



INSPECTION REPORT

Priory Catholic Primary School
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DfE Number: 880 3617
URN: 140783

Headteacher: Miss C Lowry
Chair of Governors: Mrs B Williams

This report to the Bishop of the Diocese under Canon 806 of the Code of Canon Law is also the report to the governors of the school on religious education. For Catholic maintained schools, the report also fulfils the requirements of Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Date of inspection: 3rd December 2021
Date of previous inspection: 20th and 21st March 2017

Reporting Inspector: Miss U Clark
Additional Inspector: Mrs M Sanderson

Description of school

Priory Catholic School is a smaller than average-sized primary school in Torquay with 72 children on roll. Since the last Section 48 Inspection the Head Teacher has been appointed as an Executive Head teacher and leads two small schools, Priory Catholic Primary and St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School in Brixham. The school is organised into 3 mixed aged classes; Years R/1, Years 2/3/4 and Years 5/6. Currently there are 3 full time teachers plus an Executive Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher and SENDCO who work across the two schools. One teacher is currently on maternity leave.

The proportion of pupils entitled to the pupil premium grant is 36% and 31% are on the SEND register; both these groups are above national averages. There are a low number of pupils with English as an additional language. 28% of pupils are Catholic and the school serves the parish of Our Lady of Help and St Denis. The school is part of the CAST multi-academy trust.

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade: Requires Improvement

This school requires improvement because:

- Since the last Canonical Inspection in March 2017, insufficient progress has been made to address some of the actions identified for improvements, especially in regard to teaching and learning in RE and collective worship.
- Leaders have not routinely or robustly monitored teaching and learning in RE, in the Catholic life of the School and in Collective Worship, using the Diocesan Self Evaluation Framework as a tool to evaluate the school's strengths and development areas. This has resulted in areas for development and improvement not being addressed effectively or in a timely fashion.
- Although the school encourages and supports staff and governors to attend Diocesan Training, there is limited evidence that this is followed up and developed within the school's context.
- The Diocesan approved RE scheme 'Come and See,' is used as a basis for planning and supports teachers' subject knowledge. Currently, standards are not high enough and the sequence of learning across an RE unit is disjointed.
- Pupils' understanding of social issues is an emerging strength of the school; talking to the pupils and the review of the 'floor books' for each class, suggests that stronger and more explicit links need to be made to Catholic Social Teaching, the school's Mission Statement and values, to ensure pupils have a better and more secure understanding of the Christian responsibility to promote social justice and support for the vulnerable and can link social action with being a disciple of Christ.
- The range and quality of collective worship requires improvement.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop could be secured:

- By working closely with the Diocesan RE and Catholic Life Adviser and seeking support from other Catholic schools and leaders in a stronger position and through the evident hard work and commitment of the staff, with the support of parents and governors, there is capacity for the school to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve leadership of RE by
 - Ensuring there is a robust evaluation schedule for RE, including whole school moderation of books and monitoring activities, ensuring outcomes are discussed and clear steps for

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- improvement agreed with each teacher resulting in higher standards and consistent high quality teaching.
 - Providing training and support for the RE leader in regard to their roles and responsibilities.
 - Regular meetings with Governors and appropriate leaders where improvements are monitored and leaders held to account for progress in addressing areas of the Canonical Inspection.
 - Develop a robust monitoring and evaluation schedule for all areas of the Canonical Inspection involving all stakeholders based on the current Diocesan Framework.
 - Improve the quality of Religious Education by:
 - Supporting all staff to increase subject knowledge and confidence in planning and teaching RE so there is a coherent learning journey for each unit of RE which supports pupils' knowledge and understanding in RE. This will result year on year a development of RE skills.
 - Agreeing a more cohesive and consistent approach to the teaching of RE, using the agreed scheme, so that all lessons have high expectations, a clear journey, effective and accurate use of assessment leading to improved outcomes for pupils.
 - Develop the range and quality of collective worship so that pupils develop a personal relationship with Christ, by:
 - Undertaking a review of the prayer life of the school and identify approaches to strengthen the impact meaningful worship has on the spiritual development of all pupils.
 - Training for staff to develop their confidence in leading worship and ability to support pupils to develop a personal relationship with Christ;
 - Pupils' involvement in leading and planning worship;
 - Governors should liaise with the Diocese to ensure leaders, including interim leaders, are well supported and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities as leaders of Catholic schools.
 - Ensure pupils understand the purpose of Catholic Social Teaching and how actions are developed from beliefs and relationship with Christ

Catholic Life

Grade Requires Improvement

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

The extent to which pupils take on responsibilities and take part in developing the Catholic character of the school

- The pupils of Priory are proud to be members of the school and recognise that everyone is made to feel welcomed and valued.
- Pupils can recite the school's Mission Statement, 'We honour God through our actions,' but do not link their actions in living out the school's mission statement. Currently, pupils do not articulate how they are benefitting from the Catholic mission of the school and the contribution that makes to their development.

