



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

St Catharine's Catholic Primary School  
Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire, GL556DZ  
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DfE Number: 9163354

Headteacher: Mrs J Welch  
Chair of Governors: Mrs M. Whitehouse

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Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Date of inspection: 11-12<sup>th</sup> December 2014  
Date of previous inspection: 17-18<sup>th</sup> September 2007

Reporting Inspector: Mrs A Barrett

## **Description of School**

St Catharine's Catholic Primary school is situated in Chipping Camden, surrounded by Birmingham Diocese and over 25 miles from to the closest Catholic school within the Clifton Diocese. The school is a smaller than average primary school and draws most of its pupils from the town itself and the surrounding area. There are currently 140 pupils on roll, of whom 36% are baptised Catholics. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and those from service families) is well below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average. The school has a growing number of children with parents from other countries. Pupils enter the school at an average or above average standard although this varies from year to year. The parish priest acts as school chaplain providing support in nurturing the Catholic life of the school. The current head teacher joined the school in September 2012, replacing the deputy head teacher who had held the role of acting head teacher for the previous two years.

### **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Requires improvement in order to be good;  
Grade 4: Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school**

**Grade 2**

This is a good Catholic school because:

- The school is a welcoming and happy Catholic community where children are encouraged and nurtured to achieve their best, and live life to the full.
- Pupils are proud of their school and display a strong sense of loyalty and respect for its Catholic tradition and strong links with the parish community.
- The highly effective leadership and vision provided by the head teacher, has ensured that leaders and governors place a strong emphasis on promoting, monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school.
- Leaders and governors are committed to developing the Catholic life of the school, act as role models for others and meet all statutory and canonical responsibilities. Governors are highly visible and fully involved in all aspects of school life.
- The effective programme of teacher training and development, promoted by the head teacher and led by the RE subject leader, has made a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching across the key stages.

The school is not yet outstanding because:

- The school is aware of the importance of enabling pupils to clearly articulate their own personal response to the deeper questions of life but teachers need to capture and build on this through careful auditing across the key stages.
- The school needs to fully develop and embed the work of chaplaincy across the school.
- Pupils are not yet involved in reviewing the prayer life of the school in a planned and systematic way.

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- The need for all foundation governors to participate in diocesan training to enable them to become more effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school.
  - The school does not yet provide retreat opportunities for all pupils.

### **The capacity of the school community to improve and develop**

- The school has made excellent progress in all issues highlighted in the previous report.
- The governing body has been strengthened and the feedback provided by them informs improvement and supports development in relation to the Catholic life of the school.
- Since the appointment of the headteacher in September 2012 there has been a determined focus on enhancing the Catholic mission of the school along with the spiritual development of its pupils.
- Overall, the school is well on its way to becoming outstanding.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Fully develop and embed the excellent work to date in relation to the development of chaplaincy across the school.
- Ensure that there are well planned opportunities within the curriculum to enable pupils to clearly articulate their own personal response to the deeper questions of life.
- Introduce retreat opportunities for all pupils in order to enhance their spiritual development.
- Ensure that all foundation governors participate in diocesan training to enable them to become more effective in promoting the Catholic life of the school.

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## How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

Grade 2

Pupils are proud of their school and display a strong sense of loyalty and respect for its Catholic tradition and links with the parish community. They respond positively to the needs of others within and beyond the school, living out their new mission statement and school motto of 'Let Your Light Shine' to the full. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about their nurturing role in supporting younger ones as playground buddies, lunchtime table helpers, line and wet play monitors. This, alongside adherence to school council-led 'playground promises' and 'buddy bench', ensures that playtimes are happy and convivial occasions for all. Pupils, inspired by their school motto (which they were fully involved in creating) are confident in suggesting and engaging enthusiastically in a wide range of fund raising events to support their own favoured national and international charities. Recent events have included a sponsored bounce organised by a child in Reception in aid of prostate cancer, setting up businesses in support of Class 3's efforts to raise funds for solar panels for a seminary in Eritrea and the school council and chaplaincy team projects to help eradicate Ebola which included a Christmas post office selling 'E for Ebola' stamps, a raffle and African-themed performance. The establishment of a formal chaplaincy team in September 2014 (commissioned by Bishop Declan in November) has been instrumental in enhancing pupils' understanding of the importance of service and responding readily to the needs of others. The work of this group, combined with a well planned RE curriculum, worship programme and effective parish links, has ignited in pupils a genuine interest in the religious life of others and living understanding of how faith can affect life. In proportion to their years pupils are able to empathise, forgive, praise and thank others, expressing their own views and beliefs with confidence, referring to the teaching of, scripture and the Catholic Church as appropriate.

