

Archdiocese of Cardiff



Inspection Report

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School Hereford

Inspection dates	1 – 3 April 2019
Reporting Inspector	Mr Lyndon Watkins
Accompanying Inspector	Mr Christopher Cherry
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 - 11yrs
Number on roll	199
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Chair of Governors	Mr Mark Slane
School Address	Boycott Road, Hereford HR2 7RN.
Tel. no.	01432 274814
E-mail address	admin@our-ladys.hereford.sch.uk
Parishes served	Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, Hereford St Michael and All Angels, Belmont
Date of previous inspection	3 - 4 March 2014
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Flint

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archdiocese of Cardiff and Inspection of denominational education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on prospects for improvement.

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice or practise that is both consistent and highly effective.
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The table below shows the terms that Archdiocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

Proportion	Description
With very few exceptions	Nearly all
90% or more	Most
70% or more	Many
60% or more	A majority
Close to 50%	Half/around half
Below 40%	A minority
Below 20%	Few
Less than 10%	Very few

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Archdiocesan website: www.rcadcschools.org

Context

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is situated in the south west of the city of Hereford. It serves a broad and varied catchment area. At the time of the inspection, 199 pupils were on roll. This figure is marginally higher than that for the previous inspection in 2014. Baptised Catholics account for 60% of all pupils and 48% of pupils use English as an Additional Language (EAL). Some 15% of children are identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) and 25% are entitled to receive free school meals (eFSM).

The school employs 11 teachers in total (9 full time and 2 part time); 37% of these are Catholic and one holds the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS).

The recommendations of the previous inspection were:

R1: Evaluate how teachers use the newly implemented 'Come and See' scheme to ensure that:

- learning objectives are clear, measurable and make use of the attainment driver words.
- clear success criteria are set and shared with pupils to aid marking and self- assessment.
- tasks enable learning objectives to be achieved and pupils are able to attain higher levels.
- levelling is accurate and evidence is shown in the work of the pupils.

R2: Governors continue to monitor rigorously the quality of Catholic education provided by the school.

R3: Pupils further develop their knowledge of liturgy and prayer in order to show progress in their ability to plan and lead worship across the school.

Currently, the school's Action Plan for Religious Education (RE) identifies a wide range of priorities relating to the Catholic life of the school and to academic RE.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?	Good
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Our Lady's provides a good Catholic education for its pupils because:

- the quality of teaching at the school is good.
- overall, pupils make good progress.
- the quality of collective worship is good.
- leadership and management are good.
- the inclusive nature of the school's Catholic community is excellent.

What are the school's prospects for improvement?	Good
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Prospects for improvement are good because:

- governors are fully aware of the challenges ahead in relation to the appointment of appropriately skilled and committed staff. They have realistic plans in place.
- the capacity exists within the school to allow for the requisite quality of succession planning to be in place.
- the excellent teaching identified during the inspection has the potential to be shared across the school through a high quality professional development programme (see R2 below). This will contribute to the further raising of standards.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1: Fully implement the recommendations of the previous S48 inspection, particularly in relation to practice in assessment and to developing opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship regularly.

R2: Plan and implement a programme of professional development to allow for the sharing and spreading of the excellent practice identified during the inspection.

R3: Ensure that the planning and teaching of Religious Education is sufficiently ambitious to allow some learners to attain at above expected levels.

What happens next?

The school will submit a Post-Inspection Action Plan to the Director of Religious Education that shows how it will address the recommendations. Submission should be within 45 working days of publication of the report. Progress in addressing the recommendations may be monitored by the Archdiocese.

Main Findings

KQ1. How good are outcomes?

Good

Outcomes are good.

As pupils move through the school, they become increasingly religiously literate at an appropriate rate. Most pupils, by the time they are in the Upper Key Stage Two, have knowledge, understanding and skills that are appropriate for their age. They can think in an ethical way and many are aware of the demands made by a religious commitment in everyday life. There is good evidence to show that, on entry to the school, many pupils have low levels of religious knowledge and understanding. Taking this into account, pupils make good rates of progress. No significant under-achievement exists for any particular group such as those who are entitled to free school meals (eFSM) or pupils for whom English is an Additional Language (EAL). Pupils are not currently involved effectively in improving their knowledge, understanding and skills and in developing their competence as learners. Self and peer-assessment practices are under-developed. The impact of work in this field would be further enhanced by pupils developing their competence as independent learners. Pupils enjoy their learning in Religious Education (RE). During the lessons observed in the inspection they were well engaged and they showed good levels of enthusiasm. In discussions with pupils, they reported that RE was a positive experience for them but that they would appreciate more opportunities to use Information Technology to aid their learning.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage One (Year 2) is good and at the end of Key Stage Two (Year 6) it is adequate. The most recent data show that, in 2018, 96% attained the expected Level 2 in Year 2 and that 70% attained the expected Level 4 in Year 6. The rate of progression across Key Stage 1 is good. This is a significant factor in the good attainment identified. Progression towards the end of Key Stage 2 is less clear. A recommendation from the previous inspection referenced attainment at higher levels; this is yet to be addressed effectively. During the inspection, a significant number of pupils showed the potential to attain at levels beyond the expected. The school needs to develop an ambitious approach in order to achieve this aim.

