



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY

Part of the Pope John XXIII Multi-Academy Company

Cannock Road, Wolverhampton, WV10 8PG

Inspection date	10 th -11 th July 2017
Reporting Inspector	Mr Paul Nutt
Assistant Inspector	Mrs Rachel Girling

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	404
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair of Governors	Mr Antony Whitehurst
Telephone number	01902 308870
E-mail address	stmarysprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 th -13 th July 2012
DFE School Number	336 3304
Unique Reference Number	141827

Executive Headteacher	Mr Karl Russell
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Previous inspection:	Good
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This inspection:	Good
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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors.
- 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 inspectors observed teaching across 10 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors 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 3 members of the Academy Committee, the executive headteacher and head of school, who is also the RE subject leader, and the parish priest.
- The inspectors also met the school's student council and RE ambassadors.
- The inspectors attended a whole school prayer assembly, Key Stage 1 collective worship, and class worship in Years 5 and 6, 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 inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.

Information about the school

- St Mary's Catholic Primary Academy is a larger than average 2 form entry school serving the parish of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, Fallings Park in Wolverhampton.
- A majority of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 59%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils attending the school is above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below national expectations.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in the structure of the senior management team. The school is currently led by an executive headteacher and head of school, both of whom were previously employed in the school. This structure has been in place since September 2016.

Main Findings

- The Catholic life of the school is outstanding and is continually under review, providing a strong environment for all to develop in faith.
- Collective worship is an integral part of the life of the school; pupils are encouraged to prepare and take an active part at all levels, which an increasing number do.
- Provision for, and outcomes from RE are secure, contributing to the engagement, progress and attainment of pupils. However, greater consistency is required in the use of assessment for learning strategies. This will ensure parity of standards with other core subjects and appropriate challenge for the more able pupils.

- Strong and committed leadership is evident in all areas of the school and individuals demonstrate their personal commitment to the faith. There is a collective drive towards continually improving on previous best in all areas of school life.
- The school mission is widely displayed and used throughout the school. There are many examples of charitable works, linking directly to the pupils' sense of vocation.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes

- The Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- Catholic life is very strong and inclusive. Catholic values are prominently displayed, and frequent reference is made to them in the course of the school's daily life. Pupils are able to identify and articulate links to these values.
- The mission statement of the school is at the heart of its Catholic life.
"To provide the best possible education for the children of the parish in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church, in order to meet their present needs and to prepare them for the next stage in their lives."
- There are excellent prayer areas in each classroom and elsewhere around the school which reflect the liturgical seasons. They include a wealth of resources including Bibles, rosary beads, displays, statues and virtues trees for individual thoughts and intentions.
- The prayer life of the school is strong and beneficial to all pupils, individually and collectively. Traditional prayers are used daily and introduced progressively throughout the school. There is a weekly whole-school prayer service, with a rota so that all are included.
- Opportunities for collective worship at whole-school, key stage and class levels show appropriate pupil reverence and behaviour at all times. Pupils participate with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment, most notably when singing.
- The school gives priority in the timetable to the celebration of Mass.
- Spiritual and moral development is given high importance in school. There is an all-encompassing ethos which values all equally, and to which all pupils respond with generosity and understanding.
- Outstanding behaviour extends to all aspects of school life. Pupils treat others with high levels of respect, demonstrating their understanding that religious beliefs and spiritual values are important in their own lives and the lives of others. Thus meeting a recommendation from the previous inspection.
- The pupils have a strong sense of vocation. This understanding of vocation is supported by an annual vocations week, when visitors from different occupations come into school. It also links to a range of charitable works through the year. These are not exclusively Catholic organisations and include CAFOD, the British Legion, Young Enterprise, and "Let Children Live", a project in Venezuela supported by the parish priest.
- The school has met the recommendations from the previous inspection, although developments and refinements are ongoing.
- Pupils demonstrate both interest and a real sense of responsibility in school life, for example through the effective work of the school council and recently created RE ambassadors, who are currently small in number and for senior pupils only. They

support staff in class-based worship and were responsible for the presentation of an Our Lady of Fatima statue to each class group.

