



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON
EDUCATION SERVICE

DENOMINATIONAL CATHOLIC SCHOOL INSPECTION REPORT

St. Catherine's Catholic Primary School

Address: Highdown Drive, Wick, Littlehampton, BN17 6HL

Telephone: 01903 716039

Email address: office@st-catherines.w-sussex.sch.uk

School Unique Reference Number: 126040

Headteacher:	Mr Derek Croghan
Co-Chairs of Governors:	Mr Mike Madden and Mrs Julie Baitup
Lead Inspector:	Mrs Elizabeth Hargreaves
Associate Inspector:	Mrs Patricia Horsman
Inspection date:	7 December 2021
	Previous Inspection: 1
Overall Effectiveness	This Inspection: 1
Catholic Life:	1
Religious Education:	1
Collective Worship:	1

Summary of key findings for parents/carers and pupils/students

St. Catherine's is an Outstanding Catholic school because:

- Almost all pupils in St. Catherine's have a deep sense of belonging to the school family. There is a tangible sense of community at all levels. The learning environment, with high quality displays, reflects the school's mission and identity through concrete signs of the school's Catholic character.
- Pastoral care for all pupils and especially pupils with additional needs, is given a high priority by all staff. Leaders and governors are a source of inspiration and support for the whole community, and together they monitor and evaluate the Catholic life provision and outcomes and plan future improvements.
- The school follows diocesan guidelines and policies and has positive links with other Catholic schools in the deanery and diocese.

- Behaviour in religious education lessons and throughout the school is exemplary. Teaching staff work together with support from leaders to plan creative and varied experiences for all pupils.
- Pupils feel safe, supported, and nurtured and those interviewed were unanimous in their response in that they really enjoy their religious education.
- High quality resources and skilled questioning supports learners and teaching is good with some lessons outstanding.

- There is a palpable enthusiasm for collective worship, reflected in the quality of communal singing, the quality of prayerful silence and the depth of participation in community prayers.
- Parents/carers are invited to pupil led acts of collective worship which pupils enthusiastically prepare and lead.
- Pupils are given opportunities for spontaneous prayer which they do with confidence.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Catherine's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school in the Worthing Deanery in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The school is maintained by West Sussex local authority. The school takes pupils from 4 – 11 years old. There are 226 pupils currently on role, 43% are baptised Catholics. The principal parish that serves the school is St. Catherine's, Littlehampton.

Most pupils are of White British heritage. 33% are from minority ethnic groups and have English as an additional language. This is higher than the national average.

The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs (SEND) is close to the national average.

16% of pupils are in receipt of pupil premium funding which is close to the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally lower than expected levels. In September 2021, the new Headteacher took up post and one Early Career Teacher (ECT) joined the school.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Ensure teachers consistently use time effectively in lessons to maximise learning opportunities in religious education.
- Use teacher feedback in marking and assessment to provide regular opportunities for pupils with the potential to demonstrate greater depth in their learning in religious education.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.
- The quality of provision of the Catholic life of the school.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school.

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

The experience of belonging to this distinctly Catholic community is strongly felt by those of all faiths and none. There is a strong sense of respect and belonging for all.

The mission statement is shaped by pupils in conjunction with leaders and governors with three straplines: *Growing in Faith, Aiming for Excellence and Learning for Life*. It permeates the school community.

Pupils have a leading role in contributing to the Catholic life of the school through the Liturgy Team consisting of pupils across Key Stage 2. Pupils have a clear sense of their role and responsibilities, and they are immensely proud to help the school community. One pupil said, 'we can help others; be mature.' Almost all pupils take full advantage of the possibilities provided by the school to support their personal and spiritual growth using the TenTen resource *Life to the Full*. Opportunities are given to Year 6 pupils to have a Retreat day and reception children are allocated a Year 5 guardian angel to support them and encourage bonds across the school. Year 5 are also encouraged to attend a residential with particularly good uptake. Pupils are rewarded as disciple of the week for extra effort, attainment or kind behaviour and they are enormously proud to obtain this certificate.