Pupils have a great sense of belonging to the school and willingly take on additional school responsibilities. A high proportion of parents attended the school themselves as pupils and feel part of the tradition and community of Our Lady's. Pupils highlight the supportive role of playground buddies, who "look after" pupils who don't feel confident to join in the games and activities at playtime and lunchtimes. Pupils state that they attempt to live out the school motto of 'We aspire that through the love of Jesus everyone should have life and live it to the full'. A few display great interest and engagement within a very active and supportive

parish, by extending their commitment to the wider worshipping community and they participate in parish activities.

In interviews, pupils indicate that they are “proud of their school” and as a result are active in contributing to both collective worship and classroom assemblies. Pupils cite that they love singing in collective worship, writing and reading their own prayers and participating in the planning of class assemblies. They emphasise that everybody is involved, taking turns to contribute. They enjoy the opportunity to meditate, which also helps them to focus on their work. Many are active in using their class prayer corners. They also enjoy circle-time and the opportunity to read from scripture and discuss its meaning.

KQ2. How good is provision?	Good
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Provision is good.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There is a significant degree of variance across the school. Observations of all seven classes during the inspection yielded judgements ranging from just adequate to excellent. In-depth scrutiny of books undertaken during the inspection broadly mirrors the pattern observed. The qualities noted in the excellent teaching observed included: clear, ambitious learning objectives, high teacher expectations, high quality teacher-pupil relationships, impressive pace to lessons, excellent outcomes, high level questioning and effective co-operation between teachers and Teaching Assistants. The qualities above resulted, for example, in activities such as dramatisation of the events of Palm Sunday, re-telling of the events of The Last Supper and led to the beginnings of an understanding of the symbolism involved in Key Stage One. In Key Stage 2 the same led to an excellent teacher - pupil rapport with high expectations and good pace throughout the lesson observed. Where teaching was no better than adequate, learning activities lacked ambition, pace of lessons was slow and there was an over reliance on worksheets. Overall, the level of subject knowledge displayed by teachers is good; this allows them to build pupils' knowledge appropriately. Most pupils' attitudes towards their learning is positive and they want to learn. They are supportive towards peers and they are able to focus on independent learning appropriately. In general, pupils' behaviour is excellent. The use of IT to enhance learning in RE is under-developed. Pupils reported that they enjoy using it and that they would relish the opportunity to develop their skills in this area. The work of the school's teaching assistants is impressive. They work effectively in a commendable spirit of cooperation with teachers and pupils benefit as a result.

The effectiveness of the school's assessment and academic guidance is adequate. A good system to track teachers' assessment of pupils against the 'Come and See' scheme criteria is in place. However, in order for the impact of this system to be greater, data needs to be analysed in order to identify priorities for development

that can become an intrinsic part of the Action Plan for RE, which currently lacks a clear sense of direction. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is positive. However it often repeats the learning objective and does not systematically help learners to make progress in their learning. It is summative in nature, rather than formative. A review of the marking policy in order to arrive at a high quality, consistent approach would be beneficial. Some Assessment for Learning (AfL) practice is in place. An end of topic reflection is in place across the school; it identifies targets for development. Other AfL work is inconsistent, however.

Pupil interviews and parental comments confirm that pupils, both Catholic and non-Catholic enjoy the Religious Education tasks set in lessons. They particularly enjoy tackling the 'mission' set at the end of many lessons. The school is tangibly inclusive in its approach to all pupils, whatever their backgrounds. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the inclusive work of the school, for example, non-Catholic pupils commented on the manner in which they are invited to participate in the Sacrament of Reconciliation by being able to receive a blessing from the parish priest. Pupils spoken to during the inspection knew that "God forgives us when we say we are sorry". They are also very aware of liturgical seasons and the significance of key events in the Church's calendar. They highlight the wide range of activities in which they are involved (CAFOD, local foodbank and other charities for example) to help and support those around the world who are living in poverty or at risk of experiencing violence. They particularly enjoy the regular class visits from the parish priest as "he tells us what's going on in the Catholic Community".

