowledge is very secure and skillful questioning helps progress and deepens understanding. This was consistently seen in all lessons. Classroom management and organisation is generally good. This enables pupils to settle to work swiftly and complete their tasks. Where teaching is very good, there is an enthusiastic delivery, excellent pace and a range of challenging activities. Constructive marking is now developing well. Opportunities are used to allow pupils to reflect on their own learning and respond to feedback. Targets are set for pupils and this now needs to be embedded to ensure pupils know the next steps in their learning. To ensure standards continue to rise, pupils should now be encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning through peer assessment and self-assessment.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The Religious Education curriculum is broad and balanced promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and preparing them for the next stage of their education. Provision is made for periods of reflection and is enhanced through the skilful use of ICT and music.

Religious Education displays celebrate children's work and the presence of a good range of good quality religious artifacts enhances Religious Education as a core subject of the school. The school ensures that 10% of the length of the taught week is given to Religious Education for each Key Stage. The curriculum is further enhanced through the use of circle time and EPR, which is linked to the Religious Education policy. Sex Education is taught throughout the school within the context of Catholic teaching and parents were involved in the development of the policy.

The school is very effective in meeting the Religious Education curriculum needs and the interests of learners. The content of the Religious Education follows the 'Here I Am' programme and all teachers use the recommended planning sheets provided by the Diocese. Teachers are well supported by the subject leader who monitors planning, undertakes lesson observations and leads staff in moderating pupils' work. This is echoed by the school's mission statement where it states 'the curriculum provides for the development of skills, knowledge, understanding and values. The child's natural curiosity and powers of learning are developed and fostered by everyone in the school community.'

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

Self-evaluation is accurate and communicated to all stakeholders, leading to very effective strategic planning. The dedicated headteacher is committed to involving all stakeholders to continue to drive up standards in Religious Education and uphold the strong Catholic ethos already evident. Parents are actively involved, consulted and responded to. The Religious Education subject leader provides clear, enthusiastic guidance and supports all staff who share a commitment to the subject's aims and values. She has worked extremely hard to ensure that Religious Education has a high profile within the school. This is echoed in the whole school planning. The Religious Education subject Leader, through lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils work, monitors the Religious Education curriculum on a regular basis. The subject leader attends appropriate in-service training and co-ordinators' meetings and has the opportunity to ensure information is effectively disseminated to all staff. The parish priest, who is the RE governor, provides very strong and welcomed support for all staff. He has undertaken in-service training for all staff.

Grade 2