Parents/carers feel valued and spoke very highly of the support given, especially during Lockdown, as going 'above and beyond' to support families and pupils. Families are invited to liturgies and Masses and grandparents have a special day where they are invited into the school.

Pupils are encouraged to think of others during the year through the variety of charities supported by the school. Pupils are encouraged to give whatever they can no matter how small. Opportunities like the Fairtrade Big Brew help them to think and reflect on justice for others, and grandparents are invited in to help pupils share their gifts and talents with the wider community. Links are also created for pupils in Year 5 to spend time in the local hospice, St. Barnabas, where they are given opportunities to work and visit staff and patients there.

The quality of provision of the Catholic life of the school is Outstanding.

There is a tangible sense of community at all levels, which is evident in the relationships between almost all colleagues, support staff and pupils. A strong sense of belonging is felt by pupils and staff. The learning environment reflects the school's mission statement through high quality displays and prayer tables. Each class is named after a Saint and the life of each Saint is studied by every class. Beautiful tapestry-style banners that represent each saint have been made by pupils and are displayed in the school hall.

The whole school community works together to support pupils with SEND and there is a designated pastoral assistant who works alongside staff to support pupils and their families. Gospel values are at the centre of the school community and the school regularly communicates high expectations of behaviour, which were exemplary on the day of the inspection.

Links with the deanery are strong and the deanery council which is made up of pupils from the Catholic primary and secondary schools regularly meet to discuss, improve and share practices distinct to their Catholic ethos and identity.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school is Outstanding.

The school's leadership is deeply committed to the church's mission in education. Leaders view the Catholic ethos of the school as a core leadership responsibility and are passionate about providing support for all members of staff, especially new teachers.

Leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the Catholic life provision and outcomes and plan future improvements as identified in the school improvement plan.

Governors are regular visitors to the school and are viewed by staff as very supportive as well as critical friends.

Governors form a Catholic ethos committee and implement improvements alongside the religious education coordinator.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in religious education.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education.

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is Outstanding.

Pupils enjoy religious education and from their varied starting points, most pupils make very good progress. Almost all pupils are engaged in lessons and want to achieve. They are religiously literate, and behaviour observed during the inspection was exemplary in lessons and as pupils moved around the school.

Questioning to check understanding and giving children the opportunity to make links was observed in all classes and most pupils were actively engaged in lessons and committed to improving their knowledge. A variety of engaging activities are planned across the school with support from the religious education coordinator, to ensure most pupils approach their lessons with enthusiasm.

Assessment is embedded and shows progress in line with age-related expectations in religious education. Pupils achieve silver to show average attainment and gold for above average. Pupils were given opportunities in Lockdown to continue their learning in religious education and support was given for those who had additional needs. Parents/carers spoke very highly of the school's support for their children.

The presentation of pupils' work is very good and spirituality journals are beautifully presented with a focus on Biblical texts that pupils may not have studied before.

The quality of teaching and assessment in religious education is Good.

Teaching is mainly good with some examples of outstanding teaching. Driver words and key vocabulary for the *Come and See* topics are carefully displayed in all classes and used effectively during lessons to ensure pupil understanding.

Support for those with SEND is very good with excellent support staff working alongside individuals or groups of children in a sensitive and professional manner.

In Key Stage 2 peer assessment opportunities are given and feedback marking is a feature. In some books where feedback marking was used most effectively, more able pupils had opportunities to respond and deepen their learning.

All pupils with the potential to work at greater depth need increased opportunities to extend their learning through teacher feedback in the marking and assessment of work.

Lessons show high quality resources being used and prayer focus areas are an integral part of the gathering liturgy before the lesson. In some lessons time was not always used effectively.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education is Outstanding.

Leadership of religious education is informed by a high level of expertise and vision which focuses on improving teaching and learning, resulting in teaching that is constantly good and, in some cases, outstanding.

