

**DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH
VICARIATE FOR EVANGELISATION CATECHESIS AND SCHOOLS**



St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Primary School
Cutlers Place
Colehill
Wimborne
BH21 2HN

URN 140756

Head Teacher: Mrs. Sarah Sparks
Chair of Governors: Mrs. Pauline Baldwin

Canonical Inspection under Canon Law 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Plymouth and
inspection of Denominational Education under S48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of Inspection 22nd -23rd March, 2018

Inspectors:
Miss Sarah Adams
Mrs. Helen Brown

Context of School

St Catherine's is the only Catholic Primary School in Wimborne and is part of the Catholic Schools Trust (CAST) which spans Dorset, Devon and Cornwall. It maintains close links with the parishes of St Catherine's (Wimborne) and St Anthony's (West Moors). The school takes up to 30 children each year and has one form of entry with 7 Full Time teachers and 2 Part Time class teachers. The school has a highly successful and sought after Kindergarten, admitting children from 2 years and nine months old, many of whom transfer into the Reception class. The school has been through a significant period of change since the last inspection, with new leadership appointed in September 2016. Working with CAST, the school is making significant progress in improving the school. The school welcomes families from different backgrounds and have a wide catchment area incorporating small rural villages and large towns.

This inspection is a re-inspection following inspection in 2015 which deemed the school to have serious weaknesses in leadership and most areas of the school requiring improvement.

Context Data

NOR: 181 Girls: 100 Boys: 81 Disadvantaged: 10% EAL: 3% SEN: 10% MEG:18% FSM 5%

2 teachers and 2 teaching assistants joined the staff in September 2017. Two teachers were absent for the inspection on long term absence.

Over-All Effectiveness:	Good	Grade 2
The School as a Catholic Community:	Good	Grade 2
Leadership and Management:	Good	Grade 2
Word (Curriculum RE)	RI	Grade 3
Worship and Spiritual Life of the School	Good	Grade 2

Summary of Key Findings

This is a school which is **Good**.

The school has the following strengths:

1. St. Catherine's has evaluated itself as a Catholic school with honesty and integrity.
2. This is a school with a strong sense of purpose and a commitment to living by Gospel values.
3. The school has a new mission statement '*A family united in God's love, learning in faith together for a compassionate tomorrow*', developed in association with staff and governors. It reflects the mission of the Church and has given the school an understanding and focus for future development. Its' visibility around the school and incorporation into policy documents and the website ensures that it has a positive impact on the whole community.

4. Relationships within the school have improved significantly since the last inspection and are having a positive impact on the success and ethos in a variety of ways.
5. The relatively new Head Teacher and her Deputy Head set an example of service and humility, reflecting Christ's call to each of us to love one another. To this end members of the community are seen as integral to the success of the school.
6. Although a relatively new governing body is now in place it is well informed and proactive in its desire to support the school. It has the capacity to meet the school's needs and is influential in determining the strategic direction of the school.
7. Curriculum RE has a high status in the school and is valued and seen as important by teachers, leadership, parents and governors.
8. Induction is taken seriously and new staff are enabled to teach RE with confidence, knowing where they can go to for support and guidance.
9. Most pupils enjoy their RE. They apply themselves diligently in lessons and work hard to produce their best work.
10. Relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils are positive and contribute to learning.
11. All aspects of school life contribute to the spiritual development of pupils. They are open to God's presence in all that they encounter.
12. The traditions and practices of the Catholic Church provide a context for all aspects of school life, enrich the worship and stimulate spiritual development of all in the community.
13. The school provides the pupils with a wide variety of well-planned and spontaneous spiritual experiences, which enable all pupils to grow in their understanding and appreciation of God's presence in the world.
14. Scripture is highly valued and its relevance understood by all.
15. The school liturgies and worship enable pupils, staff, parents and carers to reflect on and be grateful for the gifts they have received from God.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

1. Ensure that pupils know and understand the mission statement so that they can make links to it in their everyday experience of school life.
2. For Governor and Senior Leaders to have a clearly defined programme of next steps supported by an external agency in preparation for Ofsted.
3. For the senior leadership and governors to develop its Middle Leaders by having high expectations and offering clear guidance so that they can contribute consistently and effectively to the mission and vision of the school.
4. Ensure that children have a genuine voice so that they feel listened to and confident that adults will respond to their needs.
5. Ensure that monitoring activities in RE enable the school to provide clear direction and challenging targets.
6. Ensure that attainment in RE reflects the ability of the children by ensuring that teaching and activities enable children to achieve their learning objectives.
7. Ensure that children are offered a variety of strategies to demonstrate their learning.
8. Ensure that children can make links between AT1 and AT2 and draw their learning together at the end of units.

