

Archdiocese of Cardiff



Inspection Report

Our Lady's RC Primary School Hereford

Inspection dates	3 - 4 March 2014
Reporting Inspector	Mrs C Collett
Type of school	Primary
Age range of pupils	4-11
Number on roll	194
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Chair of Governors	Mrs C Thompson
School Address	Boycott Road, Hereford HR2 7RN
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E-mail address	<u>admin@our-ladys.hereford.sch.uk</u>
Parishes served	Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, Hereford St Michael and All Angels, Belmont
Date of previous inspection	17 -18 June 2009
Headteacher	Mrs M Woolaway

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archdiocese of Cardiff and Inspection of denominational education under Section 50 of the Education Act 2005

During each inspection, inspectors aim to answer three key questions:

Key Question 1: How good are outcomes?

Key Question 2: How good is provision?

Key Question 3: How good are leadership and management?

Inspectors also provide an overall judgement on the school's current performance and on prospects for improvement.

Judgement	What the judgement means
Excellent	Many strengths, including significant examples of sector leading practice or practise that is both consistent and highly effective.
Good	Many strengths and no important areas requiring significant improvement
Adequate	Strengths outweigh areas for improvement
Unsatisfactory	Important areas for improvement outweigh strengths

The table below shows the terms that Archdiocesan inspectors use and a broad idea of their meaning. It is for guidance only.

Proportion	Description
With very few exceptions	Nearly all
90% or more	Most
70% or more	Many
60% or more	A majority
Close to 50%	Half/around half
Below 40%	A minority
Below 20%	Few
Less than 10%	Very few

Copies of this report are available from the school and from the Archdiocesan website: www.rcadc.org

Context

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided Catholic primary school in the trusteeship of the Archdiocese of Cardiff, maintained by Herefordshire Council. It serves the parishes of Our Lady, Queen of Martyrs Hereford and St Michael and All Angels, Belmont and has good parish links. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school and provides good support for the Catholic life of the school.

Our Lady's caters for pupils aged 4-11. At the time of the inspection there were 194 pupils on roll of whom 60% were Catholic. Figures indicate that the number applying for Our Lady's is rising. The majority of pupils are from white British background and the proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds is above average. It has an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and also has a significant number of pupils who join the school in KS2 mid-way through the school year. The number of pupils in receipt of pupil premium is below average.

Since the last inspection in 2009 the school has had a number of staff changes. This has proved to be challenging for the governors and leadership team in terms of being able to implement consistent and sustained practices in Religious Education. However since the school has had a stable, committed staff force it has been able to move forward effectively. Currently 50% of the teaching staff are Catholic with 1 teacher holding the 'Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.'

The school supports its parents through the provision of before and after school care and there is nursery provision run by private providers on site.

Summary

How effective is the school in providing Catholic education?

Good

The school is good in providing Catholic education because:

- it recognises and provides a good distinctive Catholic ethos which impacts on the life and experiences provided for the pupils.
- teachers have an understanding of what constitutes good learning in Religious Education.
- it is applying the same rigour of monitoring and accountability in Religious Education as in all other core subjects.
- pupils show a good level of engagement and enjoyment in learning and understanding their faith.

What are the school's prospects for improvement?

Good

The school's prospects for improvement are good because:

- the governors and leadership team are aware of the priorities and next steps and are seeking support to address them.
- the governors recognise their changing role from support to monitoring and challenging the Senior Leadership team on the standards and provision in Religious Education
- the teachers are receptive to feedback and show a desire to improve their teaching and pupils' learning.
- parents are supportive of the school.

Recommendations and Required Actions

What does the school need to do to improve further?

R1: Evaluate how teachers use the newly implemented *Come and See* scheme to ensure that:

- learning objectives are clear, measurable and make use of the attainment driver words.
- clear success criteria are set and shared with pupils to aid marking and self- assessment
- tasks enable learning objectives to be achieved and pupils are able to attain higher levels.
- levelling is accurate and evidence is shown in the work of the pupils.

R2: Governors continue to monitor rigorously the quality of Catholic education provided by the school.

R3: Pupils further develop their knowledge of liturgy and prayer in order to show progress in their ability to plan and lead worship across the school.

What happens next?

The school will produce an action plan that shows how it will address the recommendations.

Progress in addressing the recommendations will be monitored by the Archdiocese.

Main Findings

KQ1. How good are outcomes?

Good

Nearly all pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons, feeling that they help them learn about scripture, their faith and building a relationship with God. The school has recently changed to using *Come and See*, which is a diocesan agreed scheme, as a means of raising expectations and standards. Evidence from the books shows that the new scheme is enabling teachers to provide the opportunities to challenge pupils in their religious thinking, raise religious literacy and develop their understanding of beliefs and practices, thus leading to an improvement in their knowledge and understanding of the teachings of the church. The majority of pupils observed in lessons used a range of religious language appropriate to their age and in some instances above. Foundation Phase pupils spoke about the 'disciples of God' and role-played reading from the Bible at the lectern. The school needs to embed and evaluate the scheme fully in order to ensure that it makes a full impact on pupil progress and attainment across the year groups. There is a need to consider providing more focused and specific lesson objectives, with clear success criteria, and tasks that enable the learning objective to be achieved.

Most pupils start school with knowledge and skills below those which are typical for their age.

The schools' tracking system and processes are assisting in driving pupil progress forward. This should lead to accelerated progress over time and allow pupils to achieve the higher levels of attainment.

As a result of the school's strong ethos, based upon Catholic teachings and gospel values, all pupils show excellent behaviour both in lessons and whilst at play. The school's diverse but inclusive ethos establishes a sense of worth for all pupils along with a responsibility to support and care for one another.

