

**DIOCESAN CANONICAL INSPECTION REPORT**  
THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **Our Lady's Catholic Primary School**

**Chanters Hill**

**Barnstable**

**North Devon**

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**URN: 140739**

Headteacher: Mr Rob Meech

Chair of Governors: Sandy Anderson

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**Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Plymouth  
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005**

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**Date of inspection: Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Reporting Inspector: Mrs C. Collett**

**Additional Inspector: Ms Nicola Slack**

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## Description of school

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is a one form entry primary educating pupils from the ages of 2- 11. The School serves a wide catchment area but predominately serves the parishes of St. Mary the Immaculate Mother of God in Barnstaple, and the Church of St. Joseph, in South Molton. 15% of its intake are baptised Catholics. The school has a significant number of pupils with Special Educational Needs including a high number of pupils with Educational Health and Care Plans. Since its previous Section 48 inspection there has been a significant number of staff changes, including the appointment of a new head. Two new parish priests have also been appointed after a significant period of instability.

The school is part of the Plymouth Cast Multi Academy Trust.

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

**Grade: Good**

### This is a good school because:

- Leaders at all levels are committed to preserving and developing the Catholic identity of the school and to providing a holistic approach to the education of their pupils.
- The leader for RE has a good oversight of her subject and provides invaluable support for her colleagues on induction and throughout the year.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and motivated individuals who work with leaders to ensure the best outcomes can be achieved for the pupils in their care. They seek to actively engage pupils at the individual's appropriate level.
- Pupils have a strong sense of pride in their school, feel safe, valued as individuals and enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils, irrespective of faith, feel comfortable to participate in the school's prayer life, demonstrating respect and reverence during class and whole school collective worship.
- There is a clear sense of community at all levels which is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between adults and pupils in this welcoming, supportive, inclusive community.
- Clear structures are in place which provide high levels of pastoral care to all pupils. There is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and those in need.
- The behaviour of pupils is a strength of the school and when challenging behaviour occurs staff deal with it respectfully and appropriately ensuring the dignity of the pupil is preserved.
- Parents speak highly of the school and value the commitment of the leaders and staff in supporting their child's education.

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

The capacity of the school to improve further is good. It should continue to grow from strength to strength under the current leadership. The areas identified at the last inspection have overall been effectively addressed but the development of all pupils being actively involved in the planning and delivery of Collective worship should continue to remain as a focus

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Further improve the quality of learning by ensuring that activities set enable pupils to show a depth of knowledge and understanding in line with their capability.
- Ensure there is clear progression of learning across the topics followed.
- Encourage an even greater involvement of all pupils, in initiating, planning, and delivering collective worship.

### **Catholic Life**

**Grade: Outstanding**

#### **a) The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school**

- The School's Mission Statement 'Faith, Fairness and fulfilment' shines through in all aspects of school life. It is visible in relationships and in the learning and outcomes for pupils. All strive to achieve the best they can and there is a consistency of high expectation from all community members.
- Pupils have a strong sense of pride in their school. They feel safe and although as one child said 'we try to sort out problems ourselves' they know that they can go to any member of staff and things will be sorted.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what it means to be a Catholic school and how it differs from other schools. They live out the values promoted by the school and flourish in the whole school ethos of faith and spirituality.
- Pupils respond positively to the opportunities provided to participate in the Catholic life, regardless of their faith. They enjoy participating in whole school fund-raising charities, such as contributing to the local foodbank during Harvest and are aware of the needs of others through the school's links with another school in Kenya.
- Chaplaincy is at an embryonic stage owing to this being a relatively new Diocesan initiative. However, the school has welcomed and embraced this initiative and look forward to the contribution it will make to the overall Catholic life of the school.
- Pupils value the opportunities the school provides for their personal support and development which enables them to be happy and confident individuals.
- Links with the parish is growing with the appointment of a new parish priest who is a regular visitor to the school. It was evident during the inspection that pupils welcome his visibility and benefit from the contribution he makes. The parish has recently provided additional resources to support spiritual provision.

