



DIOCESE OF **Arundel and Brighton**

DENOMINATIONAL (S48) INSPECTION REPORT

School: St John's Catholic Primary School

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School Unique Reference Number: 126039

Acting Headteacher:	Mrs Rachel Clough
Chair of Governors:	Mrs Deirdre Nash
Lead Inspector:	Mr Stephen Beck
Associate Inspector:	Mrs Liz Hargreaves
Inspection date:	1 st July 2019

	Previous Inspection:
Overall Effectiveness	2
	This Inspection:
Catholic Life:	2
Collective Worship:	2
Religious Education:	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St John's is a Good Catholic school because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ St John's is a warm and welcoming school offering a very good standard of Catholic education. Pupils are happy and enjoy being part of their school community. They achieve well and make good progress, academically, spiritually and morally. ▪ Pupil behaviour is excellent. Pupils have a clear sense of moral purpose and are keen to help others, in school and beyond. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Governors are conscientious and committed to their role. They know their school well and provide support and challenge in their continued drive towards school improvement. ▪ Good relationships are a feature of the school. Pupils, parents, teachers and governors work in partnership in this happy school community.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parents are very appreciative of the school and the Catholic education it offers. Responses to questionnaires distributed as part of this inspection were overwhelmingly positive. A parent wrote, <i>'We are very pleased with the school's religious guidance and kind Christian attitudes, as well as its strong Catholic values'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ School collective worship is inclusive of all in the school community, regardless of faith background.

St John's school is not yet Outstanding because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The use of pupil progress data by teachers is not yet consistently used in lesson planning to impact on individual pupil attainment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although standards in teaching and learning in religious education are good, in some lessons, opportunities are missed to engage pupils to initiate further interest and independent research. The pace of some religious education lessons is slow and not matched to the needs of the learners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pupils need opportunities to become more involved in collective worship. This could involve them taking the initiative in planning and leading the community's prayer life appropriate to age and ability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school needs time to embed and further develop pupil involvement in shaping the school's mission and ethos and develop their leadership potential through responsibilities such as membership of the school council.

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's Catholic Primary School is a single form, smaller than average-sized primary school, on the west side of Horsham. The age range of pupils is 4-11. The school is located in an urban setting and takes pupils from the immediate area as well as the feeder parishes of St John the Evangelist Horsham, Our Lady of Consolation and St Francis West Grinstead and St Gabriel in Billingshurst. There are 187 pupils on role of which currently 71% are Catholics.

The current Acting Headteacher has worked at the school for many years, as a teacher, Deputy Head and more recently as the school's SENCO. She has been in the capacity of Acting Headteacher since October 2018 when the incumbent Headteacher went off sick and subsequently resigned her post at Easter.

The proportion of pupils eligible for support through Pupil Premium is lower than the national average at 8%. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, supported through school action is below average at 11%. The proportion of pupils from ethnic backgrounds is much lower than average, but a higher than average number of pupils speak English as an additional language.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

As a result of significant changes in staff in a relatively short space of time the Acting Headteacher is doing an excellent job in providing continuity and stability and thereby minimising the impact on the school and its pupils. The self-evaluation provided for this inspection showed insight and clarity regarding the school's strengths and areas for development. The school should action these giving priority to;

- Further developing the use of the school's updated religious education data analysis, to ensure its consistent use by all teachers, linked to planning, in order to maximise the progress of all pupils.
- Establish an up to date job description for the religious education subject leader to clarify roles and responsibilities, possibly linked to the formation of a religious education team to move all aspects of this curriculum area forward.
- Use the school website to celebrate the school's Catholic Ethos and to provide access to religious education policies.

CATHOLIC LIFE

THE QUALITY OF THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

- The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.
- The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school is Good.

