

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 INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Derwent Drive, Burnham, SL1 6HW

**DfES School Number 871/3353.
URN 110035**

Head Teacher: Mrs J O'Keeffe
Chair of Governors: Mrs L Timms

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M Everington
Associate Inspector: Mrs E O'Brien

Date of inspection: 30 April 2014

Date of issue: 19 May 2014

[Date of previous inspection April 2008]

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

Information about the school

Our Lady of Peace is a popular three form entry Infant and Nursery school for 3-7 year olds with 318 children on role. The school is situated in the parish of Our Lady of Peace. 71.5% of the pupils are Catholic and 28.5% are from other Christian denominational and other faith backgrounds. 36.5% of the children speak English as an additional language with 18.2% of this number speaking Polish as their first language. 62% of the stable and settled staff are Catholic and most are members of the local parish. The school works very closely with Our Lady of Peace Junior School with whom it shares a site. The school is one of the eight schools of the Slough Pastoral Area Catholic Partnership.

Key grades for inspection

1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic School

Grade 2

Our Lady of Peace is a good Catholic school. Religious education is at the heart of the curriculum and its Catholic ethos permeates the fabric of school life. The mission statement is known and understood. Teaching is good with effective support from skilled teaching assistants. Most children achieve consistently and make good progress throughout their time at the school. The senior leadership team is highly motivated and communicates high expectations to staff. The children are proud of their school and feel valued. From the 140 questionnaires returned, it is clear that the parents are pleased that their children attend Our Lady of Peace School commenting on the Catholic ethos, academic standards and the warmth of relationships between staff, children and parents. Chaplaincy provision is strong. The rapport between staff and governors is good. Governors provide effective challenge to the school. The behaviour of the children is excellent.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Grade 2

There were no improvements required at the previous Inspection six years ago in 2008.

The school's self-evaluation now identifies those areas in which progress is well established and others in which the school needs to further improve to sustain effectiveness. The subject knowledge of the staff is good because of the shared good practice and support from the religious education and chaplaincy co-ordinators who themselves are ably supported by other members of the senior leadership team. Classroom religious education is monitored through the scrutiny of teacher planning and pupil books and through the quality of assessment and moderation. The school takes part in assessment and moderation with other schools in the Slough Catholic partnership. Feedback is shared with staff and governors.

Parents speak highly of the support given to non-catholic members of staff ensuring that they are able to take full part in all school activities. They also speak of the good communication between the school and parents saying that the newsletters, web-site and their own children keep them well-informed. They approved, for example, of the school making children aware of 'Newsround' when that programme reported on the recent canonisation of the two popes.

Our Lady of Peace Infant and Nursery School has a good capacity for sustained improvement but needs to continue the development of the children's active learning,

differentiation and developmental marking to challenge all ability groups, particularly the more able. The senior leadership team demonstrates an eagerness to ensure that they continue to deliver improving academic standards and maintain the school's very strong Catholic ethos.

What the school should do to improve further

- challenge the children by encouraging greater independence in their learning
- extend and enhance teaching strategies to further enrich the children's learning opportunities and experiences
- continue to improve the analysis of assessment data obtained through tracking and assessment to maintain attainment and progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Grade 2

Outcomes for pupils are good. Children participate in a range of religious activities. They show interest in the religious life of others and care and respect for religious objects in the school. They understand the importance of key celebrations throughout the liturgical year and in the life of the parish community. The children respond to the needs of people beyond the school community and have raised funds for a range of local, national and international charities.

Prayer forms an important part of the daily life of the school. Children are at ease when praying or worshipping within the community. They reflect in silence and join in prayers with confidence. They have a good understanding of religious seasons and feasts and are aware of the importance of scripture, religious artefacts and hymns. Pupils know about saints and talk easily about the scripture stories they know, giving examples of parables and miracles. The focus of the prayer tables is clear with good quality artefacts and books displayed. Children have a good knowledge of Church prayers. During the inspection inspectors saw good examples of class prayer using relevant music and images. Parents speak positively about the impact of prayer interaction between school and home, citing 'The Travelling Nativity.' during Advent as an example of such. The newly established prayer garden is a welcome addition that is greatly appreciated by the children.

Chaplaincy provision is good and makes a significant contribution to the well being of individual pupils and to the wider school community. Pupils talk eagerly about how their school is special. Parents speak highly of the care given to children with special needs, whether they are through behaviour, learning or a loss such as bereavement. This care is also extended to parents when needed. Every child regardless of their need, however challenging, feels valued and wanted. The parish priest is a regular and a welcome visitor to the school. The governors, staff and parents spoke about the forthcoming parish mission with the Syon Community and how it will involve both parents and children in the fortnight's activities.

Most pupils make good progress in religious education. They are interested, enthusiastic and keen to do well, working diligently in lessons and seeking to produce their best work. Most can articulate their knowledge and understanding clearly and with great insight. The use of more sharply defined differentiation would increase the challenge for all pupil groups and a greater use of developmental comments, inviting a pupil response, would encourage more independence of learning. Behaviour in lessons and moving around the school and at playtime is exemplary.

Leaders and Managers

Grade 2

The senior leadership team have a clear vision for the school and a determination that standards will remain good and continue to improve. They share a deep commitment to Catholic education and are good role models who support the school community well. Further consideration needs to be given to extending and enhancing teaching strategies so as to further enrich the children's learning opportunities and experience. Continued improvement in the analysis of data obtained through tracking and assessment to enhance pupil progress and strengthen attainment is also required.

The governing body see their role as challenging the school to provide the very best Catholic education for every child in their care. The RE governor is actively involved in the life of the school. Governors feel welcomed, valued and appreciated as they fulfil their role of offering constructive challenge to and requiring the accountability of the leadership team. They receive regular input and feedback from the senior leadership team to enable them to fulfil their strategic role. The governors access the training provided by the diocese and are able to effectively participate in the strategic decision making process.

Provision

Grade 2

The provision for the prayer life, collective worship and chaplaincy is good. Chaplaincy is accessible to all including parents. There is an awareness of the needs of the parents as well as the children and, where it is appropriate, support is given. In each class there is a well-planned prayer focus. Children are accustomed to different kinds of prayer; formal and congregational; informal and reflective. Acts of collective worship are given a high profile and are well resourced. Staff and pupils regularly pray together. Displays in classrooms and in shared areas enhance pupil experience.

The quality of the teaching and learning in religious education is good across the school. Teachers have secure subject knowledge. Pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well, enjoy their work and are making progress but a commitment to develop the greater involvement of children as more active learners is needed to ensure their progress accelerates. The religious education coordinator delivers effective training to the staff and models lesson delivery to her colleagues. There are good examples of curriculum linkage using, for example, improvised drama and music to explain the story of Holy Week and Easter. Good and imaginative use is made of resources and the religious education exercise books are well presented and cared for.

The religious education curriculum is well resourced. The new diocesan approved scheme, 'Come and See' has been adopted, using high quality resources and effective staff training from the senior leadership team. Teaching assistants are well directed and involved in all aspects of the work. The school council meet regularly and make suggestions for school improvement. Parents responded very positively to the questionnaire saying that learning in religious education and the Catholic ethos of the school impacts well on the children's relationships with adults and with each other. Classroom religious education provides a good coverage of topics with a range of learning tasks and differentiated methods of recording outcomes. Teachers have high expectations. 10% of curriculum time is dedicated to religious education in compliance with requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales.

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.