- There are clear plans being explored to develop a grotto area for prayer and reflection. The current councillors when their term of office finishes will continue with this project. Thus involving more pupils in the Catholic life of the school.
- A whole school learning journal for Catholic life is used well to record and celebrate the pupils' journey of faith.
- Each year group also has a learning journal to record aspects of RE and Catholic life. Their use and purpose would benefit from a review as they can repeat tasks or experiences already recorded in pupils' books.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- Leadership of Catholic life and collective worship is good.
- Strong leadership is evident in all areas of the school. All staff demonstrate their personal commitment to the faith and there is a collective commitment to the Church's mission in education.
- The collaborative leadership of the executive head and the head of school is very effective, and appropriate to the school's present situation. It has laid strong foundations for sustained improvement, and ensures that the areas of religious education, Catholic life and collective worship are all well planned, monitored and managed.
- The school is committed to working collaboratively and sharing good practice, as shown by its involvement in the MAC and with the diocese. Support and continuing professional development opportunities for staff are set as a priority by senior leaders.
- There is clear, strong evidence that the Catholic mission of the school is a priority, along with the social, moral and vocational development of all pupils.
- Governors are fully supportive of leadership and demonstrate a commitment to the school through the time and energy they commit. For example, a link governor visits every class in May and October to say the Rosary.
- Governors understand their twin responsibilities of challenge and support. Effective processes and procedures are in place to hold the school to account and to fulfil their duty to evaluate planning and outcomes.
- All staff respond with dedication and enthusiasm to the example of the executive headteacher and head of school, whose commitment and enthusiasm are continually evident.
- Improvement planning is founded on sound evidence and data, it identifies key areas for development and builds on areas of strength, to enhance opportunities for pupils. For example, the school has identified and taken action to increase the contributions of pupils to the planning and delivery of worship.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- The leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education are all good.

- The personal example, commitment, knowledge and understanding of the RE subject leader, who is also the head of school, provide strong and effective leadership, setting high standards for teaching and providing targeted support where required.
- The absence of two significant members of staff has been well managed during this school year.
- Leaders conduct a range of monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes which provide an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for development in RE. The evaluation of this monitoring leads to informed improvement planning and targeted interventions. For example data analysis of attainment 2015-16 identified an issue in Year 3; the data for 2016-17 indicates that remedial action put in place to address this area has been successful.
- Governors have oversight of religious education and fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral and vocational development and raises pupils' awareness of other faiths and religions, ensuring coherence with the wider learning opportunities through Catholic life: for example, a focused week, when each phase learns about another world faith or religion, and guest speakers and visits are arranged.
- There is good evidence across the last three years to indicate progress from the baseline data gathered on entry. This quality of progress is sustained year on year so that attainment is good for most pupils. Internal processes are used to address major variations or concerns.
- Pupils are keen to learn, concentrate well and consequently achievement in RE is good.
- Teaching is secure and carefully planned. Good use is made of a range of learning styles and resources, so that all pupils can make progress. All plans includes ways that work can be matched to pupils' abilities. However, this can be limited to expecting a different standard/quantity of work from pupils and sometimes fails to extend the more able, for whom more challenging tasks are required.
- Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge, and use a wide range of strategies, including digital technology, music, prayer and scripture, to secure engagement and progress.
- Teachers make good use of summative assessments to inform future planning and teaching, fulfilling diocesan requirements.
- Ongoing assessment for learning is largely effective but teachers should ensure that all pupils respond to each gap task to extend pupils' skills and knowledge. There is also the tendency in some books for gap tasks to focus on literacy rather than RE.
- Relationships and Sex Education is it taught in accordance with teachings of the Catholic Church and is age appropriate.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Embed the accurate use of assessment for learning, to ensure that standards in religious education are comparable with those in other core subjects in all years.

- Evaluate the use of year group learning journals, to recognise and celebrate the pupils' journey of faith.