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**b) The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- The Mission of the school and the attention to Social Catholic Teaching is at the forefront of all that the school provides and plan. The school team work cohesively and tirelessly to meet the needs of all pupils, valuing them as unique individuals. Pupils expressed that they feel they are treated as an individual and their talents and achievements are celebrated. One child reported that ‘we can even bring in any trophies we win from outside school.’
- The school has an embedded culture of mutual respect. This is expressed in its mission and values statement and approach to behaviour. Staff promote good standards of behaviour and act as good role models in terms of exhibiting mutual respect for all pupils and one another.
- The school environment reflects its Catholic identity and ethos through the images and displays around the school. These include religious artefacts and displays in key areas across the school. RE displays and prayer tables are prominent in all classrooms
- Clear policies and structures are in place which provide high levels of pastoral care to all pupils. There is an explicit and concrete commitment to the most vulnerable and those in need, in both policy and practice. The school’s use of ‘Thrive ‘to support the mental wellbeing of pupils is embedded as is the use of a nurture and sensory room.
- Staff are committed to the Catholic life of the school and are receptive of any support to assist them in their knowledge and understanding of what this means in practical terms. They engage in all activities including the leading of collective worship.
- Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE), and Relationship and Sex Education (RSE) are planned to reflect Catholic teachings and principles. The school is in the process of updating their RSE policy and approach so that they are in line with diocesan and new statutory DfE guidance.
- The leadership of the school is aware of the pastoral needs of staff and provides induction and opportunities for recently qualified teachers or those new to the school. Staff are provided with opportunities to work with colleagues from other schools to support the work they do. One such example is the Special Educational Needs lead regularly attending a local cluster forum and the Devon network of SENCo’s
- The provision for chaplaincy is developing in line with the diocesan strategy and the school is positively embracing the approach. Whilst this is being developed, pupils do participate in supporting the delivery of collective worship through their reading of prayers and reflective questions. However, this should now be extended to allowing all pupils to support and take a higher level of responsibility for the actual planning of collective worship and the spiritual provision within the school.

**c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school**

- Leaders and governors successfully promote, nurture and sustain the Catholic identity and ethos of the school. Despite significant staff changes Catholic life has remained at

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the forefront of the school's vision and development, enabling this aspect of school life to remain outstanding.

- The highly committed head and lead for RE are united in ensuring that Catholicity, including academic RE, are given the same recognition as that of all other core subjects. Evidence in books show that the Bishop's requirement of 10% of time allocated to the teaching of RE is fulfilled and monitoring and feedback to staff from book scrutiny or lesson visits is in line with all other subjects.
- The Head's understanding of the areas of strength and areas in need of further development are accurate and well recorded through their school self-evaluation report and school development plan.
- Since the previous inspection the RE lead has now been given full ownership for leading RE and has welcomed and embraced this. They regularly support staff in relation to their subject knowledge and has provided training at a whole school level in areas such as collective worship and the new Section 48 framework. They seek to improve their own knowledge and practice by attending RE cluster lead meetings.
- Governors undertake school visits to support the monitoring of the school development plan which includes RE and together with the RE lead identified that that there needed to be more evidence of progression across the RE themes being taught. Subsequently a further joint book scrutiny has been undertaken and it has been reported that there is improvement.
- The Head provides regular information to the governors about identified priorities within RE and ,as evidenced in discussions with a group of governor representatives. they are aware of the change from levels to age appropriate expected outcomes and the work being undertaken to strengthen chaplaincy. There was recognition from governors that it would be beneficial to monitor more closely the attendance by staff at training and the impact this has.
- The school has effective strategies in place for seeking both parent and pupil views which has evidenced that pupils enjoy RE and parents value the school.