9. Continue to develop assessment procedures in line with on-going diocesan guidance.
10. Ensure that support staff are sufficiently engaged in the planning process so that they can confidently facilitate learning.
11. Continue to develop the quality of liturgical experiences by the creation of teams which are tasked with leading and facilitating acts of worship. This would involve all members of staff and children.
12. Facilitate and guide pupils to develop the skills needed to plan their own acts of worship.

Full Report

THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Good

- St. Catherine's has, over the past three years, been on a significant journey to rebuild its' confidence and sense of direction. A new Head Teacher was appointed in September 2016 along with a new Deputy Head. Together they have a clear sense of what it means to lead a Catholic School and their vision is beginning to bear fruit
- The school is warm and welcoming. Children are respectful and generally well-behaved around the school. They care for one another and respond to the needs of the wider community with enthusiasm.
- The school's mission statement, '*A family united in God's love, learning in faith together for a compassionate tomorrow*', is becoming embedded within the school. As a result the community is growing in its sense of unity and desire to work together with a common purpose.
- Pastoral Care within the school is good. The teacher responsible for Special Needs is clear about her role and aware of the needs which different groups of children present. She is articulate about the school's policies in relation to her role and committed to providing the support which children need.
- The school is aware of and committed to promoting equality and celebrating diversity. Although the school is situated in an area which is predominantly white middle-class, the school is keen that children understand the diversity of the country in which they live. Children are keen to know more about children from different countries and from different religious backgrounds. They enjoy opportunities for learning about other faiths. In addition, children are helped to appreciate the needs of others and enthusiastically look for opportunities to support a growing range of charities.
- Children like their school and appreciate many aspects of what it has to offer. However, they do not always feel that they are listened to and would like the adults to respond more quickly to their concerns. There is a worry-box in school which children use, but they feel that the adults do not always have time to read or deal with their worries. Staff cuts have added to this problem and the school recognises that the children need an advocate who can listen to them and speak on their behalf.
- Induction is well planned and received well by new staff, who are enabled to integrate quickly and embrace the ethos of the school. They are supported effectively by the leadership team and understand the expectations the school has of the adults in the community. Supporting supply teachers, particularly those who are

long term to engage with the RE curriculum, is an area for development to ensure that children do not lose out on crucial learning.

- The school has a dynamic nursery which is attached to Early Years. Many of these children move into the main school and as a result they quickly settle into full school life. There is still work to be done to ensure that, within early years, children are provided with the best possible experiences which will allow them the chance of developing in Year 1. This is particularly the case in RE where it continues to be taught as a formal lesson and is not integrated into the free flow curriculum. This limits the capacity of the children to engage at different levels and develop their understanding.
- Only a small proportion of parents responded to the survey for this inspection. Those who did were overwhelmingly positive about the school. They appreciate the changes that have been made and are supportive of its ethos. They are appreciative of the quality of welcome they receive which enables them to feel that they can approach staff easily.

THE SCHOOL AS A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY (LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT) Good

- The new leadership team is having an impact on the quality of education offered to the children at St. Catherine's. Following three turbulent years, with unstable leadership the school is back on an improving journey.
- The Head Teacher is growing in her own confidence to lead a Catholic School and is committed to sharing her vision with staff, children and parents so that all can engage with it.
- The dedication of the leadership team at St. Catherine's is leading most adults within the school to feel valued and appreciated. As a result they are open and respond well to self-evaluation, monitoring and are able to engage in searching analysis. As a result needs are identified more quickly and support put in place to develop the skills and talents of all teachers.
- The governing body has undergone many changes since the last inspection. An external review has led to significant changes and a greater understanding of the role and purpose of governors. There is now in place a robust body of governors who are committed to moving the school forward.
- Relationships with the wider community have strengthened over the past year with home, school and parish having stronger links. The two Parish priests are regular visitors to the school and are welcomed and respected by staff and children.
- Self-evaluation forms a key component of Senior Leadership meetings. This informs development planning. The governing body helps to shape the school development plan and is instrumental in ensuring that it is fit for purpose and that goals are achieved.
- There is a need to develop Middle Leaders so that consistency of practice across the school becomes the norm and more staff are enabled to develop their skills to lead and take on roles of responsibility.

