



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

INSPECTION REPORT

The Marist Catholic Primary School

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DfES Number: 936/3458

Headteacher: Mr Neil Lewin

Chair of Governors: Mrs Bernie Newton

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 13th November 2013
Date of previous inspection: 14th February 2008

Lead Inspector: Mrs Catherine Walker
Associate Inspector: Mrs Gill Howell

Description of School

This is an above average size primary school. Currently there are 356 pupils on roll. 94% of pupils are baptised Catholics. The school is part of the Woking Deanery and the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. The majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds who speak English as an additional language is average, currently 22%. An average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium funding. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

The Marist is a good school that is well placed to continue on its journey to becoming an outstanding school. The school's Mission Statement states the "Marist School is a place of teaching and learning, where everyone is valued not just for what they do or give, but for who they are, a traveller on the way to Christ." All staff, pupils and parents are aware of the Mission Statement. There is a strong inclusive policy clearly evident across the school. The Catholic traditions of The Marist remain firmly at the heart of the school and the leadership team ensure the legacy of The Marist permeates all aspects of the school community.

RE has a very high priority and status within the school community and is seen very much as a core subject alongside maths and English. Proactive links with local deanery schools have facilitated the sharing of professional development opportunities through joint INSET days and in the monitoring of the RE curriculum.

Pupil behaviour around the school is excellent. Pupils are polite, well mannered, friendly and welcoming. The cultivation of important social skills starts in the Foundation Stage, where pupils successfully learn how to work with others and to develop self-discipline and independence. The Marist Learner embodies this where progressive attitudes to learning are developed across the school. Pupils' self esteem and confidence are nurtured through the award systems and through the positive affirmation by all staff who are clear about their expectations.

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Parents commented that they feel they "belong to one family." Excellent relationships ensure that the care, guidance and support given to pupils is outstanding.

Grade 2

Improvement since the last inspection

The school has developed its Newly Qualified Teacher induction programme well. New teachers have regular access to training from both the deanery network of schools and the Diocese. Teachers are further supported through observations of more experienced colleagues. This support is extended by individual mentors assisting with religious education planning, as well as the provision for class-based worship, liturgies and masses.

The parish and school partnership continues to be strengthened through shared coffee mornings in the school and new mass times which encourage parents to attend mass during the week. Parents are regularly informed about the school's provision for religious education through the termly introduction of the "Come and See" newsletter as well as regular contributions in the Marist Mail and monthly school newsletters. These publications also include invitations and pupil contributions regarding the spiritual life of the school. The development of the new school website will also serve to further support communication links between home and school.

Grade 1

What the school should do to improve further

To support the school on its journey to becoming an outstanding school the following areas should be addressed:-

- Build on the work underway to provide a wider range of challenges for more able learners so higher ability learners have access to a broader range of tasks and independent work, which will provide increased levels of challenge.
- To continue to raise standards, teachers now need to ensure opportunities are created for pupils to respond to the marking comments made in their books.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

The headteacher and governors share a common vision of Catholic education and give good direction to the school. The headteacher is a strong, highly effective leader, committed to driving up standards and promoting the highest quality care and education for every pupil.

The new and strengthened leadership team, which includes the RE leader, is focussed on whole school improvement centred around the Catholic faith and the ethos of the school and parish community. The leadership team reflect accurately on the school's many strengths and tenaciously strive for continuous improvement. Leaders at all levels effectively monitor and evaluate the Catholic Life of the school through the monitoring of lessons, prayer corners, spiritual journals and scrutiny of books, weekly learning walks,

lesson observations and drop-ins. Governor learning walks ensure all governors are able to see the delivery and progression of RE across the school. This is in addition to regular discussions with the RE governor on key issues in relation to the Catholic life of the school.

Since the headteacher has been appointed he has swiftly evaluated all strengths and areas for development. He has secured a shared ownership of the vision for the future of The Marist School.

Grade 2

The Prayer Life of the School

Prayer is woven into the fabric of the school and permeates all aspects of school life. Very good provision for collective worship, which includes masses, liturgies and assemblies is matched carefully to the age, interests and abilities of the pupils. All teachers share in leading whole school and key stage worship.

The liturgy celebrating Children in Need, linked to Matthew's Gospel was a strong example of music and ICT being used to make connections between the gospel message and the pupils' own lives. Pupils reacted with enthusiasm, joy and silent awe. The experience was even more powerful because the pupils prepared and led the collective worship themselves. Prayer and reflection play a significant part in religious education lessons, helping to link learning to the pupils' own experiences.

Strong and growing links exist with the parish. This is an area that the school is confident will continue grow and flourish.

