

Catholic Diocese of Northampton



Inspection Report of Denominational Character and Religious Education

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

ST PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Patrick Road, Corby, NN18 8NT

DCSF School No: 928 3406

URN: 122045

Headteacher: Mrs L Blair

Chair of Governors: Mrs S Ogwang

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P Brannigan

Associate Inspector: Mrs P O'Byrne

Date of Inspection: 29th November 2012

Date Report issued: 10th December 2012

Date of previous Inspection: January 2009

The School is in the Trusteeship of the Diocese and in partnership with
Northamptonshire Local Authority

Information about the school

St Patrick's is a one form entry primary school with nursery in Corby, Northamptonshire. It serves the local parish of St Patrick's although some pupils come from farther afield. There are currently 249 pupils aged 3-11 on roll and the school is over subscribed. Over 70% of pupils are of White British Heritage with the remainder coming from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Around 65% of pupils are Catholics. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average and the number of pupils receiving free school meals is above.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Patrick's is a good school with a strong Catholic ethos. Prayer and worship are central to the life of the school and pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. The current senior leadership team have recently put in place a number of new initiatives linked to the Catholic life of the school as well as teaching, learning, assessment and monitoring. These initiatives are well supported by staff and governors and are beginning to show results. Pastoral care is good and shared by the chaplain and other members of the school community. Relationships within the school are good and pupils feel well cared for and supported in their learning. Parents welcome the new initiatives, appreciate the good communication with staff and the way the school keeps them informed. Pupils' standards of attainment are in line with national expectations.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement and has recently put in place systems which are bringing rapid results. The last inspection in 2009 identified three areas for development linked to provision for abler pupils, moderation of assessed work and consistency of marking. These have been addressed to some extent although further developments are currently taking place. The current school leadership now appreciates the need to reference the RE SEF to the diocesan framework. The team gives a high profile to religious education and is putting in place strategies to share good practice and support new teachers.

The senior leadership team and governors have a clear vision for the Catholicity of the school and the central place of prayer, worship and religious education. Senior staff are good role models and all staff are given opportunities to extend their knowledge and improve their skills.

The current leadership has a good capacity to maintain effectiveness. The acting headteacher and deputy head show good leadership of a Catholic community and are well supported by staff. Governors have a wide range of expertise and many are involved in the life of the school. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen recent initiatives which are leading to better outcomes for all pupils. The religious education subject leader is well placed to support colleagues and has attended training linked to a new religious education scheme which was implemented in September.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards by:

- Embedding the new religious education scheme and enabling teaching staff to see outstanding practice.
- Enabling the subject leader to give sufficient time to monitor and work alongside teaching staff.
- Using assessment data to challenge all groups of pupils especially the most able.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They respond well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. Members of the School Council play a part in school life and older pupils help and support younger ones. Several local, national and international charities are supported throughout the year including CAFOD and Children in Need. There are very good links with the local parish and many pupils act as servers at Sunday mass. Pupils

show respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is good and pupils value the sense of community created within the school.

Prayer and worship are central to school life. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey. They are involved in preparation for assemblies, liturgies and masses and participate well. Pupils learn the traditional prayers of the Church and are given time for reflection. They are able to apply aspects of Jesus' life and teaching to their own lives. They understand the importance of worship and are given opportunities to create their own prayers, examples of which were seen during the inspection.

Chaplaincy provision is good. The chaplain visits classes frequently and leads discussions with pupils. Staff and governors work closely together to promote the spiritual development of pupils and the Catholic life of the community. High priority is given to the pastoral care of pupils. They feel safe, well cared for and know where to go when they need support. They value being in a friendly environment where they are listened to and encouraged to help each other. Parents value the care given to their children and the approachability of staff.

Progress in religious education is satisfactory. Pupils work with interest and enjoyment. They enjoy their religious education lessons and work well together. They are eager to participate in activities and keen to do well. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the Catholic faith appropriate to their age and abilities. Workbooks are well presented, show coverage of the curriculum and indicate a varied range of tasks but little differentiation. Standards of attainment generally meet national diocesan expectations.

Leaders and managers

Grade 2

The acting headteacher supported by her deputy demonstrate good leadership of the school through the way she promotes the provision for the Catholic life of the school. A clear Catholic vision is communicated to the whole community and is affirmed by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. The process of self-evaluation is detailed and identifies areas for improvement. The new deputy head who is also subject leader has a good knowledge of areas for development and is well placed to support colleagues.

Religious education is monitored by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning by the subject leader and the acting headteacher. The school has identified the need to put in place strategies to ensure all pupils make good progress. The implementation of an improvement plan has led to a stronger focus on planning and assessment. Much emphasis is placed on staff development and teachers are encouraged to undertake further training.

Governors work closely with senior leadership and have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. They are well informed about the life of the school through the headteacher's report and meetings with subject leaders. Governors and staff have recently reviewed the mission statement so that it has more meaning for all members of the school community. The link governor for religious education attends school liturgies and is part of the chaplaincy team. She also visits classrooms and holds discussions with pupils about their work. In addition several governors visit frequently and are involved in school activities. They recognise the need to ensure that there is an effective monitoring system in place to evaluate all aspects of the religious life of the school and to enable the governing body to challenge and support effectively.

Community cohesion is good. The school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are taught to respect other faiths. The school participates in local sporting and cultural events and there are good links with other schools including those to which pupils transfer at the end of Key Stage 2. Parish links are very good and pupils visit the local church on a regular basis. A wide range of charities including CAFOD and Macmillan Cancer are supported throughout the year and pupils are given opportunities to develop a sense of service and show compassion for others. Provision for spiritual development ensures that pupils are able to reflect on their own lives and experiences. Parents are invited to many school events and the new parents' group plays an active role in the life of the school. They are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress and appreciate the curriculum information sheets which enable them to support their children's learning.

Provision**Grade 3**

Provision for prayer and worship at St Patrick's is good. Assemblies and liturgies are well planned and contribute to pupils' spiritual development. They include visual presentations, bible readings drama, singing and music. Pupils are involved in collective worship in their classrooms and are given opportunities for personal reflection. Each classroom has a prayer focus with religious artefacts which sometimes includes children's work. A prayer garden and prayer room are available for classes and groups. Masses and age appropriate liturgies are celebrated in school throughout the year as well as Reconciliation in Lent. Parents and families are invited to these celebrations. The priest from the local parish supports the school through masses, liturgies and chaplaincy.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is satisfactory. During the inspection, lessons observed were satisfactory or good and one had outstanding features. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and an interesting range of activities. Pupils work well and generally make good progress. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments although occasionally opportunities to extend knowledge and develop understanding are missed. Good support by teaching assistants is a feature of some lessons. Marking is positive and occasionally includes suggestions of ways to improve. The assessment strategies currently being strengthened indicate that standards are likely to be maintained or improve.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is satisfactory. Generally 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The new religious education programme 'Come and See' has been in place since September. The subject leader and acting headteacher give religious education a central place in the life of the school and this is demonstrated by the good level of resources and time devoted to it. Religious education displays around the school emphasise the centrality of faith to the work of the community. The curriculum enables pupils to become aware of their responsibility for each other and their environment. It contributes well to their spiritual and moral development.

Assessment is in place and the school is in the process of developing current practice to improve outcomes for pupils. There is evidence that a strengthened system has begun to support the learning and progress of all pupils. The school has recognised the need to consolidate and build on current good practice in this area.

The inspectors would like to express their thanks and appreciation to all members of the school community for their welcome and openness during the inspection.