



INSPECTION REPORT

The Rosary Catholic Primary School

Beeches Green, Stroud, GL5 4AB

Telephone: 01453 762774

E-mail address: admin@rosary.gloucs.sch.uk

DfES Number: 916/3557

Headteacher: Mrs Rosy Savory

Chair of Governors: Mr Andy Rozwadowski

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: 8th - 9th February 2012
Date of previous inspection: 29th – 30th September 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mr Frank Toner

Description of School

The Rosary Catholic School is a smaller than average primary school with one class in each year group. It serves the parishes of Stroud and Stonehouse. 54% of pupils are baptised. The attainment on entry to the school is broadly average though there are variations between years. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. Pupils come from mixed social-economic backgrounds with lower than average numbers coming from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is a little lower than nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

The Rosary School is a good school, with a positive Catholic ethos and caring, welcoming atmosphere. Standards are good, but inconsistencies exist in evaluation and assessment. Both pupils and staff enjoy being part of the school community and all contribute to its ongoing wellbeing. Teaching and learning are good across the school, with some outstanding features. The headteacher and governing body share a commitment to improvement and development, with a clear School Improvement Plan in place. Provision for catholic education is secure.

Grade 2

What the school needs to do to improve further:

1. Marking and assessment must relate to the RE objectives set and be consistent across the school
2. In order to ensure appropriate challenge for all, greater consideration should be given to how learning is differentiated in lessons
3. To develop a locally based diocesan training programme for governors

How good are outcomes for pupils taking account of the variations between different groups?

Pupils are proud of their school and are able to speak confidently about its distinctiveness. They treat each other with care and respect, and acknowledge the way Jesus' teaching impacts on their lives. The needs of the local and wider community are brought to the attention of pupils through various charities including CAFOD and Operation Christmas Child, which are actively supported by the school. The school has a strong sense of

community with opportunities for children to contribute in a variety of ways, including being lunchtime monitors, playground 'angels' or having routine responsibilities in the classroom.

Prayer plays an important role in the life of the school. In the assemblies observed during the inspection, pupils responded with reverence to the collective prayers. One of these, a KS1 class assembly on Jesus' Miracles, was written and performed by the pupils themselves. The use of drama enhanced the opportunity for engagement in the message being conveyed. Pupils particularly enjoy singing as part of their acts of worship, which are led by enthusiastic staff, who choose hymns and songs which are meaningful to the children. Prayer makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

Pupils enjoy RE and have positive attitudes in lessons. By KS2, pupils feel confident talking about their work and religious vocabulary is developing well. In all lessons observed, emphasis is placed on the meaning and relevance of a topic, rather than reliance on developing knowledge, which gives children confidence in sharing their opinions with others. Progress made across both key stages is good, although at the top end of KS2, opportunities for reaching higher levels in written work are not exploited. For example, work focusing on AT1 – 'Learning about Religion' relies too much on recall, rather than interpretation. Despite this, the level of challenge, from Foundation Stage upwards, is a key feature of learning in RE.

Grade 2

How effective is the provision for Catholic education?

The school offers a variety of opportunities for prayer and liturgical celebration. The annual 'Collective Worship Schedule' makes provision for whole school, class led and teacher led acts of worship. The parish priest is a regular visitor to the school- celebrating mass, and leading liturgies, in addition to supporting RE lessons.

Class prayers are said at the beginning and end of each day and before lunch. In some classes, there is an opportunity for pupils to contribute their own prayers and for them to be shared by their class. The prayer life of the school is enhanced by drama, music and use of ICT. Parents are invited to the weekly 'Achievement Assemblies', which are set in the context of celebrating children's "God given talents." The RE curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops Conference and has clear progression and developments. The school has recently introduced a new programme, 'God Matters', following a review their previous curriculum. Recent evaluation by the school is positive, suggesting that this will provide greater challenge and higher attainment. Further evaluations would benefit from being more robust, particularly in reviewing consistency of provision across the school. Pupils have found that the new programme offers a range of learning activities and impacts on their levels of attainment beyond school. One pupil described how the learning in RE made them 'stop and think' when making choices. The school follows 'All That I am' for their sex and relationship education, which is currently under review in partnership with another Catholic school and with parents.

