

Catholic Diocese of Northampton
Interim Monitoring Visit Report
15th June 2021
St Mary's Catholic Primary School
[URN 122036]

Since the last Section 48 inspection there have been significant changes to leadership. There is a new executive headteacher and a new executive deputy headteacher. The current headteacher was appointed in 2019. Her ambition and drive to make the school environment distinctively Catholic and to create a culture for learning are clearly evident from the moment you walk into the school. The headteacher and the team she has established are working incredibly hard and so much has been achieved already but there are strategic plans for further improvements. The school has a happy, orderly atmosphere and the behaviour of the children is outstanding. A new RSHE policy has been drawn up in consultation with parents.

All the development points raised in the last inspection have been addressed. The school SEF-RE has been updated and gives an accurate picture of the school. There has been a strong focus on teaching and learning. An SLT member has provided exemplar lessons to support an NQT teacher. The monitoring and evaluation process includes moderation of pupil books with other schools, book scrutinies, lesson observations, collecting assessment data and working one to one with teachers analysing the data to improve standards and progress further. Staff and pupil expectations have been raised about the standards expected and this is evident in assessment data and pupil books. A bespoke assessment system has been introduced for tracking pupil progress which is very impressive. Knowledge organisers have been introduced for pupils to help them focus on the "Big Questions" and key vocabulary; this aids all learners as well as EAL pupils. There have also been sessions and input from the diocesan advisor.

A new mission statement was launched in April: "With Christ as our guide, we let our light shine". All stakeholders were consulted and a great deal of work and preparation went into this important initiative. All pupils were given a mission bag to take home. The children were consulted and as a consequence they own the mission statement and try to live it out daily. They are developing their own spiritual and social development as well as supporting others to grow spiritually.

Collective Worship is a strength of the school with all children participating respectfully. A school prayer book has been developed which all the pupils will receive in September. There are many opportunities for pupils to become involved in and support the Catholic Life of the school. There are faith ambassadors in every year group, Mini Vinnies in Year 4 and an ethos committee for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. The school chaplain is active in the school, working with different groups and leading the ethos committee. A new prayer room has been developed and currently a prayer garden is in the process of development. A house system has been introduced which the children have responded to very positively.

The pupils' books are regarded as special and the pupils are very proud of them. The books clearly show evidence of progression with some extended and lengthy pieces particularly in Year 6. Books show evidence of an excellent range of activities and differentiation. Displays around the school are very attractive and reflect the Catholic life of the school. Each classroom has a beautiful prayer table with a lantern and class prayer book. The lanterns were given to each class as part of the mission statement launch.

St Mary's is a good school that has rapidly progressed under the new headteacher and new SLT who are clearly dedicated and committed to the Catholic Life development of the school and raising standards further.

Areas for further development

- Ensure the quantity and quality of work in the pupils' books are consistent across the school.

Many thanks to all who made my visit so enjoyable.

Rosemarie Jones