



INSPECTION REPORT

Christ the King Primary School

Earls Court Road, Amesbury, Salisbury SP4 7LX

Telephone: 01980 622039

E-mail address: head@christtheking.wilts.sch.uk

DÆS Number: 865 3412

Headteacher: Mrs R. Horner

Chair of Governors: Mrs C Crossland

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

Date of inspection: 24 & 25 January 2007
Date of previous inspection: 20 & 21 November 2002

Reporting Inspector: Mr S Lake

Description of School

Christ the King is an average size primary school serving the parish of Christ the King Amesbury and the surrounding area. Only a small proportion of the pupils are baptised Catholics but the school extends its mission to many others. As a result many pupils attending this school have little experience of religious education or worship prior to their admittance. A very high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has a specialist centre for pupils with speech and language disorders, as a result of which it has five times the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need as is found nationally. A significant minority of pupils (i.e. 25%) come from service families and join or leave the school partway through their education because their military postings change.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

This is an outstanding example of a Catholic school because of the way leadership and management develop a truly Catholic atmosphere where everyone is welcomed and cared for in a worshipping community. The headteacher is a pivotal figure in this but is supported extremely well by a very committed and caring team of staff and a Governing Body that puts the Catholicity of the school first. Parents are full of praise for the school and the way in which it brings the teachings of Christ into the community. So many parents wrote giving reasons for the distinctive nature of the school that it is impossible to quote them all but their attitude is perhaps best summed up by the parent who wrote; 'The amazing leadership and caring attitude of all the staff adds to the ethos of an extremely caring and loving school where everyone is welcomed and valued.'

Worship in this school is excellent with all involved at their level and playing an equal part. This is even more remarkable when one realises that the vast majority of children have no experience of church or worship before entering this school. Pupils often enter this school mid-year either through movement into the area or because they are transferred to the school because of its excellent record of coping with vulnerable children including those with learning difficulties or disabilities. The ministry of welcome ensures that all of this as well as visitors to the school quickly feel part of the community. Another parent expressed this by saying; 'It's almost like a family. Nevertheless Christ is clearly the head of this family.'

Pupils achieve well during their time in the school. The school takes children who have below and often well below standards on entry and enables them to achieve average standards by the time they leave, although few attain standards above average.

Teaching is good and at times outstanding. It is never less than satisfactory although not all teachers present the same degree of challenge to pupils, which is why so few attain above average standards. The religious education curriculum is of a very high quality and contributes extremely well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The very good links made with other curriculum areas enable pupils to realise that religious education is integral to understanding the way in which the world works and people interact with others.

Grade 1

Improvement since the last inspection

Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The strengths have been maintained and the areas identified for development in the last report have been addressed well. Planning is now of high quality with all staff well aware of the 'Here I Am' scheme of work and progress is monitored very effectively. Marking is monitored closely to ensure consistency of practice although marking does not always make it clear enough what pupils have to do to improve further.

Grade 2

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school is extremely well placed to improve further. High quality systems exist for checking on the Catholic life of the school and strategies are discussed to improve worship even more. The leadership of the school is well aware of how standards could be improved and has the capacity to bring this about.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

Ensure that more challenge is available in all lessons to match that seen in the best in order that more able pupils can be guided to attain higher standards.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The headteacher provides an excellent role model and sets the tone of the school. She provides a gentle and inspirational leadership that draws all in and recognises their talents. She is supported very well by the staff and governors who together work very hard to develop the Catholic life of the school.

This is a school committed to being a demonstration of the way Christ would look after others. All are warmly welcomed and the school operates a 'Ministry of Welcome'. Adults and pupils alike take this very seriously and look after visitors and each other in a caring and respectful manner. From the moment pupils and parents start attending the school they see how Gospel values are lived out and all are treated equally. This starts on the playground where pupils gather in a circle for each class with parents able to stand behind their child. This enables all to see each other and the teacher, to greet pupil and parent in a warm and encouraging manner that sets the tone for the day in school.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Every day and every major activity starts with prayer. Although less than a quarter of the school are baptised Catholics, they are all involved in worship, with due respect given to their background. No one is made to feel isolated or uncomfortable but can join in the worship at their own level.