The leadership of religious education inspires confidence and commitment from pupils and colleagues. As a consequence, religious education has a high profile in the life of the school. By cascading skills, leaders have helped support and empower staff.

The curriculum meets the Bishops' Conference requirements, and leaders promote links within the diocese through training and with other Catholic schools in the deanery and wider.

Religious education is well resourced in line with other core subjects, and this is reflected in the yearly budget.

The curriculum enables pupils to gain first-hand experiences of the liturgical life of the Catholic church and of a wider diversity of religious and belief communities. Religious education is included as a key priority on the School Development Plan.

Pupils enter at a lower attainment level than nationally, and progress is carefully monitored across the school. Assessment across the school is embedded. Although an electronic system is not yet being used, leaders have a clear understanding of the progress made by each child at the end of the year using age related targets. When pupils reach the end of Key Stage 1 their attainment is broadly in line with national averages, making good progress. At the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have made significant progress given their very low starting points.

Leaders have an accurate knowledge and understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in religious education and regular feedback is given to staff following rigorous monitoring that includes learning walks, book looks, lesson observations and moderation of work in school and with the deanery of schools.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND PRAYER LIFE

THE QUALITY OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PRAYER LIFE

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- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship and prayer life.
- The quality of provision for collective worship and prayer life.
- How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and prayer life.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship and prayer life is Outstanding.

Collective worship observed was outstanding. It is an established part of school life and a major strength of the school. The themes chosen for worship reflect a deep understanding of the liturgical season and the church's mission in education.

A respectful and prayerful atmosphere is created, and pupils are given opportunities to sing, play music and lead quiet reflection time and prayers for the community. Community singing observed was moving, as was the time of stillness and reflective silence to ponder, 'how will you meet Jesus? How will you smooth the path to him?'

The prayer life of the school is excellent and there are many opportunities for staff and pupils to plan and lead prayer which they do with reverence and confidence.

There is a deep respect for different faiths and the experience of living and working in a praying community has had a profound effect on the development of all pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. One parent said that they had no particular faith, and now her six-year-old prays aloud at home.

The quality of provision for collective worship and prayer life is Outstanding.

Leaders enable the availability of excellent resources, and these are used to support high quality collective worship and prayer. Displays and religious symbols throughout the school are of the highest quality and enhance the Catholic ethos of the school.

Governors, especially the Catholic Ethos Committee, are regularly involved with the life of the school and join the community for Masses, liturgies and during spirituality week.

Parents/carers are invited into class liturgies and a recent invitation to parents/carers inviting them into a Key Stage 1 class saw twenty-four parents/carers arrive to share this special time with the pupils.

Class teachers are skilled in helping pupils plan and deliver quality worship.

Leaders have an exceptional understanding of the church's liturgical heritage, its rites and seasons and are passionate about ensuring all pupils have quality experiences of the church's liturgical life.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and prayer life is Outstanding.

Leaders at St. Catherine's are highly visible as leaders of collective worship within school. As such, they are models of outstanding practice for staff and pupils. They have expert knowledge of how to plan and deliver quality experiences of collective worship.

Leaders also ensure that all staff in the school receive formation in the development of spiritual and liturgical understanding. Staff training is given a high priority and has inspired confidence, especially in new staff. Governors on the Catholic Ethos Committee attend school regularly in order to witness the Catholic life of the school on a day-to-day basis. They spend time formally and informally with school leaders as part of the evaluation and monitoring schedule.

The regular school newsletter from the Headteacher promotes the school's Catholic identity and echoes the values and mission. Although new in post (September 2021) the Headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has been pro-active in developing a new school website, which he was able to give the lead inspector a preview. Also, an area is being developed as an outside prayer and reflection space to further enhance prayer opportunities for pupils.

Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

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Catholic Life

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

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The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school.

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

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Religious Education

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How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education.

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The quality of teaching and assessment in religious education.

2

How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education.

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Collective Worship and Prayer Life

1

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship and prayer life.

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The quality of provision for collective worship and prayer life.

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How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship and prayer life.

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