Pupils' sense of belonging to the school community and their relationship with those from different groups and backgrounds

- The school is welcoming and inclusive, which is recognised by pupils, parents and staff.

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- Relationships are a strength of the school; mutually respectful and supportive relationships are evident between staff and pupils.
 - Pupils are proud of their school and eager to share their opinions with visitors.

The extent to which pupils contribute to the common good in the school and wider community.

- The curriculum effectively supports pupils' personal development and pupils are knowledgeable about social issues.
- There are opportunities for pupils to contribute to the common good, e.g. by sending cards to Parishioners, however, these are not effectively linked to the mission of the school and therefore pupils do not make the link that they are serving others and living out their Christian witness.

B) The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school

The centrality and efficacy of the school's mission statement

- Pupils know the school's Mission Statement, 'We honour God through our actions.' Further work is needed to ensure that pupils recognise how it is witnessed in the daily life of the school.

The extent to which the school makes its catholic identity and ethos explicit through the learning environment, chaplaincy and community cohesion

- The school is mainly well maintained and throughout the school there are displays that make explicit the Catholic identity of the school.
- All classes have a prayer space and RE displays which reflect the liturgical season. Some prayer spaces could be simplified. e.g. Removing Nativity figures adjacent to Advent displays as a sign of preparation and waiting.

The quality of the pastoral care shown to all members of the community, both pupils and staff

- The school is welcoming and inclusive. Positive relationships between pupils and staff lead to a harmonious and calm learning environment where all are valued and supported.
- The work the school has undertaken to become a trauma informed school is evident in the close working relationship between staff members which effectively supports pupils. This has resulted in an inclusive ethos with all pupils learning together.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school recognising it as being family orientated.

The extent to which the school promotes standards of behaviour that reflect gospel values and how effectively it develops positive relationships between all members of the school community

- The pupils in the school showed exemplary behaviour. All pupils were well supported in the classroom and able to access learning because of the secure relationships that exist between staff and pupils.

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- Pupils are articulate, confident and proud to be a member of Priory School recognising it as a place where everyone is valued and welcomed.
 - This area shows significant progress from the last Section 48 report and reflects the efforts of the staff led by the SENDCo to meet the needs of the children with behavioural needs.

The quality of personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) and sex education (RSE) and spiritual and moral education.

- The school has recently introduced the TenTen RSE programme 'Life to the Full'. The PSHE curriculum ensures pupils personal and moral development is well supported.
- Approaches to support pupils' spiritual development needs further development as pupils were unable to articulate how the school is enabling them to develop a personal relationship with Christ.

b) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school

The effectiveness of leaders and governors in promoting the Catholic Life of the school

- Leaders and Governors are committed to the school and want the best outcomes for the pupils, staff and community. The Catholic Life of the school is evident in the newsletter and on the school's website.
- Self-evaluation and improvement planning in relation to the Catholic Life of the school requires improvement as it is not sharply focused or robust in its nature.

How well leaders and governors monitor and evaluate the Catholic Life provision and outcomes to plan future improvements;

- Governors make regular visits to the school to review aspects of the Catholic life provision. They receive subject reports for RE from the Head teacher who is also the RE Leader. Governor minutes include reference to the Catholic life of the school; challenging questions and their response are not recorded
- Monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the Catholic Life of the School is not robust and therefore improvement planning lacks focus and precision.

The extent to which leaders offer models of good practice as leaders of Catholic Life

- Leaders have created a committed team based on mutual respect and secure relationships. The staff team share a common sense of purpose.

How well leaders and governors implement improvement in respect of the Catholic Life of the school

- Since the last Canonical Inspection, the school's leadership has been consistent, although there have been changes to the governance arrangements. Some progress has been made in relation to the Catholic Life of the School in relation to improving the environment so it is well maintained but other areas need further work including improving teaching and learning in RE and developing meaningful acts of worship.

How well leaders and governors ensure that the whole curriculum contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, and vocational development.

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- Pupils' personal and moral development is supported by the curriculum. Pupils talk positively about how the curriculum has shaped their personal development. The whole curriculum has less impact on supporting pupils' spiritual and vocational development.

How well Leaders and governors implement the Diocesan Pastoral Vision for the Diocese and its strategy for schools.

- From the evidence presented to the Inspectors the school has engaged with the Diocesan Pastoral Vision and strategy but it is yet to have impact or be embedded.

