



INSPECTION REPORT

Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Primary School

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D/ES School Number 801 3412

Headteacher: Mr Gerald Kloska

Chair of Governors: Mr Vincent Savin

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: 1-2 December 2009

Date of previous inspection: October 2006

Reporting Inspector: Mr J Skivington

Description of School

Our Lady of the Rosary is an average size primary school with 206 pupils on roll, of whom 64% are baptised Catholics. Around 23% of pupils are from ethnic minority groups and half of that number have English as an additional language. There is a wide range of abilities and backgrounds, and most of the children come from the nearby estates. The percentage of pupils with stated special education needs is around the national average, with particular needs in speech, language and communication skills. The school has close, fruitful links with the parish and makes very good use of the adjoining parish church. The percentage of Catholic staff reflects that of the pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

Our Lady of the Rosary is an outstanding Catholic school. The excellent, charismatic leadership of the head teacher, closely supported by the governors and senior staff, is reflected in the wholehearted commitment of staff and parents to provide the highest quality of care and education for the pupils. The Catholic mission of the school informs all planning, it is frequently reflected on, and it is the yardstick by which the school judges its success. The school works very effectively to promote community cohesion. The provision for collective worship, as well as the spiritual and moral development of the pupils, is excellent and this contributes enormously to the strong Catholic ethos of the school. The quality of the provision for religious education is outstanding. Excellent teaching promotes excellent learning and achievement. The leadership and management of the religious education programme are both outstanding.

Improvement since the last inspection

Grade 1

At the last inspection the school was judged to be outstanding, and through the intervening years it has sustained a continuing high standard of excellence. Areas highlighted for specific development included formative assessment of pupils work and progress, and to increase the pupils' understanding of other faiths. Both these issues have been addressed very effectively and have made a significant impact on learning outcomes. This has been the result of attention to detail and a restlessness which is always seeking to improve provision and maximise the potential of every single child.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

Grade 1

The school knows itself very well and measures itself constantly against its mission and its own high expectations. There is a determination and commitment to provide only the best, careful planning with achievable and measurable objectives, but more importantly, a senior leadership which is able to communicate to the whole school community its vision and philosophy. The quality and professionalism of the staff, and the care shown by all the significant adults in the children's life at school, will secure sustained development and excellent outcomes in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

To enrich the learning and understanding of the pupils by giving them an even wider scriptural knowledge, particularly the teaching and message of Jesus through His parables and miracles

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Grade 1

The nurturing of the strong Catholic ethos of the school and the living out of the Faith is the prime concern of the head teacher, and this is very effectively communicated to the whole school community. The governing body is very supportive and fully involved in the life of the school. The mission statement itself is revisited regularly, involving input from governors, parents, teachers and learners. Inset days are set aside to re energise and re focus the mission of the school. Monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of the school's Catholic character are rigorous and result in a freshness and relevance to the daily life of the pupils. The inclusion of all learners is central to the vision of the school, through its belief that all are created in the image of God. Leadership at all levels promotes the spiritual and moral development of the children, not only through teaching but by the example and excellent role modelling of all the significant adults in the pupils' lives.

Collective Worship

Grade 1

'Everything we do here is a prayer' commented one child, and certainly the spiritual atmosphere of the school is almost tangible. The quality of collective worship and the liturgical life of the school are both excellent, with invaluable support from the parish priest, who is closely involved in the life of the school. Masses are celebrated on a regular basis, and all pupils are keen to participate. Parishioners, parents and governors are frequent participants. The whole school assembly during inspection was well planned involving the pupils in Year 5. They read clearly and everyone sang with great joy and enthusiasm. The morning prayer in the reception class was an exemplary introduction for them into a close, personal relationship with God through prayer. They were able to make the Sign of the Cross remarkably well, with reverence and attentiveness and understood the specialness of the time and the symbolism of the lit candle. There were many opportunities for prayer in lessons with music and candlelight, and pupils readily compose and share their own prayers. The sacramental preparation programme is well planned within the parish, supported by the school, and involving the parents of the candidates closely. The liturgical year of the Church is followed in a very imaginative way. For example, the Stations of the Cross presentations during Holy Week made a tremendous impact on everyone. Collective worship contributes enormously to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. The Gospel message constantly presented in assemblies and Mass through the parables and miracles of Jesus is made relevant to their lives, and this is evident not only in the thoughtful prayers they compose themselves, but also in their practical care for others.