RE lessons are well-planned and resourced, which, together with the good subject knowledge of teachers, enable positive outcomes for pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with a number of outstanding features. The best lessons give opportunities for pupils to think through their ideas, work independently, or in groups, and involve challenging questions from the teacher. There are good examples of peer learning and teachers taking opportunities from pupils own responses to further develop ideas and concepts. During the inspection, exemplary practice was demonstrated in a Year 1 lesson on Jesus' miracles, when the teacher used the theme of superheros to illustrate Jesus' powers. The teaching assistant was questioned as a 'witness', followed by pupils empathising with characters in the bible story. The activities and resources deployed – including the teachers dressing for the part! – ensured a high level of engagement and understanding from a very young class. Similarly, a Year 6 discussion was absorbing because of the level of challenge, high expectations and an environment in which pupils felt confident to share their ideas. The subject, "faith vs belief", was a demanding one, generating a lively and interesting exchange of views. Some lessons had elements of too much teacher talk, providing information that the pupils themselves could find out independently. Few lessons were differentiated, which meant that there was variable challenge across the class.

The quality of marking and assessment is inconsistent across the school. Pupils do not always know the individual levels at which they are working. This needs to be shared, together with what needs to be done to achieve the next level. Teachers do, however, have a broadly accurate picture of the class level and share with pupils advice on improvement. Marking of work rarely relates to the lesson objectives being covered. Too often, comments, though positive, do not indicate how a pupil can improve their work. There is further inconsistency in the presentation of written work and worksheets. In some classes it can be slapdash, but in others, particularly class 4, this is a strength.

Grade 2

How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic life of the school?

Leadership of the Catholic life of the school is good. The headteacher has a clear vision of the nature of a Catholic school and has identified priorities on the current school improvement plan. The Catholic vision is shared and supported by staff, who have demonstrated a commitment to the schools mission "We do our best, following in the footsteps of Jesus". Care needs to be taken to continually review the Development Plan to avoid slippage. This may require sharing some responsibility. Monitoring and evaluation systems are in place, but need to be sufficiently robust to address inconsistencies in provision. The school involves itself in the diocese through meetings and course provided as well as representation at the annual Year 6 Mass at the cathedral.

The school has a highly supportive governing body, lead by a chairman with long experience at the Rosary School. The governors are aware of the schools strengths and areas for development, and were involved in the review of the schools mission statement. There is an appropriate sub-committee structure in place, with monitoring and evaluation roles. Governors involved themselves in the launch of 'Called to be a People of Hope' and joined parish representatives on how to follow up the Bishop's vision. The Parish Priest for the parish of The Immaculate Conception Church is the link governor for RE and a regular visitor to the school. Links with the parishes are therefore good.

In order to further improve governors' contribution to the life of the school, participation in diocesan courses needs developing. The distance from diocesan headquarters presents a barrier; linking with other catholic schools to develop local arrangements for training could help overcome this obstacle.

The school is inclusive and children from other faiths and cultures are warmly welcomed into the Rosary School family. The values of caring for one another, and the dignity of each individual created in the image of God, are central for the life of the school. Parents are made welcome in joining assembles and liturgies. Children are taught to value other religions, which are studied through the RE curriculum. Timetabled events celebrating other cultures have been introduced, with French Caribbean and Polish Days taking place over the past 18 months. Beyond school, links are being explored with a city primary school to broaden pupils' social and cultural experiences. Additionally pupils are aware of their Christian duty in supporting local and international charities.

Grade 2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

The mission of the school is clear, and is one that is shared with staff and governors alike. The school's systems for monitoring are methodical, but success criteria need to be more specific, in order to judge their impact. The School Development Plan, which includes provision for evaluating the new RE scheme, is ongoing and provides a basis for further improvement.

The school has sustained its high level of performance since the last inspection, though the recommendation made to develop the quality of marking has yet to be realised.

The quality of provision is good and children develop well as a consequence. With continued development of strengths, and addressing areas for development, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Grade 2