

Catholic Diocese of Northampton



Inspection Report of Denominational Character and Religious Education

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Patrick Road, Corby, NN18 8NT

DCSF School No: 928 3406

URN: 122045

Headteacher: Mrs L Blair

Chair of Governors: Mrs AM Lawson

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M Betts

Associate Inspector: Mrs P Cotton

Date of Inspection: 29 November 2017

Date Report issued: 18 December 2017

Date of previous Inspection: November 2012

The School is in the Trusteeship of the Diocese and in partnership with
Northamptonshire Local Authority

Information about the school

St Patrick's Catholic School is a one-form entry primary school with nursery provision for pupils aged 3 to 11 years. There are 238 children on roll, 77% of whom are baptised Catholic. This compares with 65% at the previous inspection. 54% of teachers are Catholic. The school serves the parish of St Patrick's Church and St John Ogilvie Church. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average and the number of pupils receiving free school meals is above. Around half of pupils come from diverse ethnic backgrounds. The school has a settled and stable staff.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding **2:** Good **3:** Requires improvement **4:** Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school.

Grade 2

St Patrick's School is a good school with outstanding features, committed to enhance the spiritual and academic development of all pupils. The school has a strong Catholic ethos with a dedicated leadership team. Relationships and respect between all staff and pupils are very good and demonstrate the school's Catholic ethos and mission statement "Christ be with me and Christ be within me". One pupil explained "we are one big caring family here". Worship and prayer are central in the school's life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development is very good and this is reflected in their excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes. Pupils are proud of their school and feel valued, respected and listened to. Religious education (RE) has a high profile and is led by an enthusiastic and dedicated leader who supports and guides teachers well. Pupils make good progress in this subject throughout their school life.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The dedicated headteacher, senior staff and governors are committed to enhance the expertise of the staff, particularly in the area of the school's Catholic life and religious education. This is evidenced by the school's support for teachers' further training through the CCRS (Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies), which has nearly been completed by two non-Catholic teachers. In addition staff are well supported by the RE lead-teacher in all aspects of their roles and responsibilities relating to the religious nature of the school.

The school has progressed well with the improvements recommended in the last report. The diocesan RE scheme is now fully embedded. The RE lead-teacher is now given management time in which to monitor teaching and learning, and implement improvements needed. Pupils regularly undertake assessment in RE, the results of which are tracked and monitored. Pupils are familiar with their targets for each RE topic and assess their own achievement. Teachers then verify these judgements. RE tasks are now differentiated so that pupils have the opportunity to work and extend their learning. This promotes very well the challenge given to more able pupils to achieve higher outcomes.

The school's self-evaluation is derived from monitoring by the headteacher, assistant headteacher, RE subject leader and RE governor who thereby gain a good overall understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and use this information to plan for future improvement. Pupils and parents appreciate the values and Catholic dimension of the school, exemplified by the recent parent survey in which all of the parents who replied were very supportive of the school ethos and 97% happy with the RE curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- work to raise the consistency and quality of RE teaching to the level of the best in school
- increase pupils' involvement in planning worship by providing opportunities for groups of pupils to plan, prepare and present their own class acts of worship and hence develop their knowledge and understanding of the elements of worship as well as enhance their own spiritual development.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Pupils benefit very well from the school's Catholic character and ethos. Their growing awareness and understanding of the Catholic faith and how to live this out is developed and enriched. This is reflected in pupils' very good behaviour and positive attitudes. Pupils understand the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year. Relationships reflect Christian respect and concern for others. Pupils show an understanding of the need to forgive. They are confident in expressing their own opinions and are proud of their school, particularly their fund-raising for a variety of charities both local and national. St Patrick's promotes the pupils' social development extremely well. Pupils willingly undertake responsibilities and appreciate being able to help and support the younger children for example as playtime buddies. Pupils praise their teachers who listen to them and support their learning. Pupils appreciate the many extra-curricular activities they are offered and their achievements are recognised and regularly celebrated by the school community.

All pupils respond well to worship and the prayer life of the school. They participate respectfully and with reverence. Worship contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils know a variety of traditional prayers and write prayers as part of their RE learning. During worship pupils demonstrated the maturity of their reflections when sharing their thoughts of how the coming of Jesus changes people's lives. Pupils enjoy worship, especially when helping to present it and when visual material and drama are used to enhance the message. They sing extremely well and this adds to the worship experience. At present teachers organise most class worship. If pupils planned worship, their learning of the various elements required to produce a worthwhile spiritual experience would be enhanced.

