



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### **SS MARY AND JOHN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Part of the Bishop Cleary Catholic Multi-Academy Company  
Caledonia Rd, Wolverhampton WV2 1HZ

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Inspection date	19 <sup>th</sup> – 20 <sup>th</sup> May 2016
Reporting Inspector	Denis Cody

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	198
Appropriate authority	The Board of Directors
Chair of Governors	Mr Mark Darmody
Telephone number	01902 558780
E-mail address	ssmaryandjohnsprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	May 2011
DFE School Number	336/2008
Unique Reference Number	139800
<b>Headteacher</b>	<b>Mrs Joanne Hanslip</b>
Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	1

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by one diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the quality, leadership, and impact of the school's provision of Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education (RE).
- The inspector observed teaching across three RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the school principal.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, the headteacher and the subject leader and parish priest.
- The inspector attended a whole school 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.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' achievement and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

## Information about the school

- SS Mary and John's is a smaller than average size Catholic primary school serving the parish of SS Mary and John near the centre of Wolverhampton.
- The school is situated in an area of significant social deprivation and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The majority of pupils are from an ethnic minority background, a significantly higher proportion than the national average.
- Currently 25% of pupils are baptised Catholics.
- The proportion of children with special education needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below the national average overall.
- On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 the school joined with three other Catholic primary schools and one secondary to form the Bishop Cleary Catholic Multi Academy Company (MAC).
- Since February 2016 the principal has also been responsible for leading St Teresa's Catholic Primary Academy, one of the other schools in the MAC.

## Main Findings

- The Catholic life of the school is outstanding in terms of the relationships, values and attitudes of children, staff and governors.
- Collective worship is good. Children participate with reverence and enthusiasm.
- Attainment in RE is good and progress outstanding. The use of assessment to support pupils' learning is outstanding and teaching is consistently good and often outstanding.
- The commitment of school leaders to its Catholic ethos and religious education is outstanding, and this is reflected in their accurate knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development and their planning for school improvement.

- Monitoring and evaluation of RE is a particular strength of the school and this rigour is now being developed in relation to Catholic life.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

### **How pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life**

- Pupils' involvement in the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. They understand and value the Catholic nature and mission of the school and are proud of their links with the parish and with Bishop Cleary. They can discuss the teachings of Jesus and how they impact on school life and on their own everyday lives. They have an age-appropriate understanding of right and wrong and can confidently address such issues as fairness, forgiveness and mercy.
- They are fully engaged with the school motto, "Learning with Christ as our Guide," which is at the heart of school life. They understand what it means and refer to it regularly.
- The impact of the Catholic life of the school and the deeply held religious values which underpin it can be seen in the positive and supportive behaviour and relationships of the pupils, and in the respect they show for the beliefs of others.
- As a result of pupils' awareness of their own duty to help others, they take the lead in initiating school responses to international disasters and local and national charities. They are also eager to assume roles of responsibility within the school, helping younger children and supporting the wider life of the school.
- Pupils help establish close links between the school and parish through their participation in school and parish Masses and by playing an active part in the life and activities of the parish. They play a significant part in the preparation and celebration of termly family parish Masses.
- They contribute to the Catholic life of the school by taking part in the processes of self-evaluation, review and planning. Through pupil interviews and questionnaires their views are canvassed and the school council has played an active role in planning aspects of Catholic life. For example when the MAC was first established the school councils from each school were involved in developing its mission statement. They also spent a day working together to help plan the introduction of the Diocesan virtues and values programme, considering how it could be developed in their schools. Their ideas were collated and presented to the RE subject leaders.

