



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the
Archbishop of Southwark and Inspection of
Denominational Education under Section 48
of the Education Act 2005

URN 118771

St Richard's Catholic Primary School
Castle Avenue
Dover
CT16 1EZ

Inspection date: 19 June 2014

Chair of Governors:	Mr Andy Rogers
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SECTION 48

Introduction

Description of the school

St Richard's Catholic Primary School is Voluntary Aided. It is in the Dover Deanery of the Archdiocese of Southwark. It is maintained by Kent Local Authority. The principal parishes which the school serves are St Paul's, Dover and Our Lady of Dover, Buckland. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 58%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 10% in all Key Stages.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 184. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is below average. A significant number of pupils join the school at times other than Reception. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Around 10% of the pupils receive extra support in class. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is above average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding	Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 2	Good	Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school in providing Catholic Education

GRADE
2

St Richard's Catholic Primary School is a good school. It has been through an unsettled time over the last several years but is now very stable. The school has flourished under the current leadership.

The Headteacher, staff and governors are totally committed to the continuing development of the school and the welfare and education of all its pupils. The school has a high number of pupils who join the school throughout the year and into different age groups. Families new to this country are welcomed into the school and parish community and helped to settle. Parents are very appreciative of the support they are given. One parent stated that she was overwhelmed by the kindness they had received and how the Headteacher and staff had all come to her child's First Holy Communion, to be part of her child's special day.

The leadership of the Headteacher and senior leadership team partnered with governors is strong and ensures the school is constantly moving forward.

Pupils are well behaved, friendly and polite. Good relationships exist throughout the school community and the welfare of the pupils is paramount. The staff work hard and are committed to the ethos and community spirit of the school.

The quality of the teaching and the creative curriculum ensure the pupils make good progress in their Religious Education lessons.

School parish links are good and the parish priests from the two parishes are frequent and welcome visitors in the school.

The Catholic ethos is apparent in the school and this is reflected in the many attractive and relevant religious displays in the classrooms and around the school.

The issues from the last inspection have been addressed. As the school is aware of its strengths and area to develop it has good capacity to continue to improve.

What steps need to be taken to improve further?

Governors, Headteacher and staff should:

- Ensure there is a cohesive approach to planning and preparing assemblies so that all school assemblies complement each other and are based on the liturgical year, Gospel readings or the current Religious Education topic.
- The school are clear about their strengths and areas to develop in Religious Education. This now needs to be reflected in a specific plan, detailing actions, timeline, budget and desired impact. It should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis, at least three times each academic year.

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school

Pupils participate well in the Catholic life of the school. They are involved in the preparation of school Masses including the readings, hymns and bidding prayers, as well as welcoming and greeting at the beginning of Mass. Some classes are involved in putting together the prayer corners in their classrooms. Year 6 had made models of the Apostles to help portray the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the topic 'Called to Serve' The pupils understand and enjoy key liturgical celebrations such as the Harvest and in particular the Easter Workshops. They took part in the Stations of the Cross in church and really enjoyed that experience.

Pupils are very caring and considerate of each other and respond to the needs of others both in their own community and globally. They have raised money for various charities such as CAFOD and Children in Need. In the community the local Soup Kitchen in Dover is supported through Lenten Lunches and proceeds from the Harvest Mass.

Pupils show an understanding of other religions and cultures. For example, a lesson in a Key Stage 2 classroom was based on a pupil's question about how people of other faiths pray. The lesson was developed by the use of artefacts concerning prayer from different faiths and looking at similarities and differences with the Catholic faith. The pupils were engrossed and asked many interesting questions.

Pupils enjoy responsibility. For example, Year 6 take great pride in being 'Buddies' to the younger children enabling them to settle well into school life. This contributes to the ethos of the school and the strong community spirit.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

Pupils come into school with below average ability. They make good progress across the school and by the end of Year 6 attain standards in line with national standards.

Although some of the pupils are now coming into school with a limited knowledge of the Catholic faith, they acquire a great deal of knowledge and understanding by the end of Key Stage 2. This is due to the good teaching and supportive Catholic ethos of the school.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and are fully engaged and engrossed in their activities. They are keen to do well, focus on the task, are confident and work at a very good pace.

Behaviour is excellent and any poor behaviour is managed without any disruption.

How well pupils respond to and participate in Collective Worship

Pupils are keen to take part and lead assemblies. In the class led assembly observed, all the pupils leading the assembly were given the opportunity to speak and share their pride in their school. One pupil said, "Everyone was very friendly and introduced themselves when I first joined the school." The pupils spoke clearly and with confidence. They sung

joyfully and with enthusiasm. They were able to join in with the prayers.

Pupils know the traditional prayers of the Church. For example, in a Key Stage 2 classroom the prayer at the beginning of the lesson was Our Father which was sung instead of said.