The school's Chaplaincy provision impacts well on the spiritual experience of staff and pupils. A well-being committee is responsible for pupils' pastoral support. This is extremely effective and pupils are aware of the procedures and personnel in place to help them resolve any problems. They feel confident that issues will be dealt with. Pupils feel safe, secure and cared for in school. Parents appreciate the approachability of the staff and their encouragement for pupils to develop knowledge of their faith and the living out of Christian values.

Pupils progress in RE has accelerated since the last diocesan inspection. The majority now achieve the expected levels. In two year groups a significant proportion, almost a quarter, achieve attainment greater than that expected for their age. RE outcomes compare favourably and in some cases are higher than in the other core subjects. Pupils can assess how well they are doing by use of the "I can" statements. They enjoy religious education lessons especially when studying bible stories or when they are given practical and creative tasks. For example, some younger children enjoyed creating their own Advent wreath. Older pupils when examining scripture passages demonstrated deep and thoughtful reflections. RE books are very well presented and evidence a range of written tasks.

Leaders and managers

Grade 2

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governors are deeply committed to promoting and maintaining the school's Catholic life. The clarity of this vision is demonstrated by the richness of pupils' Catholic experiences which effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social development and faith awareness. Pupils said "Jesus is around us here and helps us follow His path". Pupils work within a pleasant learning environment. Attractive RE displays around the school confirm St Patrick's Catholic identity. The school is a welcoming inclusive community where all members are respected and valued. Governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities. They are very supportive and kept well informed about the work of the school through visits and regular reports. Parents responded extremely positively to the inspection questionnaire, particularly mentioning the friendly, supportive and approachable staff. The school has strong links with the local church through the close involvement of the parish priest and a retired priest.

The religious education leader, being well supported by senior leadership, ensures the subject has a high profile. She is enthusiastic and committed, keeps herself well informed about ongoing developments in the subject and guides and supports teachers in their planning and delivery. Supporting ongoing improvement, the RE lead conducts a range of monitoring activities including RE learning walks, regular book scrutinies and analysing of RE data. She also leads staff training as do the priests and diocesan advisor on occasions. In order to improve the quality and consistency of all religious education teaching to the best in the school, further opportunities for staff to observe and be supported by experienced colleagues would be beneficial. Four teachers have had CCRS training which ensures a high level of expertise within the staff for delivering and understanding the school's Catholicity and the religious education curriculum. Class worship has been monitored and improvement suggestions given. The RE governor is committed to her role and regularly monitors pupils' outcomes. Moderation of pupils' work has been undertaken to confirm consistency of judgements. The school is piloting the new national/diocesan assessment framework. The RE budget is generous and in line with that given to other core subjects.

Provision

Grade 2

Worship, Mass and prayer are central in the school's life. The chaplaincy team and teachers deliver a rich programme of prayer and worship linked to Catholic traditions. They plan to provide even further experiences for pupils' spiritual development, a recent innovation being an after school meditation group led by the chaplain. Worship themes reflect the school's values and the liturgical year. A calm reflective atmosphere is created for worship. Attractive prayer tables are used well as a focus for prayer. Older pupils regularly attend Mass and the younger children attend prayer services led by the chaplain. Older pupils also have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation twice a year. The chaplain offers prayer for any child or family who requests this.

The quality of religious education lessons overall is good. Where RE lessons were best, teaching clearly focusing on the learning objective; and clear instructions, visual presentations, imaginative planning, open questioning, a lively pace, talking partners, and practical outcomes, were all effectively used to motivate and engage pupils. Differentiation of tasks were offered and the more able pupils were able to decide the style of their work presentation. Teachers' RE subject knowledge is sound and pupils use scripture with confidence. Teaching assistants gave good support to groups of pupils. Formal assessments are undertaken regularly and linked to national expectations. Marking ensures justifiable praise and often encouraged pupils to extend their learning.

The quality of the curriculum is good, and suitable for the age and abilities of the learners. It fulfils the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of curriculum time is used for religious education following "Come and See" the diocesan directed programme. In addition

each class learns about their class saint. Scripture is used well and pupils are able to debate the meaning of bible passages, for example when they researched the expectations of the prophets for the messianic coming. Pupils are encouraged to become aware of the demands of religious commitment as demonstrated when the younger pupils were discussing how they could show their love to others. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Religious education is often linked to other curriculum areas particularly to literacy, hymns, drama and creative activities. The priests and parishioners are used as extra resources for learning. Attractive RE displays give added value to this core subject.

The inspectors wish to thank the school's senior leaders, RE lead, staff and children for their very warm welcome and for contributing to their informative and interesting visit.