



INSPECTION REPORT

Wardour Catholic Primary School

Wardour, Tisbury, near Salisbury Wiltshire SP3 6RF

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D/ES Number: 293557

Headteacher: Miss J Luzmoor

Chair of Governors: Mr Richard Arundell

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: 15 January 2007
Date of previous inspection: 28th-29th June 2001

Reporting Inspector: Mr J Skivington

Description of School

Wardour Catholic Primary School is a smaller than average primary school with around 74 pupils on roll, just over 50% of whom are baptised Catholics. The school serves a wide rural area. The 2005 census suggests the socio-economic background of the pupils to be above average. Almost all the pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with special education needs is well below average. Because of smaller numbers pupils are taught in three mixed groups. The school has had three different head teachers since the last inspection, as well as more recent staffing problems. The present head teacher has been in post since September. Good use is made of the adjacent Wardour Chapel, but the involvement of the very supportive school chaplain is unavoidably restricted.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Wardour Catholic Primary is a good school. It is well led by the head teacher, who has the wholehearted and proactive support of the governors, staff and parents, in maintaining and enhancing the strong Catholic ethos and witness of the school. Collective worship and the spiritual and moral development of the pupils is good, because of the care taken, by all concerned with the children's welfare, to provide a visible Catholic environment in which the Catholic Faith can be lived out from day to day.

The quality of the provision in religious education is good. The standard of attainment reached by pupils is above average; and achievement through all stages, apart from the middle years, where standards have been affected by ongoing disrupted teaching over the last two years, is good. Good teaching promotes good learning because it meets the learning needs of the majority of the pupils. Assessment and monitoring procedures are now in place, beginning to impact on rising standards of attainment and achievement. Leadership and management of the subject are both good.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The areas for development identified in the last inspection have been addressed resulting in good improvement. The 'Here I Am' schemes of work have been adopted and work on developing these further is still in progress. The monitoring and assessment of the subject is evident in the resultant progress over time of the pupils. The school's well-wordsed mission statement was rewritten in 2004, with wide consultation, to clearly reflect the aims and nature of this Catholic school. However, it has not been revisited or made the focus of reflection formally since then.

Grade 2

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

The school's own self evaluation has highlighted well the areas where improvements can be made, and these are spelled out in its development plan. The capacity to improve is good because effective monitoring systems and checks are now in place, and there is evidence that these are proving effective. There is a willingness to use every resource and available advice from outside agencies such as the diocesan adviser, the schools' cluster, and INSET training, to achieve best practice in every aspect of the school's work and mission.

Grade 2

What the school should do to improve further

- To promote further independent learning through imaginative teaching strategies, which will attract and challenge the pupils, especially the more able
- To encourage pupils to express their thoughts through more extended writing opportunities, especially in the earlier years

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management at all levels in the school is good. The head teacher and the governors set high standards and clear direction, which maintain and improve the provision of high quality care and education. The strong Catholic ethos and prayer life of the school reaches beyond to the parents and the wider community. The participation of all pupils, Catholic and non-Catholic alike, in the Mass and assemblies, is a strong, wide embracing and inclusive feature of the Catholic ethos and prayer life of the school, and actively encouraged. All teaching staff, teaching assistants and significant adults in the children's school life, are fully committed to the school's values, and their witness is paramount in promoting the ethos of the school. The mission statement is clear and well expressed, but the school in its self- evaluation has not yet come to a clear judgement on the effectiveness of the steps it has taken to promote Catholic life. The governing body fulfils its role well in supporting the school's Catholic foundation. Leadership at all levels promotes the spiritual and moral development of the pupils well, and this is evident in their behaviour and care for one another around the school.

