



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

## ST MARTIN DE PORRES CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BIRMINGHAM

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Inspection dates 24<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> May 2012  
Reporting Inspector Teresa Quick

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr Mark Drugan
School address	Oakland Road Moseley Birmingham B13 9DN
Telephone number	0121 4645500
E-mail address	enquiry@st-martindeporres.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2006
DFE School number	376913
Unique Reference Number	103467

**Headteacher** Mrs J Tomlinson

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## Evidence

The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector. The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life. To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 2 full RE lessons with the headteacher. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. She held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, and parish priest. She observed an assembly, 2 prayer services, attended Mass and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school, and pupils' behaviour. She looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self evaluation such as the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about the school's monitoring and evaluation processes, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

## Information about the school

St Martin de Porres is a slightly below average sized Catholic primary school serving the parish of St John and St Martin. It is a multicultural school situated on the outskirts of the inner ring of Birmingham. It is a culturally and socially diverse community. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 28%. This reflects the local area. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 79.2%. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The numbers with special needs and/or disabilities are average. Attainment on entry is generally below what is expected for their age.

## Main Finding

In its self evaluation St Martin's judges itself to be a good Catholic school in which all pupils benefit from and participate in the spiritual and moral values of the school that underpin it as a community. Religious education is judged to be good and sometimes excellent and pupils are secure and happy within a vibrant Catholic ethos. All pupils, irrespective of age, ethnicity, ability, gender, or faith background are encouraged to fulfil their potential. St Martin's staff have very high expectations of themselves and the pupils and are too modest in their self evaluation. While the school judges itself to be a good Catholic school with outstanding features, it is an outstanding Catholic school. The school is very well supported by the governors and the parish priest who consider the school to be outstanding. The senior leadership knows the school well and are never complacent and plan well for the future. Catholic life and RE are strengths of the school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.

## School self evaluation

The school's evaluation of its Catholic life and religious education is rooted in a meticulous and effective monitoring process which is planned across the year. The evaluation reflects the high quality of the leadership of the school and its religious education. Audits have been undertaken including audits of RE skills, spiritual life and prayer, together with a staff questionnaire in relation to the Catholic ethos of the school. These are information gathering exercises. Outcomes are evaluated and required action forms part of the subject and school improvement plan. The development plan for religious education is a very clear plan to improve on aspects

of teaching and learning in RE and Catholic life based on the results of the audits, monitoring and evaluation. The evaluation of the Easter Trail showed it was so successful that an Advent Trail is being devised. Monitoring of lessons forms part of the school's monitoring cycle. Each teacher is observed annually teaching RE. It can also be a choice lesson for performance management. The accurate assessment of teaching and learning as good and sometimes outstanding was established after observations of teaching RE, learning walks, planning and assessment scrutiny and the monitoring of pupils' books and interviews over a period of time. When assessing pupils' learning the school errs on the side of caution. They have very high expectations. The lesson observation pro forma seen shows clearly what was observed. Comments were positive but giving where necessary clear messages for development that could improve pupils' learning. The subject leader has a clear understanding of pupil and teacher needs leading towards achieving at least good consistency of learning across the school. Non-Catholic teachers are well supported by the subject leader and other members of the senior leadership team. The outstanding teaching of the subject leader provides a model for others to follow. Teaching groups differ in challenge but planning shows that work is arranged to meet individual pupils' needs. The programme of school training is well planned to meet the needs of the school. The very good teaching assistants greatly assist the quality of the learning helping to ensure that pupils are interested, learning and behave well.

The school judges the curriculum to be outstanding. Inspection would agree with this judgement. The well thought through curriculum is integrated to include multicultural teaching and collective worship. The unit on prayer is a good example. Within the curriculum the school initiates projects that stimulate the pupils' interest. Mission week that focused on vocations with the theme based on the words of Pope John Paul "Do something great with your life" had a huge impact on the pupils. An engraver was one of the visitors during the week. A beautiful legacy is in the hall – a large cross with every child's name engraved on a small plaque and fitted to the cross. The school has adopted class saints in line with the geography themes. Pupils' awareness and respect of other faiths and cultures is high and is celebrated at key points throughout the year. Parents other than Christian have spoken to children and at assembly. Visits are made to other places of worship. Children of differing faiths have talked to groups of children about their beliefs. Pupils are proud of their beliefs and treat each other, their teachers, and the adults around with respect. The curriculum is well focused and regularly reviewed. End of unit assessment portfolios have been collated and whole class tracking using assessment focuses. Each unit assessment starts with a clear evaluation of the findings. It was good to see pupils using net books in their RE lesson. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons because the teachers make learning interesting and fun. Pupils are attentive and fully engaged during the lessons. Behaviour in lessons and during collective worship is excellent. Pupils are able to carry out research and to make individual and creative responses to tasks. Teachers' questioning is good, stimulating the pupils to deeper thought. If Year 6 pupils are unable to get an immediate response to a query, they put their question in the back of their RE book to be answered later. Some were very mature questions requiring a time to answer. The school aims to work to extend the learning of the high achieving pupils. This they should continue to do.