### **The quality of provision for the Catholic life**

- Leaders at all levels place Catholic faith and ethos at the forefront of all school development and improvement planning. They ensure that its Catholic life provides outstanding outcomes for pupils in their religious, spiritual and social, moral and vocational development. In its current planning the school has identified ways to provide additional opportunities for pupils to assume leadership roles in its Catholic life.
- All staff, Catholic and non-Catholic, respect and value the Catholic ethos of the school, and each is fully involved in preserving and enhancing it. For example all staff recently attended the First Communion Mass to support the children receiving the sacrament for the first time and celebrate with them the significance of the occasion.
- The importance of Catholic life is explained when prospective candidates are interviewed and it is always emphasised in on-going staff training as well as induction for all new staff. 'Catholic ethos and prayer' is included in termly induction days shared by all schools in the MAC and subsequently followed up at each academy by the RE subject leader.

- The academy has strong links with the parish, and the community of priests in the parish provide good support for the faith life of the school. The parish priest visits classes to discuss liturgy, vocations, sacraments and feast days.

### **How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's collective worship**

- Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. Observation and feedback from pupil voice show that they enjoy and value prayer services and assemblies, contributing enthusiastically and thoughtfully. They are also keen to take an active part in school and parish Masses as altar servers, readers and singers, and by preparing and reading bidding prayers.
- They approach acts of worship in a reverent and prayerful manner, listening attentively, responding appropriately and showing respect for the views and contributions of others.
- Pupils develop a mature understanding of prayer as they move through the school. They know the different forms of prayer and when to use them. In their worship they become familiar with traditional formal prayers and show confidence and insight in composing and reciting their own informal and spontaneous prayers.
- Pupils have input into class liturgies and assemblies. They select hymns, prayers and assembly themes for class focus work, and plan special assemblies for the whole school, to which parents are invited.
- Through interviews and questionnaires pupils contribute to the process of review and evaluation of the quality and content of worship.

### **The quality of the school's provision of collective worship**

- Provision of collective worship is good. It is an integral part of the life of the school. Prayer opportunities are incorporated into the children's daily classroom routines and are a regular component of RE lessons. Children pray individually and collectively in their classrooms and in class and key stage assemblies.
- Mass is at the centre of the school's provision of worship. Whether celebrated in school or in the parish church, it is always given a high priority and approached with reverence by staff and pupils alike. Children are involved in composing prayers and selecting hymns.
- All forms of worship are carefully planned and prepared. Planning for school Masses is carried out in partnership with the parish priest. Liturgies and assemblies are planned and monitored under the guidance of the RE subject leader. Children are involved in selecting the content and style of delivery as well as prayers and hymns. They also contribute to evaluation.
- Review and evaluation of the provision and quality of school worship has identified the need to provide pupils with greater opportunities, and the skills, to initiate, plan and lead acts of worship. This target has now been incorporated into school improvement planning.
- There are opportunities for pupils to worship alongside others beyond the school for example in the parish Sunday Mass, and in shared retreat days and celebrations with partner schools. They also celebrate their faith together with their counterparts in other schools through shared deanery Masses and Masses with pupils from other schools in the MAC.
- Provision is made in school worship for children of other faiths to share their beliefs and traditions, for example during Eid and Diwali.
- Prayer and worship in the school reinforce and reflect its Catholic life and RE teaching. Spiritual, moral and vocational themes, Catholic virtues and values and

gospel stories and topics from the curriculum units are highlighted in prayers, assemblies and Masses.

- Children have opportunities for private prayer as well as learning and using traditional and formal prayers in their worship. They are also encouraged to compose and share their own informal personal prayers.

