

Catholic Diocese of Northampton



INSPECTION REPORT OF DENOMINATIONAL CHARACTER AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

(Under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005)

OUR LADY OF PEACE VOLUNTARY AIDED CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL

Derwent Drive, Burnham, SL1 6HW

DCSF School No 928/3502
URN: 122050

Head Teacher: Mrs J O'Brien
Chair of Governors: Mrs M Flannery

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P Brannigan
Associate Inspector: Mrs K Williams

Date of Inspection: 30 April 2014
Date Report Issued: 19 May 2014

Date of previous Inspection: November 2009

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

Information about the school

Our Lady of Peace Junior is a three form entry primary school in Burnham, Buckinghamshire in the local authority of Slough. It serves the parish of Our Lady of Peace with some pupils coming from farther afield. There are currently 356 pupils aged 7-11 on roll. About 39% of pupils are of White British Heritage with the rest coming from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Around 69% of pupils are Catholics with the remainder coming from other Christian denominations or other faiths. Half of the teachers are Catholics. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is just below the national average.

Key grades for inspection

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 1

Our Lady of Peace Junior is an outstanding Catholic school due to the clear vision of the headteacher supported by a very strong leadership team. The Catholic ethos is evident in all aspects of school life with prayer and worship being central to its work. Pupils are given many opportunities for spiritual and moral development through the curriculum and the wider life of the school. The headteacher and senior leadership have put in place a number of initiatives linked to the Catholic life of the school as well as the development of religious education through the monitoring of teaching, learning, and assessment. These initiatives are well supported by staff and governors. Pastoral care is excellent and shared by a large chaplaincy team, which includes pupils and represents all members of the school community. Relationships within the school are very good and pupils feel well cared for and supported in their learning. Parents welcome the Catholicity of the school, appreciate the good communication with staff and the way the school supports their children's faith journey. Pupils' standards of attainment are very good.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 1

The school has an excellent capacity for sustained improvement. The last inspection in 2009 identified three areas for development. These have all been very well addressed. The self-evaluation process has been refined and now involves school leadership at all levels. The prayer room is available for all pupils at lunchtimes for prayer and reflection. Work books are well presented, include the school's mission statement and are seen by pupils as having special value.

The quality of self-evaluation is very good. The school documentation is accurate and gives a detailed, comprehensive analysis of the Catholic life of the school and religious education. It is a working document which is updated regularly. The school leadership gives a high profile to religious education and has put in place strategies to share good practice and support new teachers. Teaching, planning and assessment are monitored with rigour and the well planned curriculum enables pupils to make connections between faith and their own lives.

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 encouraged to improve their skills through training and moderating sessions in school. The recently enlarged chaplaincy team plays a significant role in the Catholic life of the school.

The current leadership has an excellent capacity to maintain effectiveness. The headteacher shows outstanding leadership of a Catholic community and is well supported by the assistant headteacher who has special responsibility for Catholic life. Governors have a wide range of expertise and many are involved in the everyday life of the school. Systems are in place to develop and strengthen initiatives which are leading to very good outcomes for all pupils. The religious education co-ordinator is well placed to support colleagues and has attended diocesan training linked to 'Come and See' which she has disseminated to all staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the tracking of pupils' progress in religious education to enable the subject leader to track progress throughout the school.
- Extend the marking system across the school to enable all pupils to identify the next steps in their learning.
- Continue the professional development of all staff to increase confidence in using materials linked to 'Come and See.'

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 1

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the Catholic life of the school. They respond very well to opportunities to understand the needs of others in school and the wider community. Members of the School Council play an active part in school life and older pupils help and support younger ones. Several local, national and international charities are supported throughout the year and there are very good links with the local parish. Pupils show respect for adults and each other. Behaviour is very good and pupils value the sense of community created within the school.