- The extent to which the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school is good. Pupils value and are ambassadors of their school's aims which state, *'Through Jesus Christ we Learn to Love and Love to Learn, knowing that kindness comes first'*. Pupils are able to articulate this and develop a deeper sense of what it means and what they need to do to live out the mission.
- The behaviour of pupils is exemplary, as they consistently observe the school's well-established routines, which set high expectations for behaviour. Pupils show an ability to listen, to give thanks, to forgive and to be forgiven. They are also quick to congratulate and celebrate each other's achievements. On the day of inspection pupils commented, *"Our school is a big family"*, and linked this well to the role of CAFOD and their understanding of being a neighbour.
- Pupils are very inclusive in their behaviour and acceptance of different backgrounds and needs. The school has a number of families from all over the world and their cultures are regularly celebrated through many international school-based events, for example, an international story telling day and an international food festival.
- Pupils understand the importance of religious beliefs and are interested to find out about other faiths. They show interest in the religious lives of others. They have a strong sense of belonging and understand 'British Values' and how these align themselves to Gospel values.
- Pupils are eager to take on responsibility within the school and the wider community. They are given a broad range of opportunities to do so as; School Councillors, Young Interpreters, Altar Servers, Mini Vinnies, Fair Trade Ambassadors, Global Citizens and House Captains. The school's 'Mini Vinnies' are particularly strong and enthusiastically support a range of community ventures including fund raising for charity. Other groups such as the School Council demonstrate capabilities but are less well developed and given impetus could strengthen pupil voice very effectively.

- The excellent English as an Additional Language lead has given this group of pupils self-esteem and confidence to develop their leadership skills and share their experiences. This exemplar could be usefully extended to develop all pupils leadership skills particularly in collective worship.

The quality of provision of the Catholic Life of the school is Good.

- The school mission statement was agreed by the whole school in September 2016 and has been retained, as it remains relevant to today. All staff and pupils are focussed on what it means to work and learn at a Catholic school and this is reflected in the mission statement. *'Through Jesus Christ, at St John's all our children Learn to Love and Love to Learn. The family of St John's love learning and are lifelong learners. Through Jesus Christ, everyone knows how to show love to others and God, remembering that kindness comes first'.*
- St John's has an engaging learning environment, apparent both in classrooms and around the school itself, where there are focal points and displays linked to the liturgical seasons reflecting the school's distinctive Catholic nature. The quality of presentation within school is a testimony to high expectations, which value achievement and promote aspiration with all classes having prayer tables and religious education displays. Classes are named after Saints and the four house teams are named after the four Gospel writers.
- Within school there is a tangible sense of community at all levels, which is evident in the quality of relationships between staff, pupils, parents and governors.
- The school's behaviour policy reflects Gospel values. It is clear that pupils are well supported in making right choices and that they understand personal responsibility.
- Pupils' achievements are celebrated, and every pupil is taught that in God, all things are possible and they celebrate each other's God given talents and abilities as a Christian family.
- Ofsted inspectors commented that the way in which the school *'promotes pupils' personal, behaviour and welfare is outstanding'* and this continues to be evident. Mutually respectful relationships lie at the heart of the school. Pupils respect each other and adults. Pupils have complete confidence and trust that adults are there to support them. Older pupils support the younger children through a 'buddy' system.
- Pastoral care is a strength at St John's and is underpinned by the school's stated aim *'Learning to Love...Through Jesus Christ, everyone knows how to show love to others and God, remembering that kindness comes first'.*

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school is Outstanding.

- St John's has been on a journey over recent times that potentially could have been very destabilising due to changes in staff and the school's staffing structure that will change again from the start of the next academic year.
- It is commendable how the current Acting Headteacher has, alongside other members of staff, managed the school since October 2018, and they have ensured the focus has remained the same during the year, namely, the pupils and their education in a supportive Catholic school. Moving forward, consideration could be given to a more distributive style of leadership utilising job descriptions to better delineate roles and responsibilities with the possible formation of a religious education team to share the workload.
- Leaders at St John's school are committed to the Church's mission in education. The Acting Headteacher displays drive and commitment for education, reflecting the church's mission in that drive. The Acting Headteacher and her staff enjoy a supportive relationship which is reflected across the school.
- Leaders are hard-working and lead by example with a drive to follow Christ's example to love one another. Putting the pupils at the centre of life at St. John's has a clear impact on outcomes and the atmosphere in the school. It is a positive place to be. The school's Diocesan Self Evaluation Form is an accurate reflection of where the school is in terms of attainment, progress, religious education and Catholic life. It reflects the priority the school gives to Catholic life.
- A high number (50%) of parental questionnaires were returned indicating that parents are highly supportive of the school. They say that communications between school and home are excellent and agree that the school offers a distinctively Catholic education. Parents are particularly appreciative of the school's 'Open Door' policy which provides every opportunity should there be a need for parents to see their child's teacher or a senior member of staff. One parent gave an example of the school staff being supportive at the time of a family bereavement that they said '*went over and above any call of duty*'. They believe that the school promotes strong partnerships with parents.
- Governance at St John's is strong. Regular skills audits are undertaken. The excellent religious education link governor, as a parent, parent governor and now foundation governor brings a broad range of expertise to her role. She is knowledgeable about the school and demonstrated that governors are supportively challenging and serve the school well.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND PRAYER LIFE