### **Leadership of the Catholic Life**

- School leaders effectively direct and monitor all aspects of Catholic life in the school. Evidence is gathered, both formally and informally, about the content, breadth and effectiveness of Catholic life.
- Senior leaders and governors are fully committed to the Catholic nature of the school. They take clear responsibility for leading, promoting and developing the school's Catholic life and mission.
- The high priority given to Catholic life is indicated by the appointment of a MAC assistant principal for RE who supports the RE leader in each school and is responsible for developing consistency of approach to Catholic life across the MAC as a whole
- The academy link representative for RE takes part in monitoring activities such as learning walks with the RE leader, for example in relation to the quality of prayer focus areas and the learning environment and how they promote Catholic ethos. The results are evaluated and shared with staff.
- Monitoring of Catholic life and its impact on pupils is also carried out through on-going discussion of strengths and areas for development at weekly staff meetings. Some aspects such as pupil attitudes and values are monitored during lesson observations.
- The judgements about Catholic life are accurate, but much of the monitoring on which they are based is carried out informally by school leaders. In their improvement planning they have recognised the need to formalise these processes in order to ensure self-evaluation remains effective and reliable.
- Pupil interviews and annual parent questionnaires are included in the evaluation process and both have led to changes, for example in opportunities for pupils to experience other faith celebrations.
- Governors are well-informed and knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development and about their role in its leadership. They are supportive of school leaders but confident in questioning and holding them to account.
- Information obtained from monitoring and evaluation is included in termly action plans for RE and is reported to governors and used to inform improvement planning. Key issues are included in the RE/Catholic life priority within the school improvement plan which always includes an aspect of Catholic life.
- Progress towards achieving the targets and success criteria is included in the principal's reports to governors and monitored throughout the year. The principal and subject leader also report to the quality and performance committee which analyses progress made and impact on pupils.

### **Leadership of Collective Worship**

- Collective worship is effectively monitored by senior leaders informally and as part of a rolling programme of formal monitoring, and areas for development are identified. As part of this process the school is planning to enhance the effectiveness and impact of worship by introducing class discussions and follow-up activities after school Masses.

- Feedback about their response to school worship is included in parent questionnaires. Pupils also take part in evaluation of worship through small group interviews. Their responses to questions about content and delivery are recorded and used in future planning. This has resulted in the inclusion of a wider variety of hymns and greater use of video clips.
- Academy leaders and governors learn first-hand about Catholic life and worship in the school by regularly attending Masses and prayer assemblies.
- As is the case with Catholic life, outcomes from evaluation, are shared and discussed with governors as part of school improvement planning.
- Following a review of prayer in the school, new opportunities for formal and informal prayer have been identified and included in the school improvement plan. Pupil prayer leaders are being appointed and prayer groups established, and more prayer areas set up in the school. School leaders have received training to introduce opportunities for meditation into the prayer life of the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Leadership of Religious Education**

- Leadership and management of RE is strong and effective, with close liaison and co-operation between the principal, subject leader and link governor and close involvement of the governing body. They work together to ensure RE provision is of the highest quality and is having the intended outcomes for pupils.
- RE is well-led within school by the subject leader. She attends diocesan cluster meetings to ensure the school is aware of new ideas and initiatives to support and promote pupils in their learning and attainment. These are shared with staff and where appropriate training is included in the programme of RE inset which is planned to improve provision for pupils.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work is carried out regularly and there is a comprehensive process of assessment. Data gathered is carefully analysed by the principal and subject leader, and used effectively to monitor provision, outcomes for pupils and in the identification of next steps for school improvement.
- School governors are kept informed about pupil attainment, the outcomes of monitoring of RE and termly curriculum reviews through regular reports from the subject leader, principal and link governor. They are well-informed about RE in the school and contribute fully to the process of self-assessment and school development planning.
- School leaders have an accurate understanding of RE provision and can initiate and sustain school improvement. The academy quality and performance committee scrutinises the effectiveness of provision and reports to the governors. They hold the principal to account through regular meetings, performance management reviews and reviews of the effectiveness and progress of action plans.

### **Pupil achievement and enjoyment of their learning in Religious Education**

- Pupil attainment and progress are measured in accordance with the diocesan Curriculum Strategy. Baseline assessment shows that most children enter school

with very little knowledge or experience of Catholic faith or religious experience. Assessment at the end of Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 shows pupils' attainment is good and their progress outstanding from their low starting point. This progress is maintained in Key Stage 2 and the great majority of pupils in Year 6 achieve at expected levels of attainment or better.

