



DIOCESE OF **Arundel and Brighton**

DENOMINATIONAL (S48) INSPECTION REPORT

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

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School Unique Reference Number: 126046

Headteacher: Mr T. Hallett

Chair of Governors: Mrs M. Scott

Chair of Executive Working Group:

Dr S Piggott

Lead Inspector: Mrs G. Askham

Associate Inspector: Mr R. McKenzie

Inspection date: 22nd March 2017

Overall Effectiveness	Previous Inspection: 2
	This inspection: 2
Catholic Life:	1
Collective Worship:	1
Religious Education:	2

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary is a good school because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The learning environment fully reflects the school's mission and identity through clear signs of the school's Catholic character. The spiritual and moral development is at least good and the pupils behave very well, relating the Gospel messages to their daily lives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The recently appointed head teacher and his staff are driven towards achieving the best attainable outcomes for their pupils and are committed to nurturing them in their spiritual development as valued members of a Catholic community. ▪ A robust programme of monitoring has been established and now needs time to embed to ensure its impact can be seen on raising standards in religious education in the long term.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The quality of teaching is consistently good and aspires to be outstanding. Lesson plans are differentiated and the religious education leader supports colleagues in the planning process in order to ensure a consistency of approach to marking and feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The environment is one which is warm and welcoming. The priority and centrality of collective worship is tangible and held dear by all within the school community. Pupils reflect, pray and are beginning to lead liturgies with growing skill and independence – they see this as being something that makes their school 'special'.

St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary school is not yet outstanding because:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The religious education leader should continue to be given sufficient leadership time in order to realise her vision for the whole school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Teachers need to take risks with their religious education teaching and be confident in making exciting cross curricular links in order to make learning inspiring and truly challenging for all pupils.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff could now introduce regular Christian meditation and Spiritual Journals to expand and enhance the prayer experiences for all pupils. 	

FULL REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Francis of Assisi is a larger than average primary school with 422 pupils on roll with 95% who are Catholic. The school serves the parishes of Crawley and Horley. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.

Pupils joining Reception enter with standards which are below national expectations yet make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 1, and achieve well by the end of Year 2. This was reported as a strength of the school in the most recent Ofsted inspection (March 2016). In January 2017, a substantive head teacher was appointed to the school. This has served the community very well providing a strong sense of stability and security for all within. The head teacher is working tirelessly in his mission to cement and develop excellent relationships with parents and within the wider community. With a passionate head teacher and strong and devoted staff team the school has excellent capacity for continued improvement.

WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL NEED TO DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

- Provide additional leadership time for the religious education leader so that she can focus on the areas for development in a strategic and thorough manner.
- Introduce Christian meditation into the school life alongside the use of Spiritual Journals for all pupils at their appropriate level of age and ability to enhance the spiritual experiences for pupils and staff.
- Introduce annual Spiritual retreats for staff so that the mission statement may remain a constant strength of direction and leadership for St Francis of Assisi school's journey.

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 outstanding.

- A warm welcome awaits all who enter St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School.
- The attractive entrance lobby places Christ at the centre of the school environment and ensures that its Catholic nature is explicit. The large, free-standing cross displaying the faces of every pupil within the school creates a real sense of belonging to a caring and nurturing school community.
- The mission statement is given pride of place making clear that every individual is valued, respected and that diversity is celebrated.
- Throughout the school, every opportunity has been taken to promote the Catholic ethos and values which are held dear by all who belong to the school community.
- In all areas of the school, religious artefacts have been sensitively placed - a constant reminder and reassurance of Christ's presence.
- Pupils are developing an understanding and appreciation of what it means to belong to a community both locally and globally and are very proud of what they achieve, realising the impact of their fund-raising initiatives on those less fortunate than themselves.
- In particular the pupils initiate and independently organise mini-enterprise projects which raise money for a range of charities including: Fair Trade, Water Aid, Macmillan and CAFOD.
- Pupils behave very well, demonstrating respect and reverence during acts of collective worship within school and during liturgical events within their community. They are polite and well mannered.
- Pupils show care for their peers and others in their school and beyond and appear to be happy, confident and secure in their various stages of spiritual growth.

