



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School**

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D/ES Number: 803/3434

Headteacher: Mr David Cahill

Chair of Governors: Fr Patrick Auger

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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 June 2007  
Date of previous inspection: 18 – 19 June 2001

Reporting Inspector: Mr Stephen Lake

## **Description of School**

Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School serves the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Kingswood on the outskirts of Bristol. The area is very developed but mainly with lower cost housing. The changing population in the area means that just over half of the pupils are baptised Catholics. To reflect the oversupply of school places in the area, the governors have this year reduced the admission limit which also has the effect of increasing the percentage of baptised Catholics on roll. A new head teacher was appointed in 2005 and a new deputy in September 2006. Many of the teaching staff have also changed over the last two years.

### **Key for inspection grades**

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

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

Our Lady of Lourdes provides a good Catholic education. By the age of eleven pupils are achieving well and reaching standards in religious education that are above those expected. This is due to the good teaching that they receive. A real strength of this school is the commitment of all staff to the Catholic life of the school. The new senior management team is working hard to make the school even better. The strong focus on living the Gospels ensures that all pupils, including those who are not baptised Catholics, feel part of the school community.

Collective worship is good. The way in which pupils are encouraged to use their own prayers is excellent. A wide range of liturgies provide pupils with many high quality opportunities to worship although pupils say that they enjoy Masses and liturgies led by the Parish Priest more than assemblies in the school. Collective worship in school, although good, could be better if more attention was given to engaging pupils more effectively. In some cases this is due to the environment in which worship takes place. The school hall is somewhat cluttered due to the presence of a large stage and equipment used mainly by out of school groups. This significantly limits the ability of the school to provide a high quality environment for whole school worship.

Leadership and management are good and very clearly focussed upon what makes a good Catholic school. The headteacher, deputy head, subject leader, and chair of governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work together effectively as a team to bring about improvement. The procedures to enable the whole governing body to monitor standards in religious education are not structured well enough to ensure that all governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in this area, nor are these clearly enough set out in the school development plan. All staff of the school provide good role models to pupils.

The good quality religious curriculum not only makes links for pupils between religious education and other subjects, but also makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. They behave well and show good attitudes to learning in religious education. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in religious education. High quality religious displays are present throughout the school and celebrate pupils' work well but there is some inconsistency in the way that focus areas for religious education reflect the current themes of the religious education curriculum.

**Grade 2**

## **Improvement since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection standards have fallen slightly but are now improving again as the new senior team sets in place suitable strategies to take the school forward.

**Grade 2**

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

The clear vision of the headteacher and senior staff coupled with their good systems for looking at how effective the school is mean that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

**Grade 2**

## What the school should do to improve further

- Set in place effective structures to enable the governing body to monitor standards in religious education and identify strengths and areas for inclusion in the school development plan
  - Seek ways of improving pupils' engagement in collective worship to match their engagement in liturgies and improve the environment in which whole school worship takes place.
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## The Catholic Life of the School

### Leadership and Management

The good leadership and management in this area are central to the strong Catholic ethos apparent in the school. The governing body is effective and well focussed on the importance of the Catholic Life of the school. Governors visit the school regularly to join in worship and support pupils' faith development.

The head and senior management have a clear vision of what constitutes a good Catholic school and share this with governors and staff. Together they have renewed the Vision statement of the school to make the value clear to all who work and learn there. The clear guidance given to pupils on how they should live promotes their spiritual and moral development very well. Very good links have been established with the parish. These further support pupils' faith development and enhance the Catholic life of the school.

