



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection Report

### ST PHILIP'S CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Part of the Catherine of Siena Multi Academy Company  
Messenger Road, Smethwick, West Midlands, B66 3DU

Inspection dates:

8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Lead Inspector:

Rose Brookes

---

#### OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

**Good**

Catholic Life:

Outstanding

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

---

*Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:*

*Good*

#### SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a good Catholic school because:

- Provision for pupils' emotional development is outstanding. Excellent role models provided by the staff facilitate a culture of trust. This results in the pupils having an inner strength and confidence to live out their faith in this loving Catholic school and parish community.
- A very dedicated headteacher, supported by a deeply committed senior leadership team and knowledgeable governors ensure that all areas of Catholic Life, Religious Education and worship are passionately led and effectively monitored.
- All teaching staff, the majority of whom have been appointed in the last four years, have been quickly and effectively developed by senior leadership so that they enjoy teaching Religious Education. As a result, most pupils approach their lessons with enthusiasm. They enjoy challenging activities and respond well to opportunities that extend their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary during all worship and they participate enthusiastically. They enjoy singing and they are well led by the new parish priest.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- A small percentage of teaching needs to improve so that all teaching is consistently effective.
- Pupils need to take greater responsibility for preparing and leading different forms of worship, with a greater degree of independence throughout the school.

## FULL REPORT

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- The newly formed Religious Education and Catholic Life senior leadership team needs to be developed so that they can have a shared vision and responsibility for promoting, monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life, Religious Education and worship of the school.
- Continue its programme of support to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or outstanding.
- Pupils need to lead Collective Worship on a regular basis across the school.

## THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	<b>Outstanding</b>
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding

### The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

#### The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- The school values the culturally diverse backgrounds of all pupils and the richness that this brings to the school. Gospel values and the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile are reflected in the openness, trust, tolerance and respect that are key features of St Philip's school community.
- The school has a dedicated learning mentor who upholds the dignity and respect of all members of the school community. He supports families and pupils who are in need and contributes to the outstanding pastoral care provided by the school.
- Over time, the headteacher has developed the role of the learning mentor so that he can work with the school council, train playground buddies and support pupils with their emotional development. There is an interactive display in the school hall that encourages the pupils to 'speak up and someone will help'. This encapsulates the way the staff live out the Gospel values and care for the pupils at St Philip's.
- Under the direction of the learning mentor, some pupils are training to be 'Sandwell Safeguarding Champions'. The learning mentor and the staff have created an atmosphere of trust between staff and pupils and between pupils and their peers. As a result, a Year 5 pupil spoke with pride to the inspectors about his role as a Champion and how he encourages children in need to talk.
- All staff care deeply for the pupils and the pupils know that they can rely on all members of the school community from their earliest years. This enables pupils to be confident and happy.
- The behaviour of pupils at St Philip's is exemplary and they show respect for each other. They are grateful for the great care they receive from very dedicated staff, who they respond to with a high level of trust and confidence. In St Philip's school community, they know that they will receive continual support, which will enable them to learn about the love of God.

- All pupils are proud of the school mission 'Learning and working together through Christ'. Pupils undertake a wide range of roles and responsibilities willingly. These include the mission team, the school council, playground buddies and junior PCSOs.
- The staff are excellent role models and their actions show commitment to the mission of the school. They live out the CSPP virtues and Gospel values to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. They encourage pupils to trust by willingly sharing their lives and experiences. Pupils appreciate this and respond with openness.
- Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. When interviewed, pupils said that they had visited a variety of places of worship and that pupils of other faiths prayed to their God and they respected this.
- Nearly all the pupils can identify the sort of person God is calling them to be, both now and in the future. The school celebrates an annual vocations week. This enables them to have an age appropriate understanding of vocation and respond with enthusiasm to the excellent provision for spiritual, moral and vocational development.
- The school focuses well on the Catholic School's Pupil Profile and the virtues it promotes. There is a beautiful virtues tree in the school hall, which was initiated by the mission team. The mission team have also initiated the painting of stones to create a beautiful virtues prayer garden.
- Pupils also take the initiative and choose to support fundraising for local charities such as Brush Strokes, which provides a local food bank, CAFOD, Good Shepherd Appeal, Father Hudson's and cancer charities.
- Pupils actively participate with enthusiasm in a variety of high-quality religious experiences and retreats. For example, Year 3 and Year 5 take part in retreats and Year 6 visit St Chad's Cathedral.
- Displays around the school and in the classrooms are of a high standard and reinforce the Catholic mission of the school, as well as providing pupils with resources to support their learning. The interactive displays also encourage pupils to pray.
- Provision for relationship and sex education is thorough and developed at an appropriate level for all pupils. It is consistent with the teaching of the Church. This enables pupils to explore feelings and emotions and how they impact on themselves and others.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.**

