



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St Francis Catholic Primary School**

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URN: 109239

Headteacher: Ms C Hostein

Chair of Governors: Mr M O'Neill

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**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**

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Date of inspection: January 2015  
Date of previous inspection: March 2010

Reporting Inspectors: Mr F Toner  
Additional Inspector: Mr M O'Keefe

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## Description of School

St Francis is an average sized Catholic primary school with a wide catchment area serving the parishes of St Francis, Nailsea and The Immaculate Conception, Clevedon. The school has a Catholic population of 52%. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the percentage of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement for SEN. A total of nine languages are spoken in the school. Nine percent of pupils have English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Requires improvement in order to be good;  
Grade 4: Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school (summary statement)

**Grade 1**

This is an Outstanding Catholic School because

- pupils' moral and spiritual development is outstanding
- the school provides many quality opportunities for pupils to participate and take a lead in its prayer life
- leaders and governors are committed to the Catholic life of the school
- staff are excellent role models for the children
- the school involves all stakeholders in evaluating the Catholic life of the school.

## The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

- Areas for development from the last inspection have been addressed.
- Governors, leaders and teachers have the skills and commitment to secure continued improvement.
- The school's self-evaluation procedures are accurate and robust.
- The children have a highly positive attitude to learning.
- The school has the overwhelming support of parents.
- There are excellent links with the wider Catholic community.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Teachers should share the best practice available in the school in using prior assessments and level descriptors to inform their teaching.
- Teachers should make effective use of assessment for learning strategies within RE.

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## **How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?**

**Grade 1**

Pupils benefit significantly from the Catholic life of the school. They have many opportunities to take responsibility, and all engage wholeheartedly in what the school has to offer. Children are proud of their school and can express with confidence the impact that this has on their personal lives. They genuinely feel part of the school community which is reflected in the attitudes and respect that they show towards one another. For example, one child stated “We are trusted by our teachers.” The children understand their role in serving the wider community through initiating and leading their own fund raising activities such as the Shoe Box Appeal and raising money for the homeless. Additionally, they respond to world needs, for example in fund raising for the Philippines.

Attitudes to learning in Religious Education are exemplary throughout the school. Positive teacher-pupil rapport and classroom management is a strong characteristic in every class. All adults provide a positive climate for learning which enables pupils to feel confident about sharing their views. Pupils' oral and written responses show growing maturity. While the range of activities is good and the use of *God Matters* is well planned and effective, the outcomes for pupils in some classes do not yet match their potential. In lessons observed, good progress was demonstrated in most classes.

Prayer and liturgy are at the heart of everything the school does and are important in promoting and developing the mission of the school. It is an overwhelming strength of which governors, staff and children are rightly proud. From the outstanding start provided in Foundation Stage to the example provided by the oldest children, there is a palpable sense of spirituality. Pupils from all classes lead whole school worship on a regular basis. For example, the Year 5 class led a highly engaging assembly in which many of their families were present. Children lead and take ownership of class and whole school acts of worship. The prayer team have evaluated aspects of prayer life in the school. For example, their review of prayer displays around the school add greatly to pupils' spiritual development.

## **How effective are leaders and governors in developing the Catholic Life of the school?**

**Grade 1**

Leaders and governors are deeply committed to the mission of the school. They take an active role in the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school. This is thorough and systematic, resulting in a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors have a high profile, regularly attending school events such as liturgies, assemblies and Masses. This, along with class visits and learning walks, enables them to appreciate the school ethos and contribute effectively to discussions on school development. All Bishop's Conference requirements are fulfilled. Parent questionnaires are used to inform planning and identify areas for development. Parents have a clear understanding of the Catholic life of the school, which is enhanced through the school newsletter and school events.

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There are clear and systematic strategies in place to monitor progress and attainment in RE. The self-evaluation undertaken by the school is thorough and accurate. School leaders monitor curriculum provision through learning walks, book and planning scrutiny and lesson observations. Leaders have accurately identified areas for development. Strategies to address the needs of more able pupils have been identified but have yet to be implemented. The link governor for RE meets regularly with the RE co-ordinator and as a result has a clear understanding of the curriculum. Governors were instrumental in the introduction of *God Matters*, which is now well embedded. Teachers feel very well supported by school leaders.

## **How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?**

### **Grade 1**

Teaching is good across the school with outstanding features. It is always engaging and teachers ensure that children have considerable opportunities for independent work and extended writing. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong throughout the school, consequently children's understanding of RE is secure. Teachers use imaginative strategies to engage the children in a range of learning activities. The support of other adults in the classroom is effectively deployed.

In Foundation Stage, the teacher's high expectations and clearly established protocols provide a strong foundation for future learning. A Year 1 lesson on The Good Samaritan related the parable to real life, resulting in children engaging enthusiastically in re-enacting the story. The well-judged and differentiated learning strategies ensured children took responsibility for their learning. A similar pattern of learning was observed in Year 2. In consequence, at the end of Key Stage 1, outcomes matched, and in some cases, exceeded expectations. In Year 5 children are given regular opportunities to take responsibility for their learning, consequently children's understanding enables them to make secure progress. In a Year 6 lesson on Saint Paul, the teacher's questioning helped to move learning forward, which enabled pupils to demonstrate thorough knowledge of the subject.

Religious Education plays an important part in developing children's faith as well as making a valuable contribution to their spiritual and moral development. The curriculum covers a range of other faiths, which not only increases pupils' knowledge but enables them to understand and respect people from other cultures and faiths. There is consistency and continuity in curriculum provision from Foundation Stage to Year 6. Enrichment opportunities outside the classroom enhance the work undertaken in RE. Resources for teaching are well considered and effectively used. The school fulfils the requirements of *The Curriculum Directory for Catholic Education*. Capitation for RE compares favourably with other core subjects. The school goes beyond the minimum time allocation for RE in the curriculum.

The school offers a wide and varied range of opportunities for pupils to develop their own spirituality and support their faith journey. All classes have a focal point for prayer. In addition, the many displays, artefacts and icons around the school help pupils to enhance their

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understanding. The prayer life is supported and enriched by regular visits from local clergy. All adults in the school model prayer and worship which is reflected in the respect and reverence shown by children. The school is establishing a strong base from which the children can and do take responsibility for aspects of prayer and worship.

### **Summary of Parental Questionnaires**

The school undertook a survey of parents' views prior to the inspection and 68 parental questionnaires were completed. All were extremely positive about the school, highlighting its strong Christian values and how it enables all children to develop spiritually and morally. Some typical quotes from the questionnaire were:

'It's a place of prayer which underpins all that the school does'.

'The children are so proud to be a pupil here and talk freely about love, kindness and God, trying hard to model good behaviour. They have also learnt how to forgive'.

'Each child is supported and celebrated as a unique individual'.

'Its child and parent approach gives a great community feel. Every child is known by name and everyone is important'.

'Christian values that are role modelled by all staff and the nurturing of all children. Strong positive leadership by the head and a wonderful caring culture'.