Community Cohesion

Grade 1

The school has a reputation for openness and friendliness in the local community, and good use is made of links to other local schools, besides an especially close link with St. Bede's Catholic College. There is a very active Parent/Friends association, and parents are kept informed of events through the school newsletter. Everyone is made welcome and included in every aspect of school life. The school has a clear policy to encourage community cohesion, a policy which encourages and makes possible involvement in the surrounding area. For instance, pupils are involved through ACTA projects, Bristol Rovers, inter school choirs, and singing in the local retirement home. The views of different faiths and none are respected, with no trace of coercion, but rather a standing invitation to participate fully. There is a consistent set of values, which is shared by all. Pupils' awareness and involvement in the wider world is successfully encouraged, and they are involved in charity fundraising for a number of national and international aid agencies. The religious education programme allows pupils to explore other religions and customs in lessons, such as Islam and Hinduism, and assemblies are used to celebrate the

diversity of the human family. The fact that all pupils, including non-Catholics, participate fully in the liturgies including the Eucharistic celebration, helps to secure the unity of the community. The pupils themselves say they feel they are part of the school family and are involved in everything without distinction. Pupils' opinions are listened to and respected and the school always takes the opportunity to respond to the pupils' initiatives, for example through the school council, and the many charity fundraising events which benefit the local community.

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Grade 1

Pupils enter the school with religious knowledge and skills, which are generally below expectation. By the end of Year 2 standards are in line with what is expected nationally, and by the end of Year 6 well above. This represents excellent achievement through both key stages, and is the result of excellent teaching and learning. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve as well as the others because of the extra help they receive in lessons, particularly from excellent teaching assistants, and where they are given tasks, which are tailored to their learning needs. Progress from the start is swift, with pupils quickly coming to recognise and understand religious symbolism and the special nature of places and events, such as Baptism or the time for prayer at the start of the day or before meals. As they move up the school they can make links with their own experiences and emotions and the connection between belief and actions. They achieve a very sound grasp of the main tenets of the faith, and internalise much of what they hear and learn. Their communication and writing skills show steady improvement and progress over time. There are some very thoughtful written pieces and prayers, which are remarkably mature and heartfelt. Pupils contribute much to the school community through the active school council and the care shown to the younger pupils by the older ones, who look out for them and befriend them particularly on the playground. The pupils are also very active in raising money for charities through their own planning and organisation. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent, and the visitor is struck immediately by their friendliness and courtesy.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Grade 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Excellent teaching is characterised by well-planned lessons, good pace and high expectations. Questioning is challenging, encourages pupils to make good intellectual effort, and allows them to take part fully in their own learning. The material used and the variety of activities, meet the needs of all abilities. In a Reception class lesson children explored the idea of celebration with great enthusiasm because of the interesting way the teacher presented the topic, and quickly linked it to the celebration of the Christ's birth. Key words and concepts are reinforced frequently and the use of power point emphasises the message. Pupils are encouraged through paired work to discuss with each other and this helps them to relate what they are learning to their own lives. The marking of written work is very helpful in showing the pupils what they must do to improve. Pupils work well together and their behaviour and involvement in lessons is good. They themselves say that they really enjoy the subject because it is made interesting, and that they can always turn to their teachers to help them if they do not understand.

Quality of the Curriculum

Grade 1

The curriculum follows the Here I Am programme, and at present is being fleshed out with elements of The Way, the Truth and the Light. This is work in progress and is being carefully monitored by the governors. The curriculum meets the needs of all the pupils. The sacramental

preparation programme is well run by the parish with the close involvement of the school. The sex and relationships programme, using *In the Beginning*, is well planned and taught. There is further enrichment in the curriculum making good use of the links with the parish, other parishes and the local community, and through the many fundraising events for charities. All these activities allow the pupils to exercise their spirit of generosity by becoming involved in helping and caring for others. Pupils study the beliefs and traditions of the main world religions, and this is followed up by planned visits to other places of worship, as well as the significant festivals of other faiths forming part of the assembly programme.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

Grade 1

The religious education coordinator provides excellent leadership and management of the subject, with a clear sense of direction and understanding of the school's place in the mission of the Church. She works closely with the parish priest in planning the liturgies. The curriculum, schemes of work and lesson plans are being reviewed, and full support given to the teachers, both Catholic and non-Catholic, through Inset days on the Catholic life of the school and a growing portfolio of ideas and resources. Lesson observations play a key role in sharing the best practice. The staff themselves feel well supported and involved in improving the provision for RE. Quality assurance and self-assessment procedures are very detailed and amply documented, driving very successful outcomes. The new level indicators are used to assess pupils, and their use is increasingly helpful in tracking and building up a picture of individual progress. Equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled. Resources are of good quality and well managed, with ICT increasingly used to support teaching and independent learning. The wonderful displays of children's work on the walls and corridors not only affirm their efforts, and educate others, but colourfully proclaim the strong Catholic ethos of Our Lady of the Rosary.

Governors discharge their responsibilities towards religious education with real care, and are very effective because they bring a wealth of experience and first hand knowledge to support the subject.