- Catholic life is led by the extremely dedicated headteacher, who leads with a passion that is rooted in a love for the pupils in her care. This enables the staff and governors to provide a very high standard of pastoral care for all the pupils and parents.
- The headteacher, the new deputy headteacher and the Religious Education subject leader are deeply committed to the school's mission. They provide support and challenge in all aspects of Catholic Life.
- There is a need to continue to develop the newly formed senior leadership team so that they can share the responsibility for promoting, monitoring and evaluating the Catholic Life of the school.
- The new parish priest is already very supportive of the Catholic Life of the school. He has continued the role of the previous parish priest, who provided exemplary support to the school.

- The monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life takes place through lesson observation, learning walks, book scrutinies and professional conversations with staff and pupils.
- Governors regularly attend events promoting the Catholic Life and they discuss it fully at governor's meetings. The Catholic Life link governor is very proactive in his role and formally records evaluations of the Catholic Life. This has been done very thoroughly.
- The staff governor, who is also a learning support assistant, is very pro-active in both her role as a governor and in supporting the pastoral needs of all pupils. She ensures that the governors are well informed about the Catholic Life of the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	<b>Good</b>
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Good

### **How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.**

- The school has identified that pupils enter the Nursery and the Reception classes with very low levels of knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. However, due to good teaching, they quickly begin to make progress so that by the end of foundation stage most are working at expected levels.
- The evidence from lesson observations and work scrutinies confirms the school's judgment that average attainment continues to be good for the majority of pupils and for some pupils it is above expectations.
- All pupils enjoy their Religious Education. During the inspection, a Year 5 boy said that he enjoyed Religious Education because it taught him to love God. Pupils enjoyment in Religious Education contributes to the good progress that almost all groups of pupils make.
- Both boys and girls enjoy Religious Education. They can speak with conviction about why they enjoy it. As a result, pupils' behaviour in lessons is exemplary. Pupils experience a wide variety of learning activities that enable nearly all pupils to succeed and to learn how to live out the Gospel values.
- Standards in Religious Education compare favourably to English and the amount of work in all classes is good. Pupils' work in their Religious Education books is of a good standard and it indicates an appropriate use of a range of resources and strategies to promote good learning.
- The pupils are well prepared for the sacraments of first Holy Communion and Confirmation.
- Pupils learn about other faiths and as a result they have a respect for people from other cultures and faiths.
- The team of teachers, most of whom have been appointed in the last four years, have been quickly and very well developed by senior leaders to have good Religious Education subject knowledge. They enjoy teaching Religious Education and they are excellent role models to pupils.