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

- The school's mission statement is strong and inspiring.
- All staff are committed to its implementation across all areas of school life and actively foster the vision for this Catholic school and disseminate it passionately to all pupils.
- Since the appointment of the substantive head teacher in January 2017, the mission statement has been reviewed by staff and pupils to ensure that it serves to support all within the school community.
- The mission statement is displayed prominently throughout the learning environment and serves to make the school's Catholic identity explicit. High standards of behaviour are promoted through Gospel assemblies and pupils are able to talk confidently about how their behaviours and attitudes are shaped by Gospel messages.

- The school has introduced the Diocesan programme 'A Journey in Love' since the last Section 48 Inspection and this is consistently implemented in all year groups. The Relationships and Sex Education programme is sound and books show that it is given sufficient time and priority.
- Pupils' well-being is fully supported during the school day and they report that they feel safe and cared for in school.
- Provision benefits from a prayer garden which is available for use during playtimes and as a resource for lessons, providing a small and welcome sanctuary in times of need.
- The school is extremely effective in working with parents and carers with one parent reporting that 'St Francis of Assisi is an excellent school and I couldn't be happier that my two children are placed here'.
- Another parent of a Year 4 pupil told us 'The teachers know my daughter so well and they do all that they can to help her to be the person she wants to be'.

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

- During his short term of leadership at St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, the head teacher has worked tirelessly to secure very good relationships between staff, pupils, parents and parishes.
- During interviews and consultations parents reported that they are very happy with the level of communication received from school and that they are well informed on all aspects of school life. An overwhelming majority of parents reported that they are happy with the education and care being provided for the children (Section 48 Questionnaires for parents, March 2017).
- The religious education leader is well supported by senior leaders, receiving some weekly release time to enable her to carry out her work.
- School self evaluation is regular, reflective and evidence based. The religious education leader has identified clear priorities and progress towards addressing these is regularly monitored with the support of the governors' Executive Working Group.
- Standards in religious education have been consistently in line with Diocesan expectations for the last 3 years and this continues to be an area for further improvement.
- The parish priest, Father Simon, is a regular visitor to the school. He provides support and guidance for staff and pupils as well as celebrating a range of Masses and liturgies throughout the school year. His commitment to the school is greatly valued.
- The Executive Working Group (currently consisting of 3 governors) has a very clear vision for the school. All members of the group are passionate and driven in their support of the head teacher, staff, pupils and parents. During the inspection they talked confidently about their aims for the school and they have a clear action plan in place. In time, as the full governing body resumes, these key members will be excellent models for future governance. They know their school and are keenly aware of its strengths and areas for development.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP / PRAYER AND PRAYER LIFE

- 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 outstanding.

- All pupils demonstrate a palpable enthusiasm and deep sense of reverence whilst participating in acts of worship. They experience a wide range of prayer forms in a range of settings linked to the liturgical year.
- Pupils are able to create atmospheres which are conducive to prayer. They plan and deliver class liturgies independently. They are proud of their leadership in this area and recognise it as "something that is different to other schools, making us special" (Year 5 pupil).
- In the whole school assembly observed, pupils took an active part in delivering the Gospel story. They were confident and comfortable in the use of spontaneous prayer and had thoughtful contributions to make. There was a simple yet powerful visual focus and appropriate music. When the pupils greeted the head teacher they followed this with a 'Good morning friends' to all present and this was felt to be a lovely addition to the norm.
- Pupils respond through high quality singing, community prayer and reflective silences and their experience of belonging to a praying community has a visible effect on their personal and spiritual development.
- Pupils enjoy being part of a worshipping community and appreciate that this forms part of their spiritual development, with a message for their daily lives and how they should behave towards others.
- All who become part of the school community are included and welcomed, regardless of their faith background.