The pupils were very excited about the continuous 100 minutes of prayer in celebration of Fr Peter's 40 year anniversary of his ordination. Each child is writing a prayer on a leaf. They are going to present their prayers in church, one class after another, and display the prayers on a tree. The pupils were looking forward to participating in this event.

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How well leaders, governors and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

Leaders, governors and managers are very committed to the school. The school previously had been through a very unsettled period with change of status and personnel.

The school has now been de-federated and has a strong leadership and governing body. The governing body has a very experienced Chair and a very good structure of subcommittees, which focuses on school improvement. The governors have undergone a comprehensive training schedule. They provide a good balance of challenge and support. They work well with the senior leadership team to ensure the Catholic ethos is maintained. They are very supportive of the whole school/parish community.

The Headteacher, who has very high expectations for the school, the Assistant Headteacher and the senior leadership team work tirelessly to maintain and promote the Catholic ethos of the school. They have a high profile in the parish community attending and supporting parish events.

The parish priests from the two parishes are very supportive of the school, and speak highly of its leadership. They are frequent visitors on a formally and informal basis. For example, attending assemblies to give a blessing and then spending time in the playground talking with the pupils. The pupils are taken to church on a regular basis, where they always feel welcomed and valued.

The home/school/parish relationship is constantly being developed and parents are regularly involved in the life of the school. They are kept well informed and their views are considered through newsletters and questionnaires.

How well leaders, governors and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement for improvement to outcomes for pupils

The Religious Education co-ordinator is totally committed to her role. She and the Headteacher work tirelessly to promote the Catholic ethos and to ensure that Religious Education has a high profile in the school. The co-ordinator's role includes lesson observations, book scrutiny and moderation, and she encourages others to share in that role. She has devised a Religious Education Action Plan but this would benefit from being more specific and focussed with a timeline, budget and responsibilities. She has now put a tracking system in place which ensures pupil progress is constantly monitored and gaps are identified and addressed. There are thorough transition meetings at the end of each year so that information is readily available and passed on to the next teacher.

Governors are kept well informed of the progress and development of Religious Education through regular meetings with the link governor, and updates at governor meetings.

The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education

Teaching is good across the school. There are several elements in place which ensure that teaching is good. There is excellent collaboration between the pupils and talk partners were used effectively in lessons observed. The teachers draw on prior knowledge at the beginning of each lesson ensuring the pupils are ready for the next step. There is good questioning at the beginning of each topic, and generally questions which challenge the pupils thinking. For example, in a Key Stage 2 class in answer to the question "Why are we called to serve" one pupil said, "We all serve God. God trusts us so we trust in others". Lessons have a brisk pace and interesting mix of activities which allow for some independent work, and high expectations of the pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson the independent tasks included drama and retelling the story either as a story board or a written story. The work was completed to a high standard within the time allocated. The pupils ask thoughtful questions which contribute to the development of the lesson. Teaching Assistants are well deployed. They were clear about their role, understood what was required and provide good support in the class.

Marking is very thorough. There is evidence of interactive marking and marking for improvement, to which enables their work to progress.

Lesson objectives at the beginning of each lesson were clear and specific, and pupils were aware of what they needed to learn and how they could progress.

Information and communications technology was used well both as a teaching resource and a pupil aid.

The classrooms are attractive with good resources providing the pupils with a stimulating learning environment.

The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum promotes pupils' learning

The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and now 10% of the timetable is allocated to the teaching of Religious Education. The school uses 'The Way, The Truth and The Life' supplemented by other material. As well as teaching Religious Education as a separate subject it is also integrated into other topics as part of the creative curriculum.

The curriculum is enriched through interesting and imaginative tasks which are meaningful to the pupils.

Pupils with additional educational needs are well catered for so that they can access the curriculum and achieve parity with their peers.

The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral and social development.

Through good quality resources and artefacts, other faiths are being studied. This could be further enhanced, if possible, by the pupils having first-hand experience of other faiths through visitors to school or visits to other places of worship.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

An act of Collective Worship takes place on a daily basis. There are either whole school, key stage or class assemblies. The parish priest is often in attendance to provide a blessing.

Each class leads a regular assembly to which parents are invited. Parents are frequently invited to join the school in prayer and celebration and attendance is good at assemblies and Masses.

In the class led assembly observed the pupils listened attentively and with respect and were able to reflect when invited to do so.

While whole school assemblies on Monday always have a moral dimension, include prayers and can include Bible readings they need to be more focussed on the Catholic life of the school and Church. They should clearly reflect the liturgical year, illustrated with scripture readings or an aspect of the current Religious Education topic being studied in school.

Mass is celebrated in school at least once a term to which parents and parishioners are invited. The school attends Mass in the Church on several occasions such as Harvest, the Epiphany, Ash Wednesday and Pentecost Mass.

The prayer corners in each classroom were relevant and attractive with examples of the pupils' prayers on display.

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