Pupils are highly motivated and engaged in RE lessons and keen to do well. Pupils' attainment and achievement is improving across the board with those in year 6 making particularly good progress. Pupils clearly enjoy RE, are highly motivated, engaged and keen to do well. This is due to an improved curriculum which is effective in helping pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in order to think spiritually, ethically and theologically (appropriate to their age and capacity). The behaviour of pupils is good and contributes well to their learning. They work well together, respecting and valuing viewpoints which are different to their own. Their relationship with adults is excellent and they respond positively to the high level of support and encouragement provided by them. Most pupils are confident in using religious language and are beginning to make links between faith and life. Pupils' readiness and commitment to succeed and ability to grasp opportunities to extend and improve their learning is extremely positive.

Pupils engage in prayer with reverence and respect and respond positively to the many opportunities provided to plan and lead prayer and worship both within their classes and whole school assemblies. They are at ease when praying with their school community and have a real appreciation of what is taking place. All pupils, irrespective of their faith background, feel valued and included in all aspects of prayer and worship. The strong school choir and music group play an important role in creating a love of singing and praising God through music. This,

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combined with well-chosen hymns means that pupils sing joyfully in assembly and in school Masses and liturgies.

The newly established chaplaincy team has made a significant contribution to the prayer life of the school, boding well for the future. Members of this group act as excellent role models and are effective in supporting those children who are working towards achieving the Leaders in Faith Award. The team have also devised a beginner's award (Copper Award) for those pupils in Reception/Year1. The team's recent initiative, inspired by their meeting with Bishop Declan, to lead the whole school in morning prayer in the school playground has been warmly embraced by pupils, parents and staff. In addition, significant numbers of pupils attend the lunch time prayer group which takes place in the school's pop-up chapel and these are now led by the chaplaincy team.

In addition, pupils in each class are responsible for ensuring that prayer areas within each class are well cared for and remain a sacred space within the room. They speak effusively of their involvement in preparing and updating these areas to link with topics studied in RE as well as the liturgical year, using this space for personal and group prayers. The school's clear focus on developing its prayer life has enabled pupils to develop their understanding of religious seasons and feasts and to become skilled in the use of scripture, religious artefacts, hymns and other forms of prayer. Discussions with pupils indicate that they are not yet involved in reviewing the prayer life of the school in a planned and systematic way.

Children choose to rehearse with the parish music director in preparing for whole school Mass and celebrations, in their free time. The children's increased involvement in parish liturgies has been warmly welcomed by members of the parish, who have expressed their pleasure in seeing the children more fully involved. Benefits from this link include opportunities to rehearse with the parish music director in preparing for whole school Mass and celebrations.

## **How effective are leaders and governors in developing the Catholic Life of the school?**

**Grade 2**

Leaders and governors are committed to developing the Catholic life of the school, act as role models for others and meet all statutory and canonical responsibilities. Governors are highly visible and fully involved in all aspects of school life. The feedback provided by them informs improvement and supports development and is now much more effective in monitoring the Catholic life of the school. Since the appointment of the head teacher in September 2012 there has been a determined focus on enhancing the Catholic mission of the school along with the spiritual development of its pupils. The highly effective leadership and vision provided by the head teacher, has ensured that leaders and governors place a strong emphasis on promoting, monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school. This has included developing the role of the RE governor in strengthening school/parish links and undertaking a full cycle of monitoring activities including learning walks, book scrutiny and lesson observations. This governor reports regularly to a sub-committee of foundation governors and head teacher, keeping them updated on progress and developments in RE and its Catholic life. This has been instrumental in ensuring that these remain at the core of the school's ethos and mission.