## **Religious Education**

**Grade: Good**

### **a) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education**

- All pupils spoken to said that they enjoy RE. As one pupil said, 'it lets me learn about God, his son and how I can choose to be like him'. They enjoy hearing and discussing stories from the Bible and engage in activities set because overall teachers use a creative cross curricular approach, as seen in the Class Books where art or drama is used as a vehicle.
- Pupils make good progress from starting points and progression across themes can be seen. However, in some situations the overuse of worksheets, specifically for more able pupils, can restrict pupils in showing a greater depth and understanding of scripture or religious concepts.

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- Pupils in early years, along with other key stages engage in a meaningful way with RE. Despite having a low number of baptised Catholics, they enjoy and participate in RE activities readily and effectively. A good basis for future progress within RE is established and achieved
  - As correctly identified by the head, and evidenced in books and lessons, pupils' difficulties in literacy is not a barrier to progress in RE. Such pupils are given opportunities to record or articulate their knowledge and understanding through scaffolded or assisted approaches. In all lessons visited support staff were deployed in a manner that supported the learning of identified pupils and through the use of a system called '5 levels of independence' it is clear in books where pupils have been given support.
  - Pupils have a good, secure knowledge of scripture and the liturgical seasons. When asked they were able to give examples of stories from the Bible correctly identifying if they were in the Old or New Testament. They use correct terminology when speaking about their religion and were adept at making links between faith and life.
  - Pupils are developing an enquiring mind specifically at the end of key stage 2 where in one lesson the range of questions being asked showed that whilst accepting of a faith it needs to be challenged and questioned in order to be able to present a reason for having a belief.

**b) The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education**

- Teachers are enthusiastic and highly motivated individuals who have a genuine desire to develop and improve their theological understanding and knowledge of RE, Catholic life and prayer life. They actively seek out the parish priest and the RE lead for support and clarity when needed.
- Teachers are making good progress in planning age-related and sequenced lessons however, a greater focus is needed on ensuring that pupils have opportunities to show mastery of understanding and knowledge through the use of more open-ended tasks and the use of extending writing tasks for those able.
- Teachers are developing clarity in identifying a learning objective (LO) rather than identifying a task or activity. However, it would be beneficial for teachers to provide clarity at the planning stage or to the pupils on what evidence is needed in the work to show the learning objective has been achieved. This would also ensure that the task set was appropriate to the learning objective.
- There is evidence of the use of an elicitation approach to learning (the seeking of pupil prior knowledge). However, the task set to achieve this is not always appropriate and the school may need to review how far the evidence acquired from this is then used in future planning and pupil progress.
- Teachers continually seek to engage pupils in their learning in a creative manner. They are understanding and implement a range of strategies to hook pupils into the learning of the topic. For instance, use of talking partners were continually used as a means of

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discussing thoughts as was the use of visual aids. The benefits of this is that pupils enjoy the subject and seek to remain on task and complete them.

- Teachers make good use of displays to support the learning of RE with key words related to topics being displayed. In speaking to a range of pupils about the boards they were able to explain words such as; almsgiving, parable, miracle and fasting. KS1 pupils were able to explain what happened on Ash Wednesday and that Lent lasted 40 days.
- Whilst all teachers regularly mark pupils work there is some inconsistency in the approach to providing feedback. Whilst teachers are not always expected to ask a question, when they do pupils should be given an opportunity and expected to provide a reply. Where answers are provided it would prove beneficial for teachers to check the response in order to pick up mis- conceptions or wrong subject knowledge.
- The presentation of the work in books is of a good standard with pupils showing pride in the work they present and teachers being clear about their expectations.
- The school is currently tracking pupils in RE and gathering data however, owing to the change from levels to outcomes it will take time to ensure accuracy. The school seeks to engage in moderation of work both internally and externally to support accuracy.