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life is outstanding

- At St Francis of Assisi, collective worship is central to the life of the school and is at the heart of all celebrations and events.
- Pupils and staff participate in a range of prayer forms which serve to deepen their understanding and enhance spirituality.
- During the inspection a range of prayer forms were observed including spontaneous prayer in religious education lessons and the whole school assembly and pupils praying the rosary independently in the school's beautiful chapel.
- The chapel is used regularly and spontaneously by pupils during their free time. The walls have recently been beautifully adorned with art work depicting the Stations of the Cross.
- Each classroom has a prayer corner which is used during religious education lessons and at times of quiet reflection.
- The classrooms are named after saints and the pupils interviewed during the inspection knew the story of their saint.
- There are daily acts of worship for all within the school and these are led by pupils as well as key staff.
- It is clear that collective worship is a priority in the school and it is resourced, planned and delivered to a high standard.
- With clear purpose and direction, the collective worship experiences are highly valued and appreciated by the whole community.

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

- Leaders plan collective worship carefully and with insight. Their extensive knowledge of the Church's liturgical year, seasons, rites and symbols enable them to deliver high quality experiences for all. Because of this, pupils' response to collective worship is outstanding.
- Leaders give pupils the opportunity to plan, resource and deliver class based liturgies and encourage them to do so independently according to their age and ability.
- Leaders are excellent role models of outstanding practice for all within the school community.
- The parish priest regularly and enthusiastically supports the school in their prayer life throughout the year.
- Governors on the Executive Working Group have observed acts of collective worship in their monitoring role and speak highly of the school's provision.
- Evidence from parental questionnaires indicates that the provision for pupils' spiritual growth and development is excellent and appreciated by families.

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.

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

- Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning in religious education. The activities provided in lessons are varied and pupils apply themselves diligently, working at a fairly good pace.
- Their behaviour for learning is very good reflecting their focus and enjoyment even in those lessons which are more teacher directed.
- Religious education work in books shows that pupils are making progress over time and the standards of attainment are at least in line with Diocesan expectations.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are effectively supported to reach their full potential.
- There are no significant differences in attainment between pupil groups.
- The presentation of pupils' work is of a high standard, demonstrating high teacher expectations throughout the school.
- Many good cross curricular links are made within religious education lessons wherever possible, although several pupils reported that they would like this to be further developed so that they are more challenged and inspired within lessons.

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

- Teaching in religious education is good with growing evidence of outstanding features in some lessons observed.
- Most pupils make good progress in lessons and over time due to the teachers' confidence, sound subject knowledge and expertise in delivering engaging learning opportunities.
- Work is differentiated, thoughtfully planned and regularly moderated across schools within the Deanery to ensure a consistency of standards and assessment.
- Time is well managed in most lessons and the school fulfils the requirements of the Bishop's Conference in terms of curriculum time allocation.

- Feedback and marking has certainly improved since the last inspection and is currently judged to be good.
- The pupils in most year groups are increasingly given time to respond to comments and questions posed by the teachers.
- Teachers are becoming more focussed in their feedback questioning and, as a result, pupils' thinking is beginning to be stretched and deepened. Their analytical skills are also developing in the light of skilful questioning and well focussed discussions led by teachers.
- Lessons observed during the inspection were judged to be at least good with outstanding provision observed in the Early Years classroom. These findings are in line with the school's own monitoring.

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

- The head teacher and religious education leader are passionate in their drive to ensure excellence of religious education provision and pupil outcomes. They provide inspiration and support for the cohesive staff team.
- The religious education leader is passionate and highly motivated. She has carried out a range of monitoring activities often supported by the head teacher or a member of the governors' Executive Working Group.
- Continuing professional development opportunities are provided for staff. These include staff meetings, INSET training and Diocesan courses, ensuring that staff are up to date with developments in the teaching of religious education and are provided with new ideas and resources to inspire them and deliver provision for the pupils.
- Teaching is improving as a result of the religious education leader's professional guidance with all lessons observed being at least good. The provision for religious education observed in EYFS during the day of inspection was judged to be outstanding.
- The shared common purpose amongst staff is, in part, due to the religious education leader's drive and ambition.
- The curriculum for religious education meets all Diocesan requirements and is supplemented by links forged with local parish and other Catholic schools.
- Standards in religious education are in line with other core subjects and religious education makes a positive contribution to the moral and spiritual development of all pupils.

Summary of Inspection Judgements

How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education.

2

Catholic Life

1

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

1

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

1

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

2

Collective Worship and Prayer Life

1

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

1

The quality of provision for Collective Worship and Prayer Life.

1

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

1

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

2