Self-evaluation at all levels is now a coherent reflection of rigorous monitoring, analysis and self-challenge which, in turn, has led to well-targeted action planning. This, combined with the work of the RE subject leader who provides focused and effective support for all teachers, has resulted in significantly improved teaching and outcomes in RE which accurately match pupils' ability.

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Staff and pupils have a high regard for and understanding of the Catholic Life of the school and parents respond very well to initiatives such as 'Little Way' week. The school continues to focus on enabling pupils to articulate its distinctive ethos with understanding and appreciation and intends to further improve parents understanding of Catholic life through sharing diocesan guidelines.

The head teacher has established close links with the diocese and is fully involved with the local diocesan sub-committee, benefiting from collaborative working relations with local schools and those in the diocese. Despite geographical challenges, the school has endeavoured to attend all relevant diocesan events although attendance at diocesan events for governors is less well developed and is an area for improvement.

## **How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?**

**Grade 2**

The effective programme of teacher training and development, promoted by the head teacher and led by the RE subject leader, has made a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching across the key stages. Overall, the quality of teaching is good with some outstanding features, enabling all pupils to make appropriate progress. Pupils are attentive, cooperative and engaged in their learning. This is a result of effective teacher planning using appropriate tasks which are well suited to the needs of different groups. Teachers are proficient in their use of questioning in order to challenge pupils and develop their religious literacy through the imaginative use of resources such as sacred art and artefacts. This is highly effective in eliciting thoughtful responses which enable pupils to critically reflect on their own and other faith stories. Classroom displays of RE work and pupil-centred prayer areas complement and support learning across the school. The school marking code has been specifically adapted for RE with pupils' work well marked and clearly identifying what they need to do to improve. Achievement and effort is celebrated in both class and whole school assemblies.

The RE curriculum meets all Bishops' Conference requirements and is based on the *God Matters* programme. There is a strong focus on encouraging pupils to reflect on their personal experience and to relate it to their developing spirituality and faith through reading and reflecting upon the biblical stories. Study of other world faiths is an important element of the curriculum and is effective in promoting tolerance and understanding of other faith traditions. Well planned links with other areas, such as the monthly assemblies on vocation, creates whole school opportunities for spiritual, moral and vocational development. The school is aware of the importance of enabling pupils to clearly articulate their own personal response to the deeper questions of life and the need for teachers to capture and build on this through careful auditing across the key stages.

Prayer is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. The school provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to lead, organise and participate actively in worship and develop their own spirituality. Class and whole school assemblies are held regularly with the themes chosen by pupils and staff reflecting a deep understanding of the Church's mission. The whole school approach is reflected in displays around the school, including a prayer wall which is updated regularly, and prayer areas within each class.

The school's prayer life is enriched by its close links with the parish and positive relationship with the parish priest. Pupils regularly attend Mass in church and are provided with a wealth of opportunities to be actively involved. In addition, the parish priest supports liturgical celebrations throughout the year within school and leads guided visits of the church for pupils. Pupils of all ages willingly support the headteacher in cleaning the church at break-time, as part

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of the parish cleaning rota. This has created amongst pupils and staff a real sense of ownership of the church and sense of belonging to the parish community.

## **Summary of Parental Questionnaires**

There were 31 parental questionnaires received. The majority were extremely positive about the school, highlighting the strong sense of community and caring staff. Some typical quotes from the questionnaire when asked 'Why did you choose this school' are as follows:

'Because it is a Catholic school and it is evident that the Catholic ethos is at the heart of the teaching'

'Our children are catholic and the school has a good reputation'

'Love the school very much and think the staff do an outstanding job and truly care'

'All of the staff are so caring and I really feel that my son is part of a family at school - he certainly talks about his school family and feels very at home here.'

'Although we are not RC we find the ethos of the school very welcoming to us as a family'

'Leadership and communication by the RE lead is exceptional and we especially appreciate the termly outline'

'Real sense of community among the parents and staff'