Pupils have an understanding and commitment to supporting the less fortunate through their fund raising activities such as '*Dig Deep for CAFOD*' project. Their ability to contribute to their own and others' spiritual development is being nurtured through the opportunities provided for them to plan and lead worship. Their knowledge of different forms of prayer and liturgies needs to be extended, as do their skills and the range of ways to present for differing audiences.

Pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year and church seasons and, as a result of the school having houses linked to specific saints, pupils understand the concepts and characteristics of being saintly and enjoy the school's celebrations of worship linked to them.

Pupils act with reverence and respect when saying prayers both formal and informal. They are willing and confident to share their thoughts and feelings with each other and adults. Acts of worship generally engage all pupils. Good links and engagement with the parishes enhance the pupils' experience of the faith and assist in supporting the school's work in achieving its overall mission statement which pupils were able to articulate.

The school is currently looking at its provision for Sex and Relationships Education with a view to changing to '*Journey in Love*' a nationally recommended scheme.

KQ2. How good is provision?	Good
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Teaching across the school is mostly of a good standard, with all teachers making use of good and appropriate strategies to engage and include all learners. KS1 work incorporates visual and practical activities and resources to develop understanding of the faith and KS2 work provides opportunities for pupils to become independent learners. The introduction of the new scheme is seen by pupils as providing greater opportunities for challenge. There is a need for care in relation to time spent on providing pupils with information or asking questions, as this can slow down the pace of learning and engagement for all. Good use is made of resources and ICT is generally used by teachers to enhance pupils' differing learning styles.

Marking has improved since the last inspection. It is more focussed on Religious Education and pupils are mostly provided with opportunities to respond to teachers comments through the use of questions. A greater use of clear success criteria for all lessons would aid teachers in using marking as a tool for greater accuracy in assessment and to support the process of pupil self-assessment.

Good progress is being made in the process of tracking pupils' progress and attainment, which will in the longer term lead to underperformance being addressed more quickly. The school now has a more consistent approach and procedure for gathering data. Regular assessment is in place. The moderation of work to support accuracy of assessment and levelling is undertaken with a school portfolio, however the school needs to acquire good exemplars of work that provide evidence at levels 4 and 5 and needs to ensure that the examples of work in the portfolio provide clear and in-depth evidence of the levels being awarded.

Upper KS2 pupils are fully aware of their targets which are in their Religious Education books and both teachers and pupils make use of them. However, evidence in books needs to be more secure and in-depth to provide greater

accuracy when deciding that levels and targets have been met. To support the process, teachers need to make greater use of the level descriptor driver words in their learning objectives which would enable appropriate tasks to be set for the target level to be achieved as well as allowing a greater chance of higher levels being achieved.

KQ3. How good are leadership and management?	Good
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Both the head and deputy head, who is also the Religious Education co-ordinator, are committed to ensuring that Our Lady's provides a quality Catholic education. They recognise that the school has been, and still is, on a journey towards reaching an excellent judgement. Together they have drawn up an appropriate and mostly accurate action plan that identifies the next steps. It would be beneficial for leaders to liaise with both the diocese and other schools to support the way forward in adapting and reviewing the newly implemented scheme, in order to raise standards further. The Religious Education co-ordinator and head attend courses facilitated by the diocese and other Catholic schools and work with their feeder secondary school, St Mary's, Lugwardine, to support and aid the transition of pupils.

The level of accountability and expectation in Religious Education and the schools Catholicity has become a real focus, resulting in most parents believing the school is a good Catholic school.

Governors are committed to raising standards in Religious Education and have now begun to monitor these more closely. They now expect and receive data on progress in RE which will assist them in knowing how well pupils are progressing. They have undertaken focused visits on the provision of prayer within classes and, following their recommendations, teachers and the leadership team have made them more interactive and purposeful.

All teachers are developing their contribution to the leadership of prayer and worship. Staff recognise the need to work with the leadership team to move on standards of provision and outcomes, and are open and positive to receiving feedback that supports them in this process.

The school fulfils all Bishops' Conference and diocesan requirements and, as well as allocating an appropriate amount of time to the teaching of Religious Education, the school also provides opportunities for it to be addressed in other areas of the curriculum, for example through music and art.

All pupils are treated equally and the school meets all their needs through the effective deployment of additional staff and appropriate use of resources. Pupils are able to take their faith beyond the classroom through the provision of a prayer group run by the committed and excellent liturgy co-ordinator.

The school provides a range of opportunities for pupils to engage in prayer and worship. It offers celebrations of Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation and is in the process of offering Benediction. Parents are able to attend class assemblies to join in the Catholic life of the school. All prayer and worship is based upon Catholic life and the teachings of the church.

Appendix 1

Responses to parent questionnaires

In total 29 responses were received from parents. Nearly all were positive and very supportive of the school. Positive comments commonly referred to the Catholic ethos and sense of community. A few felt they would like more information on how the school delivers Sex and Relationship Education and on how well pupils are doing in Religious Education. They also recognise the raised profile of Religious Education and prayer and look forward to it being further developed.

Appendix 2

Evidence Base

- Pre-inspection conversations and communication
- The school's self-evaluation reports and other relevant documentation
- Meetings with the head teacher, deputy head and liturgy co-ordinator
- Meetings with representatives of the governing body including the parish priest.
- Lesson observations
- Scrutiny of planning and assessment
- Scrutiny of pupils' work
- Scrutiny of prayer foci and displays
- Attendance at whole-school and class based acts of worship
- Discussions with pupils
- Discussions with teaching and non-teaching staff
- Parent questionnaire returns
- Observation of daily routines