Grade 2

Collective Worship

The quality of the provision for prayer and collective worship is good. There are ample opportunities for prayer at the beginning and end of the day, and in lessons. The pupils show reverence and put feeling into the words, making the Sign of the Cross carefully, and listening attentively. The liturgical life of the school is well planned and celebrated despite the less frequent involvement of the school chaplain. Pupils, both Catholic and non-Catholic, participate readily in the weekly Mass, contributing their own bidding prayers and approaching the altar for Communion or a blessing. Mass is celebrated on Holy days and there is an opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent. Assemblies are well planned and rehearsed. For instance, an excellent assembly on the Baptism of Jesus was impressively acted by the older pupils, parts spoken clearly and from memory, and the message reinforced by a pupil in the role of teacher questioning the listeners. The pupils put a lot of joyful energy

into their delightful singing. The combined effect of the homilies they hear, the messages in the parables and stories from the Gospels, as well as the many daily exhortations to respect life and care for others, has a tremendous influence on their spiritual and moral development, and its effectiveness is evident in their concern for each other and their excellent behaviour throughout the school. Attractive wall displays and statues around the corridors and in the classrooms affirm the pupils' work and demonstrate the catholic ethos of the school.

Grade 2

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Pupils join the school with different levels of religious knowledge and understanding, but generally attainment on entry is in line with national expectations. They make steady progress through the school so that by Year 5 and Year 6, levels of attainment are above average. This represents good achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve as well as the others because of the extra support in lessons and the use of material suited to their learning needs. By the end of Year 1 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of some symbols and artefacts, and are able to recall and sequence some stories from the Bible. Writing skills in Year 2 are steadily developing, evident in some reflective writing and simply expressed summaries of the significance of Baptism. Year 3 and Year 4 have not achieved as well at this stage because of earlier disruption due to staffing problems. Examples of written work are mainly the rewriting of, for example, an incident from the Gospels in their own words, which some pupils said was quite difficult to do because they could hardly better the original. Attainment levels at this stage are about in line with expectation. However, the standard of work in Years 5 and 6 is above average. Pupils produce more thoughtful and extended pieces of work, are able to marshal their own opinions, and can relate their beliefs to their own lives, for example, several well written and interesting pieces on being a parent. They obviously thrive on more challenging work, for instance getting to grips with some Hebrew script, and tasks which encourage empathy, as in answering the question: 'Could I be a martyr?' In interview pupils were impressively articulate and had a secure grasp of the knowledge and understanding of the Faith.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teaching and learning are both good, but with some aspects that need to be developed. Teachers take great care to explain clearly and question individuals to check understanding. Teaching assistants make an invaluable, proactive contribution in lessons, enabling the mixed group teaching to successfully cater for the learning needs of all pupils. The best teaching is characterised by challenging work, and questioning which really makes the pupils think for themselves. Lessons where teacher expectation is lower tend to be less interesting, with more input from teacher than from pupils, and less variety, especially departing from the overuse of the worksheet. Some peer work and discussion was built in to the lessons observed and this encouraged some independent learning. Pupils were able to use their own prayers at the beginning of one lesson and these were quite heartfelt and beautiful. PowerPoint is used very effectively to enrich and reinforce learning. Pupils say they enjoy their religious education lessons, particularly learning about other religions and new ideas. The quality and effectiveness of teacher assessment and monitoring of progress, particularly marking written work, is good. Comments are very helpful, because they show the pupils how to improve and give them targets to aim for. This results in evident improvement over time seen particularly in the work of

pupils with special educational needs. The school is still working on refining the procedures and reflecting on their effectiveness.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

The curriculum is balanced and inclusive, meeting the needs of all the pupils. It is based on the Here I Am syllabus. Good work has already been done on interpreting the syllabus and translating it into relevant schemes of work and lesson plans. There are well-planned links with citizenship and personal development programmes. The school counters the effects of its rural isolation well, providing opportunities to give pupils new experiences and opening the school up to the outside world. This has included extra-curricular clubs, retreats, visits, charity work, the China project, visit for a group of Tibetan monks, and planned links with India. Sacramental preparation is provided by some of the parents in the parish, working with the chaplain and the school. Sex and relationship education is taught in line with the governors' policy and diocesan guidelines.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The leadership and management of the religious education coordinator in supporting staff and providing clear direction towards higher achievement and attainment is good. Good use has been made of outside advisory agencies. Staff are well supported, especially those who are not Catholic. The assessment procedures put in place are beginning to show dividends in better progress. Pupils know what their level of attainment is and what they must do to achieve the next, higher level. The subject's own self-evaluation has identified what areas still have to be developed, and these are being worked through in the medium-term plan. Resources are adequate and managed well. The governors discharge their duties towards religious education well, and take an active interest in its presentation and impact. All statutory requirements are met.

Grade 2