In view of the quality of the school self evaluation and the developments that the subject leader and other members of the senior leadership team have put into place the capacity for sustained improvement in both the Catholic life and religious education is outstanding. "This school is a school that looks forward. It never stands

still.” Governors are in agreement that the school’s evaluation of the Catholic life and RE is accurate. The chair of governors and the link governor for RE, the priest, have an excellent understanding of the school. The chair of governors leads the governors in supporting and challenging the school.

### **Overall effectiveness of the school<sup>1</sup>**

Outcomes for the pupils are at least good in RE and rising. There is a clear direction to ensure consistency of learning. Pupils enter school with a very low knowledge and understanding of the faith. Throughout the school pupils make at least good progress. During Foundation Stage pupils make good progress by the end of the year. At the end of Year 2 pupils are working at average or above average levels of attainment. In Year 6 assessment shows that the majority of pupils are working at average and some at above average levels. Pupils in Year 6 talk enthusiastically about the faith and those of other faiths explained the similarities and differences between the faiths. This was a serious discussion involving pupils in high order thinking skills. All pupils participate in every aspect of Catholic life. The quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress is very good. Inspection found that the school’s processes of self evaluation are exceptional in their thoroughness, detail and impact.

Due to the inspirationally led Catholic ethos pupils acquire attitudes, values, relationships and commitment to the school community. Links with parents are very good. Further *Inspire* workshops are planned. Parents are given the opportunity to support their children through meetings and presentations in sacramental preparation. Projects designed by the subject leader to support pupils’ vocational and spiritual development are innovative. Spiritual, moral and vocational developments are exceptional. There are clear behavioural expectations linked to the teachings of Jesus. Pupils learn to understand the importance of forgiveness in relationships. Pupils are valued and respect is encouraged throughout the school. There are harmonious relationships throughout the school. Pupils are proud of their school. Collective worship is outstanding. Pupils participate reverently in prayer and liturgy. Pupils are frequently actively involved in the planning of collective worship. The school prayer was taken from pupils’ own prayers. Pupils enjoy differing types of prayer including meditative prayer and are comfortable with spontaneous prayer.

Provision overall is outstanding. Planning is effective and meets the needs of the various groups of pupils whether by the provision of different tasks or through the support of teaching assistants. As a result of school development planning, cross curricular themes have been implemented across the school which promote Catholic values, ethos and a sense of vocation. The assessment processes are rigorous and extensive with searching analysis. Teachers’ marking is positive and developmental with questions to help pupils improve further. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. The school encourages pupils to respect the lives, cultures and beliefs of others in the school, the local community and beyond. They aim to live the school mission statement “Through Jesus we achieve our very best”

### **Recommendations**

- Teachers should challenge their higher achieving pupils to a greater understanding of the Catholic faith.

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<sup>1</sup> As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.



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May 2012

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School,  
Birmingham May 2012**

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

The school is an outstanding Catholic school which serves all of its pupils extremely well irrespective of cultural or faith background. It is a Catholic school which has welcomed many children who hold differing beliefs. There is an excellent Catholic ethos where every member of the school community is valued and respected. The Catholic mission underpins all that the school does. The children make good progress in their religious education. There is a comprehensive Catholic curriculum but the pupils are taught to have an interest in and respect for other pupils' beliefs. The pupils are proud of the school. They enjoy their learning in religious education and take an active part in the Masses and liturgies whether it is in a reading, a prayer or singing. This is a harmonious community where children work and play happily together. The teachers encourage the children to behave well both in class and around the school. The children are polite and most welcoming. The teachers regularly review the teaching and what is learned in RE together with the Catholic life of the school to ensure that your children receive the best possible religious education.

The teachers have a comprehensive development plan for religious education. I have recommended that they encourage the higher achieving pupils to reach even higher levels of knowledge and understanding in the subject.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time in the school, being able to see your children at work, play and prayer. It was a privilege and pleasure to inspect this delightful school. The children and staff made me feel most welcome. The children are a credit to the school, to their families and those who care for them.

Yours sincerely

Teresa Quick  
Diocesan Inspector