**Grade 2**

### The Prayer Life of the School

The prayer life of the school is good. The way in which pupils are encouraged to develop their own prayers and the way in which spontaneous prayer is encouraged during class worship is excellent. Masses and other liturgies provide very good quality occasions when pupils can pray and worship as a part of a community. Pupils enjoy this and say that they really feel that they are encouraged to take an active part in Masses. In the assemblies observed during the inspection, most pupils were well behaved and reverent but were not always fully engaged. Pupils themselves comment on this, saying that Masses are much more enjoyable than assemblies. Although the content of collective worship is good the environment in which whole school worship takes place makes it difficult for the school to create a really effective place of worship. The school hall contains a stage area and considerable amounts of equipment, a lot of which belongs to out of school groups. This not only creates a cluttered and crowded environment but limits areas for display. Teachers work very hard to develop focus points for worship in the remaining space, nevertheless this is a significant limitation upon the school in its efforts to create a good environment for worship.

In class assemblies pupils share their own prayers and thoughts. They show respect for one another and develop an understanding of how God's word teaches us how to treat others and how to lead our own lives. However, pupils are not always engaged enough in some of collective worship.

**Grade 2**

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## Religious Education

### Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment on entry to school varies widely in religious education due to the wide range of pupils' experience, but overall is in line with that normally found. Pupils' written work in religious education is in line with expectations and matches the standards in English. Pupils oral work demonstrates that by the age of eleven, pupils have a good understanding of religious education and this factor means that standards overall are above expectations at age eleven.

The overwhelming majority of pupils say that they enjoy religious education, regarding it as in their three most enjoyable subjects although a few feel that it is boring. In the lessons observed pupils behaved well and shared their knowledge and understanding with others.

Pupils have a good understanding of other faiths. They know that Jews worship one God and that other religions worship in different ways, but all teach ways of living that are important to society. They can compare the essential similarities and differences between faiths and make good use of information and communication technology to support their learning

#### Grade 2

### Teaching and learning in Religious Education

The good quality ensures that pupils learn effectively and attain the high standards noted above. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to make lessons interesting. This stimulates and motivates pupils well, recognising their different learning styles and engaging them in the lessons. A particular strength of the teaching is the way in which pupils are encouraged to be independent learners in religious education. Teachers use questioning well to ensure that pupils demonstrate their understanding in high level discussions and to informally assess that understanding. Most pupils speak enthusiastically about the way teachers support them by discussing with them how they improve their work, although they say that this varies from class to class. This variation, although minor, does limit progress for a few pupils. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are well established and the school is developing these further to assess the quality of pupils' oral work.

Teachers work very hard to provide high quality displays of pupils work in religious education that celebrate pupils achievements well. All classrooms have a suitable focus area for religious education but the way in which these reflect what is being taught is inconsistent and gives a mixed message to pupils. In addition although some displays are very visible to pupils, others are partly obscured by books and equipment detracting from the good work that has gone into setting them up.

#### Grade 2

### Quality of the Curriculum

The school follows the approved Diocesan scheme of work for religious education and for sex and relationship education and a suitable amount of time is allocated. The subject leader and headteacher are working hard to ensure that religious education is supported well by other

areas of the curriculum. A particularly good innovation is the way that the school is seeking to address the 'Every Child Matters' agenda through religious education. Sex and relationship education is provided through the approved Diocesan programme that was introduced this year. The headteacher is developing information and communication technology to further enhance the curriculum through a wide variety of programmes such as 'God Story' and Espresso. Although some teachers are using this well it is in an early stage of development. Nevertheless this exciting model shows the way that this school is seeing to continually improve the curriculum in religious education.

**Grade 2**

### **Leadership and management of Religious Education**

The quality of leadership and management is good and improving as the new senior leadership team starts to have an effect. The headteacher provides good leadership that is driving forward school improvement. The subject leader has a good understanding of religious education and provides a very good role model to other teachers.

The headteacher and subject leader check teachers' planning and the work in pupils' books regularly. This allows them to know if the correct work is planned for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. This regular monitoring ensures that the senior management know the strengths and weakness of the school well but this is not fully reflected in the school development plan. The Chair of Governors knows the school well but the procedures for making sure that the whole governing body knows how well the school is doing in religious education and collective worship are not well enough structured. Coupled with the lower emphasis on religious education in the school development plan this lack of structure limits the ability of the governing body to effectively monitor this aspect of school life.

**Grade 2**