2

- How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life.
- The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

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How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Good.

- Pupils participate reverently in collective worship, whatever their personal faith and join in singing with enthusiasm. Their response to and participation in the school's collective worship is good and confirms the school is a place of mutual tolerance and respect.
- At interview, pupils spoke about how they enjoyed their times of worship, particularly the times they were actively involved in it and also when they could be '*silent and calm*'.
- The experience of living and working in a faithful, praying community has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils, irrespective of ability or faith background. They have a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. This is reflected in the manner in which many pupils participate in prayer and liturgy.
- The school has created a lovely prayer garden and plans are underway to use it more frequently and develop it as part of religious education teaching and learning, encouraging pupils to fully participate and appreciate the awe and wonder of God's creation.
- The parish priest and his assistant are very supportive of the school and their willingness to lead celebrations is much appreciated by the school and parents. They are regular visitors to the school and these visits are valued by the whole school community. As a parent commented on their questionnaire return, '*The current school leadership are providing great quality in the Catholic message given to the pupils*'.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Good.

- Collective worship is central to the life of the school and forms the heart of every school celebration. Praying together is a natural part of the school day for all staff and pupils. Whole school liturgies or assemblies are linked to the church year, monthly devotions, Gospel values and wider world events.
- There is a clear policy for collective worship and a well-planned programme of Masses, liturgies and other liturgical celebrations. It is given a high priority and is well resourced.
- Staff are working with pupils to enable them to confidently plan, prepare and lead collective worship. As a result, they are developing a good understanding of the purpose of collective worship at an age-appropriate level. The school plans to develop this to enable older pupils to deliver collective worship to a range of pupils.
- Parents, parishioners and governors regularly take the opportunity to be present at assemblies, liturgies and acts of worship and comment with enthusiasm about the consistently high quality of celebrations.
- Staff are aware of the importance of worship and the quality of the worship that is essential to develop pupils' spirituality and deepen their understanding of faith. They are supported as needed and any resources required are sourced and provided. Through collective worship the school has a clear aim to enable pupils to prepare, gather, listen, respond and go forth.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is Good.

- School leaders lead collective worship within the school and are appropriate models of practice for staff and pupils. They are promoting pupils' planning and leading of collective worship, which is developing, initially at a class level. They have a clear understanding of the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts and they are able to make these accessible to the pupils in a contemporary context.
- There is a monitoring programme in place for collective worship that identifies areas for further development, which will impact positively on the school's provision as they are implemented.
- The parish priest is very supportive of the school's collective worship and supports the school's use of the church as part of religious education. He is well known by staff, parents and pupils who all value the contributions he makes to the life of the school. Work is ongoing to further strengthen the school parish relationship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

THE QUALITY OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2

- How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.
- The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.
- How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

2

2

1

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education is Good.

- Pupils are keen to do well and report that they enjoy their religious education lessons; they articulated how they like the variety of experiences they are offered and that their lessons are interesting.
- During lesson time most pupils are on task and engaged in their learning. They answer questions thoughtfully and demonstrate their knowledge well. Behaviour is very good and lessons proceed without interruption.
- Pupils understand how well they are achieving in religious education but are not always clear about the skills they have to focus on to improve their work. They can talk clearly about religious ideas and explain how they affect their everyday life and the way they treat people.
- Teachers' annotations in pupil books show that there is good progress across the school for most pupils. Opportunities to use self and peer assessment, to increase pupil progress are not yet used consistently.
- Pupils identified as having a special educational need or disability make good progress because of the additional, discreet and targeted support they receive from skilled support staff.
- Standards of attainment are usually at least in line other core subjects at the end of years two, four and six. Inspection findings and evidence presented by the school show no noticeable differences between groups of learners.
- Behaviour for learning is strong across the school and could now be usefully channelled to provide opportunities for pupils to undertake elements of self-motivated challenge and research.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education is Good.

