



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **St Patrick's Catholic Primary School**

Lacock Road, Corsham SN13 9HS

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DfES Number: URN: 3437

Headteacher: Miss Rita McLoughlin

Chair of Governors: Mrs Ann Ferries

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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: May 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> 2013

Date of previous inspection: July 2011

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P. J. Antolik

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## Description of School

St Patrick's Catholic Primary School serves Corsham, Melksham and the surrounding area. The school is broadly average in size. Most pupils are White British, with around 10% from minority ethnic groups. A few pupils speak English as an additional language, although none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average. The school also receives additional funding for around 10% of the pupils because their parents serve in the armed forces. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average. The school has 6 full time and 4 part time teachers, of which 33% are Catholic. Two teachers currently hold the CCRS and eight teachers have the Diocesan Modular certificate. There have been changes to the staff, due to maternity and retirement, and a new deputy head has been appointed for the new autumn term. The school has appointed in the last year a chaplain for one day a fortnight, who works with all the children in the school. The school is held in very high regard by parents and parishioners from both parishes.

### Key for inspection grades

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

### Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

#### Grade 1

Overall St Patrick's is an outstanding Catholic school. It is led by a strong, dynamic head teacher, well supported by her whole staff team who work together extremely well. The values and expectations of Catholic education and its mission in the Church are very clearly articulated and lived out in the school community. The inclusive provision for collective worship and pupils' response is a key strength of the school. The development of the chaplaincy role is having an outstanding effect on the spiritual life of the school. Community cohesion is very effectively and successfully promoted. The rate of progress made by pupils in Religious education is good and outstanding in certain areas. The key factor in the school maintaining improvement is the high quality of professional development of staff. This has a significant impact on teaching, learning and worship. Some teaching is outstanding. The curriculum offered meets pupils' needs well and pupils enjoy learning and feel valued. The leadership and management of Religious Education are outstanding.

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

#### Grade 1

The capacity of the school to improve is outstanding for the following reasons:

- The senior leadership team inspire the school community to work towards meeting and sustaining an ambitious vision.
- The school has a clear accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. This has resulted in a detailed improvement plan shared by leaders, staff and governors.
- Morale is high and belief in the school's success runs through all staff levels.

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- The pursuit of excellence in Catholic education has securely maintained and built on previously outstanding performance.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Continue to embed the assessment and tracking programme, and continue to enable pupils to self assess their work.
- Continue to develop the role of the chaplain creating vibrant acts of worship with staff, and to encourage pupil's skills in preparation and delivery of liturgies.

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

#### **Grade 1**

Pupils throughout the school enjoy Religious Education. They speak with enthusiasm about what they have learned and are becoming religiously literate. Their knowledge, skills and understanding are excellent. They are able to discuss their own beliefs with confidence and can talk about how religion, belief and spirituality impacts on their lives. A group of pupils who work closely with the chaplain, known as the "Sunshine Saints", are very eloquent and highly motivated in developing their faith and the Catholic ethos of their school and community. They have taken their inspiration and guidance from the words of Pope Benedict, "Calling us to be Saints", when he said, "A good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints".

St Patrick's is a fully inclusive school and all pupils make good or better progress, whatever their starting levels were. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards of attainment for most pupils are above average. At the end of Key Stage 2 a large majority of pupils achieve good and above the national average in attainment and learning of Religious Education. Pupils are highly motivated because of teachers' excellent subject knowledge, enthusiasm and skills in facilitating excellent learning and pupil progress. The school makes good use of the assessment process and are implementing a new tracking system to match the new programme of study for Religious Education. It also has highlighted the need to continue to provide opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge through written tasks where they can demonstrate a language of faith that shows a deeper understanding of the implications of belief in their everyday life.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and gain much benefit from it. They take on responsibilities enthusiastically and participate in activities within and beyond the classroom, which they recognise help them to become better people. They are reflective and enquiring and understand that religious belief and spiritual values are important to many people. They understand the importance of key celebrations in school and in the parish community throughout the liturgical year. Pupils understand the need for forgiveness and have a good understanding of right and wrong.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is outstanding. They listen intently, act reverently and are keen to take part in and are beginning to plan and lead prayer and liturgies. They sing joyfully, reflect and know a variety of ways of praying. Collective worship contributes positively to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils. They show respect for everyone in their community and understand that some people have different beliefs and attitudes and spirituality. The whole school Easter Celebration which took place during the inspection was a reflective, joyful and uplifting experience for all, and was well attended by

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parents, governors, parish priest and members of the parish community. All children were involved in the celebration and careful attention was paid to ensuring that a wide range of media was used to bring the liturgy to life with music, singing and acting.

