



## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **Christ the King Catholic Primary School**

Earls Court Road, Amesbury, Wiltshire SP4 7LX

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DfES Number: 865 3412

Headteacher: Mr. J. McCormack  
Chair of Governors: Mrs. C Crossland

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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: 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> December 2012  
Date of previous inspection: 18/19<sup>th</sup> March 2010

Reporting Inspector: Mrs. M. Barnard

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## Description of School

Christ the King Catholic Primary School is slightly larger than average and serves a wide geographical area around the town of Amesbury. The large majority of pupils are White British but a small number come from minority ethnic backgrounds with a few having English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those having special needs supported at school action is above the national average and the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special needs is well above the national average. Pupils are taught in some single age and mixed age classes. There is a resource base on the school site for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties which is supported by the local authority under the direction of the governing body. The new headteacher took up post in September 2012.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Christ the King is a good Catholic school with some outstanding features. In particular, the extent to which leaders and managers promote the vision for Catholic education is outstanding and this is significant in the way in which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school. Prayer is at the heart of the school and its quality and sincerity enhances the spiritual journey of all members of the school community. The very significant contribution of the previous headteacher towards developing this prayerful and spiritual community has left a legacy which the present headteacher is very committed to continuing. All members of the school community displayed a warmth and welcome which is central to the core of a Catholic school. The Advent assembly and the Infant Nativity were of a high standard and were well supported by parents. The Golden assembly illustrated how well the school celebrates pupil success and how this contributes to their confidence and well-being and links so well to their spiritual development. Displays around the school, the Oratory and the prayer areas in classrooms were of a high quality and provided an environment that clearly illustrated the central place of RE in the school. The pupils, a significant number of whom have special needs, were courteous, polite, happy and well behaved. The school has a very strong ethos with a significant focus on the needs of others in the local and wider community. The new RE scheme is helping to promote religious literacy though the effects of this will need time before the impact is fully realised. Oral work in RE is of a high standard though the standard of written work needs further development, which the school has recognised and is addressing.

**Grade 2**

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

The school has recently undergone a change of headteacher. However, the ability of the school to develop is good because of the following factors:

- The positive attitude and commitment of the headteacher and all staff to improve
- The very good leadership of RE in the school with a highly motivated team
- The recently introduced Scheme for RE 'Come and See' with significant back up resources available
- A good plan is in place for the further development of RE in the school which already recognises the strengths of the school and what it needs to do to improve
- The strong support from the parish priest
- An Ofsted Inspection that gives clear guidance for improvements that will be supported by the local authority.

**Grade 2**

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## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in written RE to match pupils' oral skills to provide challenge for the more able pupils
  - Ensure topics in RE provide continuity and progression in planning across the school
  - Continue to improve assessment in RE to ensure all pupils consistently make good or better progress
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## How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

The mission statement of the school 'Let the love of God shine through us by smiling and being gentle' is clearly displayed in classrooms and is evident in the excellent relationships between pupils and adults in the school. Pupils are able to articulate and understand the ethos of the school. They contribute to evaluating the distinctive nature of the school for example through pupil questionnaires. They take part in activities with a religious character, presenting for example, an outstanding Advent liturgy through dance, drama, prayer and reflection with a high level of reverence and respect. Pupils are proud of their faith backgrounds and beliefs, illustrated by comments such as 'the school makes us feel proud of our religion' and 'we're all part of a family here'. Pupils have a strong sense of personal worth showing a capacity for praise and celebration. They are able to refer to and understand the teachings of Jesus and can apply this to their lives, valuing the Catholic tradition of the school and its links with the parish community. Pupils treat others with a high level of respect and are active in supporting their peers to make the right choices which results in very good levels of behaviour across the school. They understand the needs of others beyond their community and participate in helping others through such organisations as Cafod, Mission Together and Oxfam.