Prayer and worship are at the heart of school life. Pupils respond positively to opportunities to develop their faith journey. They are actively involved in preparation for assemblies, an example of which was seen during the inspection when pupils from the Chaplaincy team interviewed Mary during a role play. They were eager to talk about the passion play performed by Year 4 before Easter. They talked about scripture stories and had a good grasp of religious terminology appropriate to their ages. 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 prayer and participate readily in class and assemblies. Pupils are given opportunities to create their own prayers and examples were seen during the inspection.

Chaplaincy provision is excellent. The chaplaincy team includes the parish priest, the link governor for religious education, members of staff and pupils. They have regular meetings to plan liturgies and identify resources to support the Catholic life of the school. Members of the team are well known to pupils, visit classes and lead discussions with pupils. Staff and governors work closely together to promote the spiritual and moral development of pupils. High priority is given to the pastoral care of pupils. They feel safe, 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 good. 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 good 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. Standards of attainment meet or exceed diocesan expectations.

Leaders and managers

Grade 1

The headteacher and assistant headteacher demonstrate excellent leadership of the school through the way they promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher communicates a clear Catholic vision to the whole community and is supported in this by staff and governors who are all committed to providing the best possible environment for the pupils. Together with senior leaders she has strengthened the process of self-evaluation which is detailed and identifies areas for improvement. The subject leader has a good knowledge of areas for development and is well placed to support colleagues.

Religious education is monitored consistently by means of lesson observations, work scrutiny and joint planning by the subject leader, headteacher and assistant headteacher. The school has put in place strategies to ensure all pupils make good progress and has plans to implement a tracking system for religious education which will enable progress across the school to be tracked more accurately. Deanery moderation of pupils' work has strengthened assessment and levelling as the school

implements the 'Come and See' religious education programme. Much emphasis is placed on staff development and teachers are encouraged to undertake further training.

Governors work closely with the headteacher and have a very 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 as well as visits to school events. The link governor for religious education who is also a member of the chaplaincy team attends school liturgies and has visited classrooms and held discussions with pupils about their work. In addition several governors visit frequently and are involved in school activities. They access training provided by the diocese which has enabled them to evaluate all aspects of the religious life of the school and to challenge and support effectively.

Leadership ensures that the school is a welcoming community where everyone is respected and valued. Diversity is celebrated and pupils from other faiths are given opportunities to share their traditions and use the prayer room as necessary. 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 excellent. Other faiths are taught well and visits are planned to the local mosque. A good range of charities including Cafod, Mission Together and Daisy's Dream 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 are kept well informed about their children's welfare and progress. They appreciate the curriculum information letters which enable them to support their children's learning.

Provision

Grade 1

Provision for prayer, worship and chaplaincy at Our Lady' of Peace Junior is outstanding. There is an awareness of parents' needs as well as those of pupils and the school offers support in a variety of areas. 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. Masses are celebrated in school throughout the year and the traditions of the Church are explored with pupils. Parents, families and parishioners are invited to many celebrations and pupils visit the church for weekday mass on a rota basis. The Priest and a Seminarian from the local parish support the school through masses, liturgies and chaplaincy.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is very good. During the inspection, lessons observed were good or outstanding. Lessons are planned with clear learning intentions and an interesting range of activities. Pupils work well and make good progress. Teachers respond well to pupils' comments and respond to opportunities to extend knowledge and develop understanding. Very good support by teaching assistants is a feature of many lessons. Marking is positive and the best examples include suggestions of ways to improve and next steps in learning. The assessment strategies currently being strengthened indicate that standards are likely to be maintained or improve.

The quality of the religious education curriculum is excellent. At least 10% of curriculum time is devoted to religious education. The programme 'Come and See' has been implemented throughout the school and is currently being embedded. Senior staff 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 very well to their spiritual and moral development. Good assessment strategies are in place and the school is constantly seeking to develop practice to improve outcomes for pupils. There is evidence that current good outcomes for pupils are likely to be maintained or improved as the school consolidates and builds on current good practice in all areas.

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.