**c) How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education**

- Leaders and governors ensure that the Religious Education curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference. The school follows the approved diocesan scheme and ensures that the teaching of other faiths is included in this.
- The RE leader is passionate about the teaching of RE and provides valuable support for her colleagues. She is a committed leader who is meticulous about documenting the work she has undertaken to support the monitoring and evaluation of the subject and provision.
- Religious Education is comparable with other core subjects and the head provides opportunities for professional development of staff. Governors are aware of the need to provide ongoing training, specifically for those not of the faith. Governors would benefit from having a clearer understanding of the training that has been undertaken and the impact this has on outcomes and provision. Owing to the school being part of a Multi-Academy Trust and restrictions related to budgets clarity related to how much had been spent specifically on RE resources was not able to be ascertained.
- There is an appropriate plan in place for RE which sits in the overall school development plan. Appropriate areas for development have been identified and there are clear timelines as to when actions will occur.
- Governors are actively engaged in monitoring RE and collective worship. They are aware that collective worship has been moved from the morning to the afternoon to support a development in reading but are conscious of their responsibility to monitor any detrimental the impact.

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## The Collective Worship of the School

Grade: Good

### a) How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

- Pupils, irrespective of background or faith, feel comfortable to participate in the school's prayer life, demonstrating respect and reverence during class prayer and assemblies. In discussions with pupils they enjoy the periods of quiet and the opportunity to reflect about things.
- There are regular opportunities for pupils to participate in prayer in both an informal and informal way and in one pupil's book it was clear that work had been undertaken to examine the meaning of the Our Father so that it has relevance and meaning.
- The school provides prayer in a meaningful way for the pupils and community that they serve. They allow all to access it in a way that they feel comfortable meaning that all, including parents, and staff readily participate.
- Opportunities for pupils to deliver collective worship is growing. During the inspection pupils at both key stage 1 and 2 were observed reading the prayers, scripture and asking reflective questions. The school now needs to consider allowing all pupils across both key stages to take responsibility for planning and deciding on the resources and prayers to be used with little or no teacher impute.
- The school's involvement in developing a chaplaincy team will seek to strengthen further the prayer life of the school and the pupils' ability to show faith in action. Whilst at an early stage the school is already engaging with the diocese in terms of providing pupils with training.
- With a secure parish priest now in place leaders have already begun to work with the priest and parish to provide further opportunities for the pupils to engage more in the parish community and have opportunities to celebrate sacramental life.

### b) The quality of the Collective Worship provided by the school

- Displays in and around school are supportive of the school's prayer life. The school's prayer wall has a selection of prayers from pupils and has been extended to include prayers written by staff.
- The school works hard to engage parents and carers in its prayer life by regularly inviting them to any Masses or seasonal events they provide.
- The school's approach to the provision of prayer is one of invitation on a level that pupils and parents feel comfortable with. Whilst it is proud of its Catholic identity, which is strong, it recognises and respects the individuals own faith and relationship with that faith. The impact of this approach is seen in the positive comments from parents and the rise in the number of pupils seeking a place at the school. The heads motto is 'we expect all pupils and families to access school life to the full'

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- All staff engage with the prayer life of the school which serves to support the Catholic identity and ethos. Whilst senior leadership lead whole school worships all staff take responsibility for leading key stage worship and class-based reflections.
  - Links with the parish are growing and the parish priest is now adding capacity to what the school can provide on a more regular basis. The parish recognise the part they play in supporting the Catholicity of the school and have recently provided funds to purchase a lectern and liturgical cloths to support prayer, the parish priest is a respected member of the school community, visiting weekly, talking to pupils at lunch times and supporting and encouraging staff.

**c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Collective Worship within the school.**

- Leaders and governors are committed to providing a strong, prayerful environment for its community. Governors regularly attend any masses or liturgical events and report that at all these events the children are respectful and engage. They are monitoring the impact of moving collective worship to the afternoons and have agreed that if it negative it will revert back to mornings.
- Leaders understand the importance of providing collective worship in a variety of ways and through evaluation look to provide appropriate resources to support its delivery. The school is currently using Ten Ten resources to support staff in their leadership and delivery of worship.
- The school's development plan recognises the need to strengthen pupils' own formation in leading prayer and worship and it is presumed that the governors will monitor progress towards this evidenced through reports presented to them