



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

INSPECTION REPORT

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School,
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DfES Number 845/3354

Headteacher: Mr J Hellett
Chair of Governors: Mrs S Chaplin

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 27th November 2013
Date of previous inspection: 5th March 2007

Lead Inspector: Mrs C Walker
Associate Inspector: Mr S Beck

Description of School

Sacred Heart is a one form entry primary school, serving the Parish of St Mary's Star of the Sea and is situated in an area of deprivation. Parental support is very strong and links within the local community are well established. Pupils are mostly white British with an increasing number of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, most sharing a common Catholic ethos. Although in past years the entry point has been broadly average there has been significant change in the past three years, as there are now an increasing number of children with EAL and/or language difficulties. There are significantly more boys than girls. The number of pupils on the SEN register is average. The number of pupils with pupil premium is just below average. The school has a high stability factor. A new leadership structure, including governors, has been in place since September 2012, and this is focused on the improvement of teaching and learning. Class sizes rise from 30 in Foundation/Key Stage 1 to 35 in Key Stage 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

The Catholic life of the school is demonstrated in the commitment the school has to its vision statement "excellence through faith and learning."

Sacred Heart is a school with a number of excellent features. The self-evaluation statement provided, reflected clear and honest approaches to self-evaluation. The inspectors have been able to affirm the school's own analysis which shows it has a clear perception as to the way forward.

Leadership is focused on ensuring the school's Catholic vision is understood and supported by the whole school community. Pupils have re-written and interpreted the school's vision statement. It is lived out in the day to day life of the school.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent commented "Our son told us his favourite subject was RE and both our children enjoy sharing what they have experienced in collective worship."

Governors are well informed and are regular visitors to the school. They play an active role in supporting developments and monitoring performance. The home school parish links are very strong and are built on mutual levels of trust and support. The parish priest has a greatly valued and significant role in the day to day life of the school.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has addressed the recommendations from the previous Inspection in 2007 by further developing the involvement of staff and pupils in the preparation of liturgy.

Both the Catholic life of the school and religious education have remained a priority for all, with regular monitoring, self- assessment and reflection, to ensure the whole community receive the best in education and care. Other significant improvements since the previous inspection include the effective development of assessment in RE, the introduction of offsite retreats for Year 6 and the development of opportunities for experiencing a wide variety of prayer e.g. guided meditation, along with the more recent introduction of higher order questioning which has contributed significantly to developing the religious literacy of pupils and staff.

A key feature of continuous improvement is the robust assessment, monitoring and tracking systems, which are under constant review and development and are beginning to show an impact on achievement and progress.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for independent learning, by creating greater challenge for higher ability learners.
- Review marking in religious education to ensure the children know what they have achieved in their learning and what areas they need to address in order to progress.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Leaders and managers at all levels are committed to the vision of the school, which recognises that the inclusion of all learners is central to its vision “where everyone is valued and encouraged to develop fully.” Since his appointment the headteacher has empowered a highly talented, confident and skilled senior leadership team who work exceptionally well and effectively together to drive the school forward.

The religious education co-ordinator plays a pivotal and leading role in the very effective development of the Catholic life and religious education. The religious education leader is single minded in her drive to maintain and develop further the Catholic life of the school.

The governors are committed to the school, and the link RE governor is the local parish priest. He meets with the RE leader regularly, is aware of priorities for development and supports the school in all it does.

Grade 1

The Prayer Life of the School

Pupils’ lives are enriched by the provision of prayer at the Sacred Heart School. Pupils regularly have the opportunity to plan and lead prayerful liturgies. The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding. The act of collective worship witnessed by the inspection team demonstrated pupils’ enthusiasm to participate and engage in prayer. The pupils retold the story of St Andrew and many members of staff facilitated the music by playing instruments to accompany the pupils’ singing and signing. The scripture was brought

to life through music and drama. Collective worship makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral growth of the pupils.

Prayer is central to the life of the school and is given the highest priority. Acts of worship are vibrant, reflective and well planned, enabling pupils to take a very active part. The range, variety and quality of prayer styles offered to pupils are excellent. The school and parish together provide good liturgical formation. Teachers show a high level of skill, imagination and creativity in leading worship and provide very good role models for pupils who are becoming increasingly skilled at preparing and leading worship independently. Some whole school acts of worship have had significant impact on parents, parishioners and the wider community. The spiritual needs of all pupils are very well met by the school's high quality provision. Class prayer tables are a focal point for prayer in every classroom. They reflect the current liturgical season. Pupils are given opportunities to compose their own prayers and respond spontaneously in prayer during assemblies and lesson times.