Religious Education

Grade Requires Improvement

a) How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

The quality of pupils' achievement, learning and progress in Religious Education and any variations between groups of pupils

- From the lessons observed and review of books, pupils are making progress in their RE lessons. In the best lessons pupils are engaged and know what is expected of them. Learning tasks are not differentiated and some lack challenge, meaning for those who have the potential for achieving greater depth in their RE knowledge and understanding are not effectively challenged.
- Additional adult support ensures less able pupils are supported and can access learning.

The extent to which pupils are becoming religiously literate

- Pupils who spoke to the inspectors were articulate and keen to tell them about the personal development areas that they had been taught e.g. Black Lives Matter, International Women's Day and also about other religions.
- Pupils were less confident in using religious vocabulary in relation to the Advent unit being studied.

The quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress

- Observations on the day demonstrated that the needs of pupils with particular learning needs were well supported. Teaching Assistants offered high quality support meaning pupils were able to access learning and showed good attitudes to learning.

Pupils' attainment in Religious Education at the end of each key stage.

- Teachers are making regular assessments of pupils' attainment. Leaders recognise that these assessments are frequently based on a pupils' achievement in literacy rather than on a pupils' religious education knowledge and understanding. Therefore, pupils' attainment at the end of each key stage is not in line with the standards they achieve in other core subjects.
- Teachers need further support in making accurate assessments of a pupil's achievement in religious education and how to use these outcomes to plan next steps

in learning. By moderating RE books within the school, teachers would have a more secure understanding of what constitutes high quality attainment in RE.

b) The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education

How well teaching promotes learning, enjoyment, progress and the attainment of pupils

- During the lessons observed, pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to learning and were engaged, especially during the teaching input. Pupils in Year 5/6 were able to work collaboratively and listened to each other's views carefully. Lessons had a clear RE focus and scripture was explored in these lessons.
- There was little evidence of differentiation, other than through adult support for less able pupils. Hence, the expectations for some pupils is not sufficiently high and learning tasks lack challenge.

How well assessment informs appropriate teaching and learning strategies.

- Teachers have been reflecting on the learning at the end of each lesson and recording this in Assessment for Learning (AFL) records. These are at the early stage of implementation, however although teachers are conscientious in completing them, there is limited evidence that they are being used to inform future teaching and learning strategies.
- End of unit assessments are recorded for each child based on Diocesan summative assessment procedures. There is a discrepancy between assessment judgements and the work seen in books. Staff have not had the opportunity to moderate and discuss RE work.

c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education

That the Religious Education curriculum meets Bishops' Conference requirements

- The school informed the inspectors that religious education is taught for at least 10% of each week. Recorded work would suggest that the school is meeting this requirement.

That the curriculum meets any additional requirements of the diocesan Bishop

- The inspectors were satisfied that the school is meeting this requirement.

How well leaders and governors use monitoring data to evaluate the school's performance in Religious Education in order to plan future improvements

- In light of the pandemic, monitoring data is sporadic. The RE action plan focuses on improving provision in RE although it lacks precision as it is too broad in its aspiration and it is unclear how impact will be judged.
- The RE Subject Report includes information about both schools in the federation, making it difficult to monitor and evaluate the performance in RE of Priory school. This in turn makes it difficult for leaders and especially governors to provide effective challenge and support.

How well leaders and governors plan improvement in provision, and in pupils' outcomes, and how effectively these plans are implemented at all levels

- RE Action Plan is too broad and lacks precision. It is not costed and there are no clear timeframes for improvement. It is unclear how actions are monitored and evaluated.
- Since the previous Canonical Inspection in March 2017, some progress has been made on the areas of improvement identified. In particular, pupils' attitudes to learning is secure and the 'Come and See' scheme supports teachers' subject knowledge and teaching. Further work is needed to ensure all pupils are meeting their potential and make progress in their learning in relation to their ability.

The effectiveness of the subject leader

- The leadership of RE at Priory requires improvement. The school has relied on Diocesan guidance and training to support staff in the implementation of 'Come and See.' Some joint working with other schools in the cluster have also supported staff.
- Incremental coaching has been used as a tool for professional development. RE has been included in the coaching. As each coaching sessions focuses on a different subject or area of teaching, it is difficult to evaluate the impact and progress towards the targets.

How effectively assessment is used in monitoring and securing improvements;

- The school uses the Diocesan summative assessment procedures to record end of unit assessments and the common assessment task three times per year. Leaders recognise that assessment is an area that needs improvement so that pupils are appropriately challenged in their learning.

How well scheme and specification choices support the learning and achievement of different groups of pupils.