- Teaching is good overall with some outstanding elements and as a result almost all pupils make good progress over time. During lesson observations, teachers were enthusiastic, confident and assured and most made good use of the 'Driver Words'.
- Consistent assessment procedures are being developed and high expectations are shared with pupils.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and continually strive to develop this through school based and external training.
- The staff follow the 'Come and See' programme effectively to plan well-structured lessons, enhanced by the use of quality resources.
- Marking and feedback is not yet used consistently to identify how the religious content can be improved and to identify the next steps in learning. In some lessons, activities are insufficiently differentiated to meet the individual needs of the learners.
- On the whole, teachers are confident in their subject expertise and have a very good understanding of how pupils learn. They build on prior knowledge well. As a result, pupils apply themselves well and make good progress in lessons and over time.
- Teachers employ a good range of appropriate strategies, including individual and collaborative work. An increasing number of cross-curricular links are being made and opportunities developing for pupils to be creative. Consequently, pupils are motivated and concentrate well in lessons.
- Some teachers ensure pupils are involved in evaluating how well they are achieving. This contributes to their good progress and increases their confidence in making further improvements. Most teachers manage time well to secure learning in lessons and across sequences of lessons and the pace of these is good. This good practice should be shared across the school.
- Teachers use observation and questioning well during lessons in order to adapt explanations, thus improving learning for pupils.
- The school is implementing the 'Come and See' religious education scheme well. Learning objectives are made clear to pupils. Some lessons would benefit from greater pace and the use of a wider range of teaching strategies to secure greater levels of differentiation.

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education is Outstanding.

- The leadership and management of religious education is in very good hands. Leaders, some new to role, have the expertise, enthusiasm, and ambition to secure and build ongoing improvement. They have correctly identified areas for improvement which figure prominently in actions for school improvement.
- There is a shared vision that all pupils will be *'the best that they can be'* and St John's effectively provides pupils with a safe, happy and caring environment that allows them to grow and develop spiritually and morally.
- The 'Come and See' curriculum is used and monitored effectively to ensure pupils enjoy their learning and are now making good progress and religious education compares favourably with other core subjects in terms of pupil progress and resources.
- The Acting Headteacher as religious education leader plays a strategic role in the development of the subject throughout the school. Since taking on the role she has seen that the subject is always promoted, and that pupils and staff recognise that it is special in its own right. She has ensured Religious Education has been prioritised this year and will continue to build on the good foundations laid, particularly regarding assessment and tracking the progress of children across the school. This will form a core aspect of the school's action plan for Religious Education moving forward.
- The Acting Head is passionate about St John's and believes that all the pupils at the school have the potential to achieve whatever they are capable of. She is a driving force in seeing that the importance of Religious Education is understood and lived out within every aspect of school life and reflects the school's mission statement. In what is a period of transition, there has been an absence of an SLT, the religious education lead has taken on a multitude of roles this academic year, which she is handling well. Following recent staff appointments there is a positive view looking forward and it will have the capacity to build successfully on the progress made to date.
- The religious education lead is highly effective and has been proactive in supporting planning, checking resources, making collective worship plans available for staff to use and by undertaking work scrutiny, book looks, moderations and lesson observations. This has impacted on securing significant developments in religious education and outcomes for pupils. She is well aware that at the start of the new academic year there are new members of staff and that support will need to increase for them, but continue for others, in order to maintain and build on the progress made to date. This reflects her strong strategic approach to secure the very best outcomes for pupils.
- The Governors have an important role to challenge the school to ensure that standards of teaching and learning in religious education are at least as good as those in other core subjects and capacity to do this is evident.
- A parent remarked that their child, who was new to the school, had, had a fabulous induction. Another said, *"I trust the school, I trust the staff"*.

Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

Catholic Life

2

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

2

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

2

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

1

Collective Worship and Prayer Life

2

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

2

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

2

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

2

Religious Education

2

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.

2

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education.

2

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

1