



INSPECTION REPORT

St. Bonaventure's Catholic Primary School

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D/ES Number: 8013417

Headteacher: Mrs L Charles

Chair of Governors: Mr Tony Nelson

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: 3 & 4 May 2006
Date of previous inspection: 29 & 30 November 2000

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M Barnard

Description of School

St. Bonaventure's is a larger than average voluntary aided school serving the parish of St. Bonaventure's, Bristol. It is in the City of Bristol unitary local education authority. At present there are 371 pupils on roll of which 83% are Catholic. Pupils are broadly above average on intake. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals and those pupils with English as an additional language is lower than the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is also lower than the national average. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school during the year is low. The school believes strongly in its vision as a Catholic school and there is a strong and mutually supportive parish and school community. Relationships in the school are warm and caring and pupils show respect for one another. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. Behaviour in the school is very good.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Overall, the effectiveness of the school is good. Staff and governors are committed to the Catholic ethos of the school and there is a strong parish and school community that support this well. The Here I Am programme is now in use in the school to support teaching and learning. Spiritual and moral development is a strength of the school. Pupils are happy and well cared for and enjoy coming to school to learn. They show reverence and respect during prayer times. There are many opportunities for staff and pupils to pray together and parents are invited to join in the prayer life of the school through Masses and assemblies. The subject leader for RE is committed to further improvements in RE and is well placed to lead these improvements. The strategic role of governors needs to act to strengthen the role of RE in the school to the level of a Core subject so that the RE subject leader has time to lead the subject for optimum effectiveness.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

A new Scheme of Work recommended by the Diocese called 'Here I Am' has been introduced to the school since the last Inspection. This now meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for the teaching of Religious Education in a Catholic School. Assessment procedures have recently been developed by staff but it is too early yet to see the impact of these changes. A schedule of assemblies and masses is followed during the year to support the 'Here I Am' scheme, the liturgical year and topical world issues. An assembly programme has yet to be completed in writing.

Grade 2

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

Governors, leaders and staff share a strong commitment to the school and are very supportive of its vision. This commitment is shared within the parish community and by the parish priest who is very supportive of the school. The school is committed to raising standards and improving further the provision of Religious Education for pupils. Pupils are eager and able to learn and the RE coordinator is enthusiastic and well equipped to lead staff and develop the subject further in the school. A programme of self evaluation through rigorous monitoring should be implemented in order to clearly identify strengths and weaknesses and improve

standards further. The school has a good capacity to improve and develop further but needs to raise the strategic profile of Religious Education in the school in line with the Core subjects.

Grade 2

What the school should do to improve further

Draw up an Action Plan for RE to:

- Develop a clear vision of the key priorities for development in relation to achievement and standards.
- Raise the strategic role of RE in line with the Core curriculum so that RE is central to the leadership and management of the school at all levels and developments are systematically monitored to ensure standards rise.
- Draw up a programme using the Here I Am Scheme of Work to include the liturgical year and topical world issues to ensure (a) continuity and progression of units of work and (b) an appropriate time allocation across the year for each year group.
- Raise the expectations about what pupils can achieve through implementing a systematic monitoring programme for the teaching and learning of RE across the school to ensure challenge for more able pupils

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The leadership and management are strongly focused on the school's Catholic vision and there is a sense of shared mission amongst all staff. Relationships are positive and supportive and this is a feature of the school. Good links exist with the wider community and there are very strong parish school links. The previous parish priest, who moved from the parish last autumn after a long period, was well known and popular with pupils and staff and the present parish priest is continuing these strong links. Spiritual and moral development is a strength of the school and staff are providing excellent role models. Pupils are happy in school and enjoy coming to school to learn. They feel safe and are well cared for. They show respect for one another and are caring and generally well developed in their understanding of RE. The outdoor environment reflects this care for the well being of pupils. Staff in all classes endeavour to enhance the internal environment through meaningful displays and prayer areas that reflect the Catholic ethos. However, the internal environment needs a programme of updating to reflect and increase the value that is placed on staff and pupils and their commitment to deliver the RE curriculum effectively. Quality assurance procedures are not effectively in place so that weaknesses are not identified and acted upon. Some pupils are not making the good progress that they are capable of. Some judgements about the progress and achievements of the school were over optimistic. There is not a clear enough vision about the key priorities for development in relation to achievement and standards in RE and the strategic profile of RE is not high enough to reflect its Core status. The RE subject leader is not given the necessary time to support the development of RE in the school so that standards rise.