Whole school assemblies and liturgies are calm and prayerful sessions where adults and pupils share in worship and meditation. Pupils take a central role in many liturgies making a very good contribution to the whole school community. Suitable opportunities are taken for Eucharistic celebration both in school and in the Church. The Parish Priest leads many of the liturgies and is a valued member of the community. Children respect the quiet authority and valuable guidance provided. The attendance of members of the Parish helps raise pupils' understanding of a wider worshipping community and supports the celebration of such liturgies.

The central prayer area is a very visible area of calm in the very heart of the school. Teachers make good use of this with small and large groups to provide a centre for prayer. Pupils say that they really like this area and many said that they use to area for quiet contemplation. This is a valuable asset to the school and an example to those with less experience of church, that communities often need a fixed place to focus their worship upon.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Pupils achieve well in this school and reach standards that are broadly average although few attain above average. Pupils enter the school with basic skills that are well below average. In addition the great majority of pupils have little or no experience of church or religious formation. A great number of pupils join mid year often with a very great range of experience relevant to religious education. The net effect of this is that initial standard in religious education are very low but vary over a wide range to some whose experience and skills is in line with that normally expected for their age. In addition the school takes in a large number of vulnerable children placed there by the local authority because of a range of learning difficulties or disabilities. These factors necessarily affect the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 6 despite the good progress that they make. Nevertheless there is a very small number of pupils who are capable of achieving higher standards.

Pupils' spiritual and moral development is outstanding. The standards that they achieve in this aspect of their religious education are very high. They are reflected in the respect that pupils show for one another, their ability to judge what is right or wrong, fair or unfair and their excellent behaviour. Pupils make good use of these skills when they exercise a ministry of welcome for visitors or pupils new to the school.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is never less than satisfactory and at time is outstanding. This is why pupils are making such good progress in religious education. In the very best lessons pupils' progress is checked and work modified to meet their specific needs. This is particularly so for the most vulnerable pupils. Great care is taken in most lessons to ensure that all pupils are included in the lesson and challenged well. Despite this very strong picture, in otherwise satisfactory lessons, some pupils, especially the more able are not challenged enough. For example, some pupils who finish the work set may be asked to colour in a picture rather than being given more work to extend their learning.

Teaching assistants are generally used well to support religious education, normally through the support of pupils needing additional help. Most marking is helpful and pupils say that teachers talk to them about how they can improve their work. Nevertheless there is a little inconsistency in this with a few teachers not matched the very high quality example found in other parts of the school. This slows learning a little especially for the most able pupils.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

A high quality curriculum is provided throughout the school. Diocesan requirements are met and suitable adaptation is made to meet the needs of pupils with less experience of religious education or worship. Inclusion is at the heart of this curriculum as the school works to meet its diverse and changing population. Education for Personal Relationships is of a high quality and appreciated by the parents. Many opportunities are taken to provide for pupils' personal development which is why their social and moral development is so good. A good quality induction programmes for the children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they quickly settle into school and learn well.

A wide range of clubs and fund raising activities not only make learning more interesting but also raise pupils awareness of themselves as God's children and of those in need. Pupils keep themselves healthy in mind and body as a result of the provision for sport and healthy eating. In addition pupils raise money to support CAFOD and Mission Together so that they learn that charity and support for others is part of Christ's message.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The holistic nature of this school makes it impossible to distinguish between the impact of leadership and management upon the Catholic life of the school and the leadership and management of religious education. The two aspects are so closely intertwined. In both cases the Headteacher and Religious Education Coordinator work as a very close team supported extremely well by other senior staff and governors. Religious Education is at the heart of this school. Many parents give this as a reason for choosing the school. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored rigorously and suitable support given for professional development in this subject. Senior staff provide good role models for other teachers. Pupils' progress is monitored closely and continual efforts are made to raise standards and improve pupils' awareness of the Gospel message. The excellent leadership is why the school has improved so much and give it a very good capacity to improve further.

Grade 1