Pupils act with reverence and are keen to participate in the prayer life of the school respectfully. They sing with obvious enjoyment and join in communal prayer with enthusiasm. Many opportunities are made available for pupils to pray including Masses, liturgies and assemblies and they are at ease praying. The use of the beautiful oratory in the centre of the school, where pupils can participate in silent prayer and reflection contributes well to the prayer life of the school. Pupils are given opportunities to learn traditional prayers, including the Y6 class who prayed the Angelus at the start of their lesson. Pupils also write their own personal prayers which are often shared with others. They have a good understanding of the religious seasons and feasts and are becoming skilled in the use of scripture. Pupils have opportunities to lead their own collective worship and are enthusiastic about becoming more involved at the planning stage.

Most pupils make the progress expected in written Religious Education (RE) given their starting points and some may make good progress. Pupils work effectively when provided with appropriate tasks but as yet lack some guidance and the confidence to improve the quality of their written work in RE. The school has recognised this and is already addressing the quality of written work in RE to enable all pupils to make good progress. Pupils' oral skills in RE are good and they are able to use religious language well, showing enthusiasm and interest as evidenced through their good behaviour and approach to lessons and through pupil conferencing. They show a high level of understanding, enthusiasm and interest.

**Grade 2**

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

The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education which is at the heart of all they do. Leaders understand and encourage their staff, pupils and parents to reflect on the diocesan guidelines and seek to put these into practice. They are energised by the task and are a source of inspiration for the whole community. A programme of staff induction and In-service training supports and promotes the commitment of staff to RE in the school and staff value this support. The views of others, including parents, staff and children are regularly reviewed through questionnaires and these views are valued and account is taken of them. Leaders model in their words and actions their values and these are noticeably reflected in the conduct of others. Spiritual and moral development is seen as a central to the life of the school and many opportunities are provided to promote this. Leaders demonstrate a strong sense of inclusiveness and welcome that is reflected by the whole community. The very kind and caring relationships are a hallmark of this Catholic school. Leaders and managers know their school well, as reflected in their accurate self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have effectively identified actions in the RE action plan to promote further improvements. Systems are in place to monitor RE in the school through a range of techniques including lesson observations, pupil conferencing and book scrutinies. Leaders have prepared staff well for the introduction of the new RE scheme 'Come and See' last September and this is already making an impact on improving the assessment of RE in the school.

Governors discharge their statutory and canonical responsibilities satisfactorily. They are organised and visible in the school community and engage well with parents but still need to develop their important corporate role in setting and monitoring appropriate priorities for improvements in religious education. The parish priest, who is also the Vice Chair of governors, is a particularly regular and valued visitor to the school, giving a high level of support and guidance to the Catholic dimension of the school and adding an important link between school and parish for the whole school community.

The school's provision for community cohesion is good with many opportunities for pupils to contribute to local communities such as Salisbury Hospital and the Trussel Trust. The school also contributes to national and international initiatives such as Shelter, World Vision and Operation Christmas Child. Leaders respect diversity and ensure equal opportunities for all pupils as evidenced by the high level of care and support given particularly within the Speech and Language resource base and their emphasis on increasing mainstream integration for pupils. The wonderful way in which each child is nurtured and valued to achieve their very best within the unit and integrated into mainstream activities such as the infant nativity to take some of the starring roles is at the heart of what Catholic education is about. Relationships between pupils are positive and parents are actively welcomed into the school. The common sense of belonging within the school was illustrated by comments such as 'we are a family supporting one another – all on board working together'. Pupils learn about other faith traditions through the RE scheme as well as through themed days such as the India Day.