- The Deputy Head is also the RE leader, as well as having responsibility for Assessment and the Worship life of the school. She has made a positive start, having developed the spiritual life of the school with the Head Teacher, effectively. Given the enormity of the role in addition to being a classroom teacher and Assessment lead, it is suggested that the role of RE Leader be split with another person taking on curriculum RE and the Deputy maintaining her responsibility for the Worship life of the school. This will allow for another teacher to grow as a Middle leader.

THE SCHOOL AS A TEACHING AND LEARNING COMMUNITY (WORD)

Requires Improvement

- Teachers and support staff engage well with children. Their interactions are encouraging and supportive, reflecting Gospel values of kindness, compassion, gentleness and forgiveness.
- For the most part children enjoy their RE and some can make sense of it in relation to their everyday life. They show an interest in their work and want to make progress.
- It is clear that RE has a high status in the school and is seen as an important part of the school curriculum with all classes receiving their 10% entitlement. Since taking on the role the RE leader has consistently attended Diocesan meetings and been given the time to cascade new information to staff. In addition she has been a more recent member of the RE Curriculum Writing Group, demonstrating the school's commitment to developing RE within the school.
- Teaching, however, continues to be mixed across the school. Some children have a positive experience. They are offered challenging activities and expectations are high. In other lessons, the expectations of teachers continues to be too low. Despite supportive materials provided for them by the Trust, some teachers are not using these to their advantage.
- Teachers need to plan carefully and effectively to ensure that differentiated activities allow all children to achieve and make progress. This requires teachers to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the children in their class.
- Teaching assistants work well with children in a supportive capacity but they could be used more effectively to ensure that the needs of different groups are catered for.
- Work in books is presented very well and generally on a par with English. The books show a significant amount of work. However, this is rarely differentiated so that all children are doing the same activity. In some cases this means that children are not being challenged or enabled to progress sufficiently.
- Some teachers are stretching children through their marking but this is not consistent across the school. Emphasis in some classes appears to be about quantity not quality and presentation is more important than content.
- Teachers are not always secure in their subject knowledge which can lead to misconceptions for children. It is important that pre-unit conversations continue to

happen on a regular basis to support staff in their knowledge and understanding of theological concepts.

- Most learning environments are positive and engaging. A number of the classrooms have interactive working walls and focal points, which honour the children's efforts and engagement with the subject. This is more important than displays which are attractive but do not reflect the work being done with children.
- Children talk about enjoying their RE but are less confident when talking about what they are learning in a lesson or have learned over a unit. Greater monitoring by teachers during lessons would help them to pick up misconceptions and reinforce learning as lessons progress.

THE SCHOOL AS A CELEBRATING COMMUNITY (WORSHIP AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT)

Good

- Children at St. Catherine's are being offered a wide range of experiences which contribute to their spiritual growth.
- Children, particularly in Key Stage One, are open to the presence of God in their lives and the lives of others. The stability in the school and the development of the worship life of the school has contributed to this openness.
- Whole school acts of worship follow the liturgical year and ensure that the mission of the school is developed through engaging with the Gospel of the Sunday.
- The school receives positive support from two Parish Priests attached to the school. Consequently the school community actively participates in the traditions and practices of the Catholic Church. This influences the school positively, supporting the spiritual development of pupils and staff.
- Each classroom has a prayer focus which, in most cases, is engaging and well-established, reflecting the liturgical season and the work of RE.
- Around the school a variety of displays, focal points and artefacts point to the Catholicity of the school. St. Catherine's is creative and innovative in how they use different spaces to enhance this dimension of school life.
- Meditation, Prayer Spaces, ritual and contemplation all serve to support the prayer life of the school. Classroom circle prayer has been embraced by most teachers and children appreciate this more intimate time of prayer. Children respond well, are reflective and engage prayerfully in this quiet time.
- Children are keen to be involved in the prayer life of the school but do not feel that there are many opportunities for them to do this. As a result some children in Key stage 2 feel that they have no role to play and there is a sense that worship is being done to them rather than it being a meaningful experience to which everyone can contribute. The leadership team recognise this and are committed to developing a different approach which will enable more children and adults to contribute and be involved.
- In all aspects of the life of the school the spiritual and moral development of the children is clear to see. Children are taught and nurtured to understand the difference between right and wrong. They understand the concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation and demonstrate a genuine desire to overcome conflict and be a community of peace.

Conclusion

St. Catherine's has had a difficult few years but has in recent months taken significant steps forward. The genuine desire of all to be a school rooted in the Gospel is beginning to take root and shoots of hope and prosperity are emerging. Faith is integral to all elements of a Catholic School. This is what is evident at St. Catherine's and is enabling the school to flourish to be a place where Christ is at the centre.

Sarah Adams
Helen Brown