Grade 3

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer is central to the life of the school. Staff and pupils pray together three times a day and there are many opportunities for quiet reflection that are integrated in to the life of the school. Y6 pupils have an opportunity for a retreat at Kintbury, and there are plans to introduce this to other year groups. Staff and governors also have a day of reflection each year. Children are encouraged to write and say their own prayers and make artefacts to support their prayer life,

such as rosary beads. Pupils show reverence and respect during prayer times and are involved in the preparation of whole school Masses and class assemblies to which parents are invited. The liturgical year is well supported in teaching and learning as is the work of Cafod and other topical world issues.

Grade 2

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

In KS1 and KS2, attainment in the school is broadly in line with the national average for that expected in each year group. Given the level of attainment on entry, the expectations of what pupils can achieve is not high enough. In Foundation Stage standards are below the level expected for the age group. The level of challenge needs to be raised so that there are higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in a lesson and over a longer period to meet the needs of more able pupils in the school. Presentation in written work is satisfactory overall with some variability between classes.

Grade 3

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Four RE lessons were observed during the Inspection. One lesson was good, two were satisfactory with good features and one lesson was unsatisfactory. The best features of lessons observed included clear objectives set by the teacher and understood by pupils, a good pace, activities where pupils were challenged and on task so that learning took place and the use of ICT to enhance learning. Pupil's attitude to learning was good. All lessons demonstrated the good relationship between pupils and staff. Marking of books was variable across the school. Where there was evidence of good assessment through marking, it indicated how children could reflect to improve their work. The work in books demonstrated that a range of strategies were being used in the school in the teaching of RE. An assessment schedule for RE has been introduced into the school and this now needs to be used more consistently to inform planning. Staff generally work hard to provide a good learning environment in classrooms and around the school. However, the internal fabric of the school needs to be updated to develop conditions for learning that are conducive to good quality teaching and learning taking place.

Grade 3

Quality of the Curriculum

The school is following the Diocesan recommended course for RE supported by the Here I Am programme of study that includes the liturgical year. There is a strong emphasis on social and moral responsibility taught using Cafod resources. This contributes well to the development of pupil's social conscience. However, the time allocation for RE is not being met uniformly across the school. There is a need now for the school to clearly set out what is to be taught when for each year group throughout the year so that continuity and progression and the allocation of time for specific units of work can be more rigorously monitored. There is evidence of the teaching of other faiths and this adds to the cultural development of the curriculum. Spiritual and moral development for pupils is enhanced by daily opportunities for reflection and prayer in each class. Resources for RE are variable. There are some good features, for example the availability of God's Story 3 textbooks, children involved in making their own rosary beads, and opportunities for ICT. However, the use of laptops frustrated the learning process because some were faulty, necessitating the need for time-consuming technical assistance from the teacher. Some resources, for example some books, need to be updated. The school is

planning to introduce a new Sex and Relationship programme to the school. Extra curricular opportunities are good with retreats provided for some year groups.

Grade 3

Leadership and management of Religious Education

Managers are committed to the vision and objectives of the schools Vision Statement. Staff work well together and feel supported by the RE subject leader who has developed supportive materials to assist the prayer life of the school. The RE subject leader is enthusiastic and well informed about RE and is well placed to lead RE in the school. The monitoring of RE has begun but now needs to be more systematic to support accurate school self evaluation and improve standards across the school. Assessment procedures have been successfully introduced. However, this has not yet had time to impact on standards. The Here I Am programme is being used widely to support teaching and learning. Links between the school and the parish are strong. Opportunities for prayer and reflection for staff are provided and non catholic teachers are well supported to deliver the RE curriculum.

Grade 2