**Grade 2**

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

Prayer is central to the life of the school and key to every celebration and meeting. Staff and pupils are at ease praying together. The parish priest offers a strong presence in the school taking an active role in the development of the whole community of faith. The school offers opportunities for both formal and informal prayer with pupils praying within classes and at key stage and whole school assemblies. The inspirational KS2 Advent assembly, to which parents

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were invited, was a deeply spiritual and moving experience. It not only illustrated the high level of commitment of staff to the development of prayer and worship for pupils in the school but also showed the impact of this commitment on pupils. Pupils participated in the assembly individually and in groups through readings, drama and hymns with great reverence, respect and enjoyment. Pupil's liturgical formation is well planned, and orally, pupils have a good level of knowledge and understanding. There are close links with the liturgical life of the church with opportunities for pupils to celebrate the Mass in school and at the parish church as well as liturgies for example on Ash Wednesday, at Harvest time, and praying the Stations of the Cross during Lent. The partnership with parents is enhanced through regular invitations for them to visit the school for assemblies and liturgies and information that is sent home such as prayer calendars and newsletters. Staff are skilled and knowledgeable in planning and leading worship. They have regular opportunities for professional development both within the school and through the diocese and find the guidance and support they receive provides them with a good level of support. The school sets aside one day each year for all staff to come together to reflect on the Catholic nature of the school.

The school satisfies the Bishop's Conference requirement and provides sufficient curriculum time for RE to be taught in the school. The curriculum enables pupils to develop a firm understanding of their Catholic faith and there are good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual and moral growth. The curriculum for RE has recently been reviewed and has resulted in the introduction in September of the 'Come and See' scheme. Professional development for staff was provided to prepare for its introduction in the summer term. Whilst the scheme is still relatively new in its implementation, the leadership has given support and guidance to staff and as a result, it is already having an impact in the school in improving curriculum provision and on teaching and learning. Teacher's plan collaboratively and creatively using the new scheme using a range of resources including some newly purchased books. The curriculum is modified to meet the needs of learners especially those in the special resource base where an RE lesson on the nativity enabled pupils with speech and language difficulties to actively engage at their own level in a sensitive and caring environment. Leaders and managers conduct a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes and they know the strengths and weaknesses of RE in the school well. As a result, they are already making adjustments to bring about further improvements such as the new system of Quality Marking which has been recently introduced. This has given a real focus to lesson planning and the setting of learning objectives for pupils as well as the achievement of targets.

The subject knowledge of staff inspires pupils and builds on their understanding and faith development. Support provided by other adults in the classroom is effectively deployed. During the Inspection all lessons seen were effective in ensuring that pupils were consistently interested in their learning and making progress. The behaviour of pupils in lessons was without exception very good and they were engaged, reflective and responsive. Their oral responses showed that pupils had a good level of understanding about their faith, could relate it to scripture and were able to link it to their daily lives. The spiritual dimension of pupils was well developed. However, the standard of written work across the school was inconsistent and did not allow pupils to demonstrate good progress. Pupils were not given enough opportunities to show their understanding through extended pieces of writing, and more able pupils were not challenged sufficiently. This inhibited pupils' ability to make the good progress for which many should be capable. The school has recognised this and is addressing it through a more general focus on improvements in writing across the school. The progression of lessons across a key stage also needs to provide increasing challenge so that pupils are stretched and are able to show their many strengths in written work.

The school monitors the quality of teaching in RE through class observations and gives feedback to staff on how they can improve their practice. The school has detailed historical assessment information on the attainment of pupils and tracks progress regularly with

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information being passed to the next teacher at the end of the year. However, some summative assessments do not have clear evidence to back up the judgements. The RE subject leader is now developing a range of initiatives to support more rigorous teacher assessment, for example a portfolio of samples of work which will become an exemplar to support accurate assessment. The new RE scheme, introduced in September has also enabled the leadership to introduce a more refined assessment procedure, linked to the scheme, which is proving effective. The introduction of Quality Marking which involves the pupils in their learning and progress is a further recent initiative that is beginning to have an impact in ensuring that learning objectives are more focused and assessments are more accurate. The impact of the new RE curriculum initiative and the more rigorous assessment of pupil attainment and progress, together with a strong commitment from the leadership and management of the school are positive indicators for improving outcomes for pupils.

**Grade 2**