- Attainment data is collected and analysed for each class, and for children grouped according to gender, ability levels, ethnicity and levels of disadvantage. Comparisons show performance in RE is comparable with that in English, and for those whose first language is not English it is often better.
- Lesson observations and pupil interviews show pupils enjoy learning in RE. They make excellent progress in the quality of their learning and spiritual development, and in the acquisition of skills enabling them to understand and discuss religious ideas and concepts.

### **Teaching and assessment in Religious Education**

- The quality of teaching in RE is consistently good and often outstanding. This is reflected in the enjoyment and engagement of pupils and in the excellent progress they make in their learning.
- School leaders promote good and outstanding teaching in RE through a comprehensive programme of monitoring activities including lesson observations, book trawls, pupil interviews and monitoring of staff planning. Teachers receive feedback with recommendations and good practice is shared.
- Lessons are well-planned and differentiated to ensure they offer appropriate challenge to all pupils, and teaching assistants are carefully deployed to support those with additional learning needs.
- Teachers promote effective and successful learning through precise and strategic questioning, clearly understood learning objectives and success criteria and self and peer marking. Teacher marking and feedback during lessons helps pupils understand exactly what they need to do to move their learning forward.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations of pupils and make good use of ICT to promote learning.
- Assessment is effective and consistent. It is used to monitor provision, outcomes for pupils and in planning school improvement in RE.
- To ensure accuracy and consistency in their assessments, teachers regularly take part in moderation exercises with staff from their partner schools in the MAC.

### **The curriculum in RE**

- The RE curriculum follows the diocesan framework for RE. It incorporates planning and assessment procedures and covers all aspects of the diocesan RE scheme of work, enabling continuity and progression between year groups.
- Curriculum timetables set across the MAC ensure that the time allocation for RE is in line with the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- Children learn about the life and teachings of Jesus and how they relate to their lives today
- Delivery of the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of all pupils and to ensure that it is accessible to everyone, so they are all able to make good progress in their learning relative to their ability and experience.

- The curriculum also provides for progression in the quality of learning in RE as children acquire the skills to analyse and interpret texts and carry out independent research.
- Sacramental preparation is undertaken through the parish and led by the parish priest. The school provides additional support through its RE teaching.
- The curriculum provides children with knowledge and experiences appropriate to their age to help them grow towards adulthood. They learn about human sexuality and relationships within the context of the Catholic faith, and about other faiths and cultures, sharing in their celebrations and visiting places of worship.

## **SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

- Provision for spiritual, moral and vocational development is very effective, and is reflected in the vibrant Catholic ethos of the school and the positive and supportive behaviour and relationships of pupils. The scheme of work provides many opportunities for pupils to explore and discuss Catholic beliefs and values and those of others.
- External visitors enhance teaching about spiritual, moral and vocational development by discussing their own faith vocations with pupils.
- Children respond positively and reverently to the opportunities for prayer and reflection in lessons and acts of worship, and they are confident in discussing and debating questions of faith.
- Through the current school focus on the Year of Mercy, which has included a CAFOD workshop, pupils have been encouraged to reflect on their mission in the world.
- They have a strong sense of right and wrong and take advantage of the opportunities to engage in service to others, for example through school council activities and providing help for those in need around the world.
- The school has recently introduced the diocesan 'Values and Virtues' programme assemblies and prayer services. They are displayed around the school and are discussed and reinforced in lessons as appropriate. Pupils are familiar with them and the assemblies are popular, but at this early stage the planned evaluation of the programme's impact has not yet taken place. These values also appear and are taught in the RE scheme of work, for example in units covering the Beatitudes.

## **Recommendations**

The school should:

- apply the same formal approach to monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life as it does in relation to RE;
- ensure pupils acquire skills and experience in planning and leading prayer and worship.