Grade 1

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

The school is a highly inclusive community with a clear, shared vision and strong sense of belonging. Vulnerable groups and individuals are well cared for within school as the diversity of peoples backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and respected by all. Pupils spontaneously suggest many charities they would like to support such as Cafod, RNLI Lifeboats and the Cabrini society. Consequently, pupils are made aware of the important role they play in society, praying and caring for the well-being of others in communities locally, nationally and globally.

Within the school, there is concern, respect and hospitality towards others. Provision for religious education results in an attitude of respect for all faiths; mutual understanding and integrity, enabling pupils to appreciate each other's beliefs and values. Pupils are quick to show concern for each other. This is clearly demonstrated through the Year 6 and Reception class "Best Buddies" system. There is a common sense of belonging. Parents are very supportive of the school's approach to the teaching of other faiths. This gives pupils the opportunity to visit other places of worship.

Pupils have many opportunities to take on roles of responsibility. These include prefects, playground friends, librarians, sport leaders and ambassadors.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Pupils take great pride in their religious education books and these are viewed as very special books. Given their capability and starting points pupils achieve good standards. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, make at least good progress and some make very good progress. Pupils are gaining knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate across all key stages. More challenging work in some year groups would provide opportunities for the more able to achieve even higher standards.

The behaviour of the pupils is exemplary and reflects the high level of respect they have for each other and their working environment. Teachers set high expectations of behaviour to which pupils respond.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

The teaching in religious education is variable, ranging from lessons with good elements and in some cases outstanding teaching, resulting in good quality learning. Good questioning skills and the confident use of ICT are effective and have an impact on the learning that takes place. Carefully planned lessons build on prior learning and pupils' capabilities. Where teaching is outstanding, confident teachers with excellent subject knowledge are inspiring confident learners. The school would benefit from sharing this excellent classroom practice. Where teaching is outstanding, teachers have high expectations; make learning exciting resulting in high levels of pupil enjoyment, engagement and motivation. The tone of lessons is set well through opportunities at the beginning of lessons to have a period of prayer and reflection. Inspectors witnessed very good examples of guided meditation. Pupils were able to confidently use the Bible to support their religious literacy. Displays are of a high quality. The school is now well placed to develop its teaching to make it less didactic and incorporate more opportunities for pupil led, independent learning.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

A well planned curriculum, embedded assessment and tracking ensure inclusion for all pupils. The curriculum fulfils the requirements of the Diocese and the Curriculum Directory for Catholic schools. The "Come and See" programme is fully implemented across the school. Currently the school is looking to adopt a consistent planning approach based on Diocesan recommendations. It is anticipated that this will further support the development of greater consistency in teaching and learning across the school. There is a budget allocation, which is spent on resources as required. General resources are appropriate with a wide range of materials for the teaching of both the Catholic faith and other faiths and cultures. The religious education curriculum provided is rich and varied and is focused on raising standards. The curriculum promotes attitudes of respect, tolerance and justice for all faiths.

Grade 1

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The subject leader, who is also the deputy head teacher, is confident and well informed and has a clear overview of the implementation of religious education across the school. She is a very experienced and established RE co-ordinator, often recognised for her exemplary practice by being called upon by the Diocese to lead training in religious education. Along with staff, she has identified areas for development, which are recorded in the school's Improvement Plan for religious education. She has led a comprehensive review of assessment and tracking procedures, the result of which has provided very effective approaches in this area.

Leaders and managers develop effective partnerships with other providers and services to promote Catholic learning and pupil well-being. The strong cluster of Catholic schools enables the Sacred Heart School to share good practice in RE.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for religious education is an outstanding feature and key strength of the school. The efficient, effective, skilled co-ordinator has ensured that robust and rigorous monitoring, assessment and tracking systems are in place and these are having significant impact on pupils' learning, progress and standards. Through lesson observations, work scrutiny and planning monitoring, she is able to give feedback, share good practice and challenge under-performance and under-achievement. The RE leader is an exemplary role model both in her teaching and co-ordination roles.

A focused, accurate and in-depth self-evaluation has facilitated clear strategies for further improvement. The school has a clear view of the areas for development. The inspectors have been able to validate the schools own identified areas for development.

Grade 1