Prayer tables give evidence to the outward signs of the school's own faith community. Opportunities for spontaneous prayer are a strength throughout the school. As part of the school's current building works a more accessible prayer garden is being created. This will facilitate access for pupils during break and lunchtimes when they require a moment of quiet reflection.

The school is committed to developing the whole child, continually seeking a variety of ways to enable them to grow spiritually and morally. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and joy and on occasions with silent awe as was witnessed during the collective worship. Excellent opportunities exist for Year 6 children to have regular retreats to focus on their spiritual, moral and emotional development. Upper Key Stage 2 pupils take a lead in the planning, preparation and presentation of class worship on a weekly basis.

Grade 1

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion?

The leadership team act upon ideas and suggestions from parents to develop community cohesion within the wider Catholic community. Recently, children from Belarus, where the community had been badly affected by the disaster at Chernobyl,

were staying in the area (one child hosted by a school family). The children were invited into school and spent the afternoon with Year 4 pupils and met with them on another occasion during a school trip.

Most pupils are Catholic so the school actively seeks ways to ensure respect and understanding of different cultures and beliefs. Within the school there is concern, respect and hospitality towards others. Provision for spiritual development celebrates, reflects and respects cultural diversity. Pupils are beginning to recognise the impact their partnership has on other communities as they become involved in Fair Trade issues and in fund raising for such charities as CAFOD and Children in Need.

Strong links exist within the deanery cluster of schools and opportunities for shared staff development are fostered. To further extend the sharing of good practice amongst the deanery schools would strengthen this partnership.

Pupils are equipped with skills that enable them to develop relationships with people from different backgrounds. Relationships amongst pupils are positive. Pupils express their identity with pride.

Grade 1

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Attainment in religious education compares favourably with other curriculum subjects. Pupils refer to their religious education books as their Holy books and identify them as special. Pupil progress is supported by the consistent use of good questioning by teachers.

There is a need for the school to further extend opportunities for higher ability learners to undertake a wider range of tasks and independent work which will provide increased levels of challenge.

Marking is consistently being used in line with the school's marking policy. However to continue to raise standards, teachers now need to ensure opportunities are created for pupils to respond to the comments made in their books. This will have a greater impact on moving pupils' progress to the next level.

Levels of attainment are shared with pupils and these are consistently evidenced in pupils' books across the school.

Grade 2

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Teaching at The Marist is good and occasionally outstanding. In the strongest lessons observed there was an equal balance between the teacher directing the lesson and pupils interacting and discussing their learning. All lessons observed demonstrated good questioning but sometimes pupils became easily distracted if time was not carefully managed and the pace of lessons drifted. Staff demonstrate excellent relationships with the pupils. In one lesson, pupils were confidently able to articulate what “living in love and service” meant, relating their understanding to their own lives. In the strongest teaching, good use of questioning enables pupils thinking to be challenged during class discussions.

Grade 2

Quality of the Curriculum

While 10% of curriculum time is correctly devoted to religious education, the subject is not taught in isolation but permeates the whole school day. The Diocesan recommended programme “Come and See” forms the basis of the curriculum which builds on the foundations of home and on the pupils’ experiences.

The parish priest is actively involved in supporting the religious curriculum. Teachers invite the parish priest to talk to their class about the Church teachings on key elements for example Baptism, Confirmation, Ordination and the Eucharist. Year groups also regularly visit the parish church to support their learning about the importance of the Church and key events throughout the liturgical year. The school aims to foster an appreciation of other world faiths and traditions through the curriculum and through visits and visitors.

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education

The leadership and management of religious education are very good. The religious education co-ordinator is hard working, enthusiastic and dedicated. Religious education has a high profile in the school. There is clear direction for the subject through comprehensive policies and through the School Development Plan.

There is a very good programme of induction and professional development for staff. Newly qualified teachers attend diocesan programmes to support their development within the Catholic education system. New staff and those with other faiths observe the co-ordinator teach RE and work closely with other Catholic teachers and the coordinator in planning and delivering RE lessons.

The headteacher, governors and RE co-ordinator ensure that religious education has a high profile in the school. They have a coherent vision for the development of all aspects of Catholic life, as evidenced by its significance in the School Development Plan

The religious education leader has excellent knowledge of her subject and is well placed to advise and support staff. She has a clear vision of her role within the school and provides strong leadership and direction. She appreciates and promotes the way in which religious education should pervade the whole school and fully involves the stakeholders at all levels of decision making.

Assessment is developing and the school would now benefit from developing the level descriptors into specific pupil targets.

Grade 2