

Catholic Diocese of Northampton



Inspection Report of Denominational Character and Religious Education

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

St John Rigby Catholic Primary School

Polhill Avenue, Bedford, MK41 9DQ

DfE School No:	822/3350
URN:	139515
Headteacher:	Mrs Michele McGettigan
Trust Chair of Governors	Mr Christopher Donnellan
Reporting Inspector:	Mrs Rosemarie Jones
Associate Inspector:	Mrs Kirstie Yuen
Date of Inspection:	19 June 2019
Date previous Inspection:	July 2014

The School is in the Trusteeship of the Diocese and part of the Bedford Catholic Schools (St Francis of Assisi Academies Trust).

Description of the School

St John Rigby Catholic Primary School is situated close to central Bedford. The school serves several parishes including Holy Cross, St Philip and St James, St Francesca Cabrini, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Lady and St Cuthbert, Christ the King, and the Holy Child and St Joseph. There are 415 pupils of whom 84% are Catholic. 40% of the teaching staff are Catholic. Pupils come from a very mixed socio-economic catchment serving families from a variety of multi-ethnic and multi-cultural backgrounds. 28% of the pupils have English as an additional language. 1% of pupils are entitled to free school meals.

Key for Inspection Grades

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires Improvement 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall Effectiveness of the School

Grade: 3

The school has had several changes in leadership over the past 4 years. The new headteacher is enthusiastic and ambitious for the school. She and her staff work hard to provide a caring and supportive environment for the pupils. The headteacher, having identified teaching and learning as an area for development, is working with her staff to raise standards across the school and improve the quality of teaching and learning. Therefore, with a more rigorous and robust approach to monitoring the teaching and learning of RE, the headteacher and senior leadership team would have a better overview and understanding of standards across the school to support their drive to raise standards in teaching and learning. The headteacher informed inspectors that the school undertakes an annual parental questionnaire, the last one being completed in March. Parental responses are analysed by the school and it was reported to inspectors that there is a very high percentage of parental satisfaction. The behaviour of the pupils is good and they appreciate the experiences the school offers them.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade: 2

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. The headteacher has a clear vision for developing the school's Catholic ethos. The school's development plan identifies priorities for this year including developing the Catholic ethos of the school and effective monitoring and accountability at all levels. Once a new staffing structure is in place with all staff clear about their accountability and responsibility for teaching and learning, the necessary improvements should be addressed. The directors are fully committed to promoting high quality Catholic education. Also, with the implementation of the new assessment framework coupled with appropriate staff training, assessment practice will improve. This will enable data to be used effectively to raise pupil progress and achievement.

The school has progressed well in addressing the areas for improvement since the last Section 48 inspection report; however, the school's self-evaluation did not give a clear and detailed account of the school's strengths. The school's self-evaluation did not provide sufficient evidence to support the outcomes and impact of work done. Once a senior leadership team is established who undertake regular monitoring of teaching and pupils' books, they will gain a clear and more informed overall view of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- To fully implement the new national assessment framework to ensure children's individual progress is rigorously monitored in order to raise standards further
- Raise staff expectations on the quality and quantity of work required in pupils' RE books
- Ensure that all RE teaching is at least good by improving the pace, the range of activities provided and the challenge in RE lessons

Catholic Life

Grade: 2

The quality of provision for the Catholic life of the school is good and, as a result, pupils contribute to and benefit greatly from the Catholic life of the school. The lay chaplain and the newly formed chaplaincy team help to promote the school ethos and foster the development of the spirituality lived out by staff and pupils. The lay chaplain plans an annual retreat for Year 5 to Walsingham. Year 6 pupils also attend "It's Your Move" organised by Scripture Union which focuses on transition to secondary school. The junior chaplaincy team participate in assembly, assist with Mass, distribute the "Wednesday Word" and present the Rosary assembly. The lay chaplain also runs a "Rainbows" group which helps children through situations of traumatic loss. A "Sunbeams" group is also in operation to support children who need to talk to an adult about their concerns in a safe and caring environment. The school's mission statement is known by the school community. This impacts on the pupils' behaviour, which is good. They show respect for each other, they understand the need to forgive and to care for those in society who are vulnerable. The school promotes social development in various ways including older pupils helping younger pupils, fund raising events such as CAFOD and developing pupils' understanding of stewardship, leading to a good understanding of how they can care for our world. Pupils demonstrate their growing awareness of the Catholic faith and their understanding of how this might be lived out.

There is a strong sense of belonging within the school community. The Year 6 pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their physical, emotional and spiritual development and transition to secondary school. There are visible signs of the school Catholicity around the school. Each classroom has a prayer focus table.

Religious Education

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning in religious education requires improvement. The lessons observed by the inspectors frequently lacked pace and challenge. The pupils are very compliant and answered questions willingly; however, the content of the lessons and tasks set did not move their learning on. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and they are proud to be part of the school community. They have a positive attitude to their learning and enjoy their religious education lessons.

Whilst recognising that behaviour during lessons is good, generally, pupils do not make reasonable progress. The school did not provide any assessment data for the inspectors. Therefore evidence in pupils' books was used to judge progress along with information in the RE SEF. The school self-evaluation indicates only 24% of pupils in 2018 met the expected standard in RE at the end of Year 6. This concurs with the inspectors' findings that over time most pupils do not make good progress.

Insufficient evidence was provided by the school to support the view that rigorous monitoring and evaluation of RE teaching and learning are embedded in the school's practice. Assessment of teaching and learning lacks rigour and therefore requires improvement.

The school informed inspectors that the religious curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. 10% of time is allocated to religious education. The presentation of work in pupils' books is poor. Despite children having guides for presentation in the cover of their books, this was not always followed. The quantity of work for Key Stage 2 pupils did not represent 10% of curriculum time. In Key Stage 2 many books had evidence of 1 lesson per week for pupils. Leaders and managers do not undertake carefully planned and focused monitoring of the teaching and learning in religious education. Therefore, with a more robust monitoring approach to RE teaching and learning, the headteacher and senior leadership team will have a clearer understanding of teaching, RE provision, progress and attainment of pupils across the school. Lack of rigorous work scrutiny and tracking of pupil progress means pupils are not achieving their full potential.

Collective Worship

Grade: 2

St John Rigby is a prayerful community. As well as classroom prayer and assembly, there are quiet spaces provided for prayer and reflection such as the Hosanna Room and the prayer garden. There are regular opportunities for prayer as part of the day. In the whole school assembly led by the headteacher, the pupils were participating by answering questions. The singing was joyful with the majority of pupils participating. The junior chaplaincy team often read the gospel from the "Wednesday Word" and prayers prepared by staff. Pupils respond well to collective worship, showing reverence and respect. All pupils know their daily prayers. The school has produced a prayer book for parents of the younger children to encourage family prayer. The lay chaplain informed us there are plans to produce a whole school prayer book for all families. Collective worship is inclusive. The school's lay chaplain plans Masses and other liturgical celebrations with opportunities for pupil participation. The parish priest, although not a regular visitor, is known by the pupils, staff and parents. Through collective worship, Church traditions, seasons and rites are celebrated and contribute to the spiritual formation of pupils and staff. The school offers opportunities for parents to attend collective worship through class assemblies and Masses.

The inspectors wish to thank the headteacher, staff and children for their welcome and contributions during the day.