The school has made significant efforts to develop the RE displays both around the school and in classrooms. The quality and impact of these are included as part of the monitoring, evaluation and review (MER) process. Daily acts of collective worship observed are typified by respectful pupils, high levels of enthusiasm, rapt attention to an engaging message or challenge and a tangible joy of participation within a sacred space. The school works actively with a very supportive parish, making full use of the facilities available. Parents, careers and other adults connected to the school are always made welcome and are regular visitors to school worship. As a result, the quality of collective worship across the school is good.

KQ3. How good are leadership and management?	Good
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The quality of Leadership and Management is good.

Governors fulfil their canonical and statutory obligations. They display an admirable commitment to the school. This is reflected by the fact that some governors have devoted their time to the school community for extended periods of time. The manner in which they contribute to setting the strategic direction of the school in relation to establishing priorities for its Catholic life and to academic Religious Education is under-developed, however, they have a clear sense of

purpose and direction in relation to key decisions that need to be made with regard to future staffing arrangements. They, rightly, see this as a priority. Governors could be more rigorous in challenging leaders and in holding them to account in relation to standards attained and to pupil progress. Governors have overseen a process that has allowed good and appropriate resources to be available and a considerable amount of investment has been made to improve the quality of the learning environment. This has been of considerable benefit to pupils.

The headteacher shows a very high level of commitment and dedication to the school and she promotes its Catholic life effectively. The joint Curriculum Leader for RE shows an impressive level of knowledge and understanding of the role. She is committed to her work and she has the potential to have a significant impact in the future. The parish priest makes a very positive difference to improvement of the Catholic life of the school. He is a regular visitor and pupils, parents and staff all expressed their appreciation of his work during the inspection. Leaders have processes in place to monitor the quality of collective worship and appropriate use of questionnaires is made in relation to the Catholic life of the school. As a result of leaders' work in this area, pupils show a good awareness and understanding of the Catholic life of the school and they engage with it appropriately. Leaders have appropriate arrangements in place to monitor the quality of teaching and good records are in place. The action plan produced by leaders includes a wide range of priorities. However, it is not clear that the outcomes of this MER work drive the thinking behind the plan, which would benefit from being streamlined to allow a focus on what leaders consider to be the priority areas. The manner in which the recommendations of the previous Section 48 report, produced in 2014, have been implemented is mixed. The response to previous recommendations in relation to the school's MER work has been good but pupils still need to further develop their skills in planning and leading acts of collective worship (R3) and some elements of R1 need further attention; clarity of learning objectives and the development of Assessment for Learning practices for example. The quality of the school's self-evaluation is adequate. It describes the work of the school well but it lacks a strong analytical focus, which would raise its level considerably.

The school has a well-established, positive relationship with the Archdiocesan Education Service and the RE Co-ordinator's file details a full range of engagement with Archdiocesan-led staff professional development. This in-service training is further enhanced through regular meetings and joint training with other schools in the local Catholic cluster group and local authority. School governors have been proactive, working with a variety of external bodies to ensure that the school accommodation and extensive grounds remain secure. Both have been developed to enhance provision and to provide a stimulating learning environment. Contact with the parish is used effectively and the school is seen by parents and clergy as a valuable, integral part of the worshipping community. The school fulfils the required commitment to study other major world religions.

Collective worship is central to the prayer life of the school and follows a variety of formats. Assemblies are well-prepared and led. There is a consistent sense of purpose and pupils enter with a tangible reverence and participate enthusiastically. Parents indicate that they and members of the wider worshipping community are welcome to attend and many do. Pupils of all religions appreciate the importance of both collective worship and personal prayer and some are active in writing and planning it. However, currently pupils appear to have only limited opportunities to lead communal worship. Inclusivity is, however, a strength of the school and pupils of all religions feel valued. Most pupils display a very secure knowledge about the life of Jesus and of many bible stories. Nearly all pupils considered they would benefit from more time being given to meditation as this is currently inconsistent and underdeveloped.

Appendix 1

Parental Questionnaires:

In total, 78 parental responses were received, which represents a good level of participation. Nearly all were positive and supportive in nature. Common themes referenced included:

- The strong sense of family and the very inclusive Catholic community.
- The welcoming approach of staff.
- The positive rate of progress made by pupils and
- High standards.

Appendix 2

Evidence Base:

- Pre-inspection team consultation.
- Self-Evaluation documents.
- School Improvement Plan.
- Lesson observations in seven classes.
- Observations of collective acts of worship.
- Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks.
- The school environment.
- Foci for prayer and reflection.
- Discussions with staff.
- Interviews with the headteacher, the RE Co-ordinator, the subject link governor and the governing body.
- Meeting with parents.
- Meeting with a representative group of pupils.
- Parental questionnaires.
- A range of portfolios provided.