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

### **Grade 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding in promoting the Catholic life and mission of the school. The head teacher is a committed dynamic leader, who encourages her staff to support the mission and values of the school. A newly appointed deputy head teacher begins work in the school in September and has a clear understanding of the school's role in the mission of the Church. The head teacher, staff and governors strive to ensure that their vision of all pupils "to live, love and learn like Jesus", (*School's Mission Statement*) is shared by the whole school community. A commitment to staff training and induction contribute to the strong Catholic ethos. Both informal and formal monitoring of the Catholic life of the school result in priorities for improvement being identified acted upon and evaluated.

The monitoring and evaluation of the provision for Religious Education are good. The leaders and managers of the school work as a team and give Religious Education high priority in the curriculum. The head teacher is the R.E. co-ordinator, and is now supported by the school chaplain and senior team leaders. There is a good Religious Education Action Plan which is also part of the School Development Plan.

The school's Mission Statement informs all school policies. They are regularly reviewed and kept up to date.

The work of the governing body is outstanding. The governors are visible in the school and are a great support to the head teacher, staff and parents of the school. The governing body attend diocesan courses and are pro-active and engage fully in the work of their ministry. The Strategy Group often acts as "a critical friend" to the SMT. As a body they have reflected on the "Called to be a People of Hope" document, attending training, and with the school have produced a response to actions recommended. Governors also represent the school in the local "Church's Together" consultation group.

Leaders and managers are good at developing partnerships with other providers and organisations and this is a strength of the school. The school is actively committed to partnerships with other Catholic schools in their federation group, enabling them to achieve and develop in areas which the school alone could not provide, their local federation group helped provide their chaplain in 2012-13. Shared professional development activities have had a positive impact on teacher knowledge and expertise. The parishes and school community collaborate well together in a range of activities and benefit positively from the effective partnership.

Leaders promote community cohesion well. There is a common sense of belonging in the school and all are welcomed in a spirit of equality and respect. Pupils are developing a heightened awareness of the common good and can articulate and explain the impact of their fundraising activities for agencies such as CAFOD, Dr Barnado's, and international charities. Acts of worship respect each one's spiritual identity and the Religious Education curriculum promotes attitudes of tolerance, respect and justice. Work on teaching other faiths is good.

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## How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

### Grade 1

The quality of teaching in Religious Education is good to outstanding across the school, resulting in good quality learning. Lessons are well planned and the range of pupils' capabilities is taken into account when planning some effective and imaginative activities. Differentiation is good and outstanding in areas of Key Stage 2. A variety of teaching strategies are employed to engage pupils well. There are excellent pupil/teacher relations, a range of questioning styles and effective use of ICT by staff to enable good levels of pupil motivation and concentration. The use of ICT by the pupils varies throughout the school. Teacher's subject knowledge is strong, and this contributes well to the good progress pupils make across the school. Marking and feedback to pupils identifies how the pupils can improve and move on in their learning.

Assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education is good. Assessment procedures are embedded in the school's systems and the school has an accurate view of pupils' achievement and progress. Assessment, recording and moderation regularly take place and are well documented. However, the school needs to continue to develop the tracking process for Religious Education to be in line with other areas of the curriculum, and to continue to develop self-assessment targets.

The school provides an outstanding, challenging and imaginative religious education curriculum which fully meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Art, music, drama and dance are also effectively used in the teaching of RE, providing different mediums for those pupils who are less proficient in writing. The school provides a good personal relationship curriculum which is in line with Catholic teaching.

The quality of collective worship provided by the school is outstanding. The prayer life of the school is given high priority. As a result of staff training and the input of the new Chaplain, pupils are becoming skilled at leading and planning worship. The children and staff attend retreats, and all school meetings begin with prayer. Every Tuesday members of the parish and/or parents prepare a reflection called "The Drop in" which is for any adults associated with the school, meet to pray together for themselves and family and friends of the school. The two parish priests are committed to supporting the school and the local Baptist Youth Minister delivers assemblies and class workshops.

As part of their partnership with the parish, school staff help prepare the children to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion outside of school time.

All pupils and staff, irrespective of their faith commitment, are fully included in the whole life of the school.