- The high quality support of TAs for pupils with particular learning needs is effective and ensures they can access the lessons. Challenge for most pupils should be more ambitious and tasks designed so that the sequence of learning is more explicit so that pupils' progress is more secure.

Collective Worship

Grade Requires Improvement

a) How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship

The extent to which pupils show interest and actively participate in the school's prayer life

- Pupils can describe the times of prayers they experience at Priory School, including visits to the nearby Church and prayers during the day.

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- In collective worships observed on the day, pupils were able to sit quietly and spend some time in quiet reflection. Pupils are familiar with the format of prayer in the school.
 - The Parish Priest reports positively on pupils' behaviour when they join the Parish Mass.

The extent to which pupils are acquiring skills in planning and leading prayer and worship

- Pupils lead the school worship each week. Leaders recognise that as part of the recovery from the pandemic, pupils need to be given further opportunities to lead prayer and worship.
- Pupil Chaplains (GIFT Team) are appointed each year. They are keen to support the school and take pride in creating prayer bags.

The extent to which the school's prayer life contributes to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

- The pupils' personal and moral development is well catered for by the school's curriculum and ethos. Pupils are well behaved.
- Pupils do not refer to the importance of prayer in their lives or show a recognition of a personal relationship with Christ. Leaders should undertake a review of the prayer life of the school and identify approaches to strengthen the impact meaningful worship has on the spiritual development of all pupils.

b) The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school

The centrality, quality and variety of prayer and collective worship opportunities provided by the school

- Throughout the school, inspectors saw prayer spaces and displays. Two acts of worship were observed. Pupils were settled and quiet. Links were made to social issues.
- The school continued to offer acts of worship during the pandemic.
- Pupils were unable to explain to inspectors why prayer and worship were important to them or recognise the relevance of prayer in their daily lives.

How well the school provides opportunities for the pupils to develop spiritually through the prayer life of the school, taking into account their age, aptitudes, family backgrounds and the catholic character of the school.

- The school is proud of its inclusive and welcoming atmosphere and pupils come to the school from a wide range of backgrounds. Prayer and worship is a feature of the daily life of the school. Continual review of the impact of the school's prayer life on pupils' spiritual development needs to be implemented.

c) How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the prayer life of the school.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate provision for prayer and Collective Worship in order to plan future improvement

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- Monitoring and evaluation of the school's prayer life and collective worship requires improvement. Although there is a commitment to offer high quality of worship, prayer and meditation, the range of worship is limited and the provision does not have a significant impact on promoting pupils' personal relationship with Christ.
 - There is an awareness that staff need support to lead meaningful worship and for pupils to have greater opportunities to plan and lead worship.

The extent to which leaders offer models of good practice as leaders of prayer and Collective Worship

- The head teacher recognises the need to model high quality prayer and worship.
- Staff and Governors appreciate the worship that were shared virtually during lockdown.

How skilled leaders are in planning for worship and how knowledgeable they are about the liturgical rhythms of a Catholic community.

- Prayer spaces were appropriate to the liturgical season, although some could have less objects. E.g. the central Advent display also had a crib scene with most of the Nativity figures in place, distracting from the focus on Advent.

Summary of Parental Questionnaires

There were 29 parental questionnaires received. Parents were overwhelmingly positive and supportive of the school. Many recognised that they appreciate the family feel of the school and acknowledge staff know their children well. One parent commented, 'Every child at school feels an individual person,' which is a sentiment reiterated by a number of parents/carers.

Information about this Inspection.

The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors; Ursula Clark and Maggie Sanderson. The focus of the inspection was the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of the Catholic life of the School, Religious Education and Collective Worship. The Inspectors also reviewed the progress the school had made since their last Canonical Inspection, taking into account the impact of the pandemic. The inspectors observed three RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These observations were carried out jointly with the Executive Head teacher. Two worships were also observed; one class collective worship and one meditation.

Inspectors carried out a work scrutiny comparing achievement in RE books with those in English and held discussions with a representative group of pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, their RE learning and the impact of the school's worship and prayer life on their personal and spiritual development.

Meetings were held with the Parish Priest, Governor with responsibility for RE and Catholic Life, Staff Governor, the executive head teacher and deputy head teacher, and the Diocesan Advisor for RE and Catholic life.

The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including the school's Diocesan self-evaluation, RE action plan, teachers' planning, anonymised coaching and monitoring reports, Diocesan monitoring visits, the school's website, Governors minutes, outcomes of the parent survey and other school related documents.

The inspectors would like to thank the executive head teacher, deputy head teacher, staff, parish priest, governors, parents and pupils at Priory Catholic Primary School for their preparatory work for the inspection, the welcome they received and for the support given during the inspection process.