- The teaching of Religious Education is good overall with some outstanding elements. However, there is also a small minority of teaching that requires improvement. Senior leaders have accurately identified where teaching requires improvement and appropriate support has been provided. The school now needs to ensure that all teaching is good and more of the good teaching is raised to outstanding.
- Teaching assistants are used very effectively to support pupils with specific needs. This enables all pupils to learn and concentrate well.
- Teachers manage time well to secure good learning in Religious Education lessons. During the inspection the pace of lessons was good. This enables pupils to stay focused and motivated.
- When marking Religious Education, teachers consistently challenge pupils to complete their 'Now' task, which is linked to the Religious Education learning objective. Pupils are given time to reflect on their learning and answer follow up questions from the previous Religious Education lesson. As a result, pupils learn how to apply their Religious Education to their lives.
- 'Wonder walls' are displayed in all classrooms. Pupils are encouraged to ask and answer questions in Religious Education for example one pupil asked, 'I wonder why there is so much war and poverty in the world?' These types of questions help pupils learn how to make connections between their learning in Religious Education and real life.
- The Religious Education curriculum is based on the diocesan scheme, 'Learning and Growing as the People of God,' and follows its recommendations in terms of planning and assessment.

#### **How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.**

- The Religious Education subject leader is in her second year of managing this role across the school. She has been trained and continually supported by the headteacher. The newly appointed deputy headteacher shares responsibility by analysing the attainment and progress of pupils in Religious Education. The way the school has divided the responsibility for the leadership of Religious Education works very well.
- Standards of Religious Education are monitored and evaluated by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and Religious Education subject leader and they are frequently reported to and discussed with governors.
- The governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities regarding Religious Education. They ensure that the requirements of the Bishops' Conference are met in terms of curriculum time for Religious Education and the priority that Religious Education is given in the school. They are pro-active in monitoring standards in Religious Education. Their findings from this monitoring is very well documented by the vice-chair and the Religious Education link governor and regularly shared with the governing body.
- School developmental planning tackles key areas for improvement systematically and builds on areas of strength. For example, the leaders' monitoring of Religious Education highlighted the need to improve feed-back to pupils. Subsequently, support and professional development were provided so that teachers now consistently challenge pupils with follow up questions.

**COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The quality of Collective Worship.	<b>Good</b>
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Good
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Good

**How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.**  
**The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.**

- All pupils conduct themselves with extreme reverence and respect during the celebration of Mass and school assemblies.
- The school has worked hard to ensure that all pupils know the responses to the Mass. As a result, all pupils answer the responses and greet the Gospel reverently and enthusiastically. This is an outstanding part of worship at St Philip's School.
- One of the strengths of St Philip's is that the pupils love to sing hymns and responses. The new parish priest has quickly developed very positive relationships with all the pupils through praising God in song.
- The staff have worked hard to create a wide variety of interactive displays and prayer areas that encourage pupils to pray both in the classrooms, the corridors, the hall and the school grounds. The mission team regularly monitor these areas to ensure that they correspond with the liturgical year.
- During the inspection some innovative ways of praying were seen. For example, during a Year 5 lesson about miracles, pupils were invited to freely pray in the class prayer area. Meditative music played quietly in the background. There was an interactive display at floor level, which encouraged the pupils to read and write appropriate prayers. Cushions and pictures also helped with the prayer focus. Pupils continually came up reverently in small groups and silently prayed.
- Pupils know that they need to talk to God in their lives. They are very good at spontaneously praying to God and respond well to opportunities for silent prayer. Pupils now need to progressively lead prayer on a regular basis across the school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's liturgical year.
- Pupils confidently use a range of prayer because staff plan for and help them to become familiar with a wide range of opportunities for prayer. For example, there has been a focus on the teaching of traditional prayers. Prayer bags are sent home to initiate family prayer. The Wednesday Word also provides families with a prayer focus.

**How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.**

- The school leaders treat their responsibility to lead and model best practice in Collective Worship with very high importance. The headteacher regularly leads acts of Collective Worship and on the occasions she is absent the deputy headteacher leads.
- There are planned opportunities for other staff to lead Collective Worship throughout the year, including significant times in the Church's calendar such as Lent and Advent, to support their professional development and commitment.

- Leaders employ a range of strategies including use of video clips, spontaneous prayer, traditional prayer, meditation and silent prayer, as well as a wide range of liturgical music. As a result, other staff follow the example set by leaders and uphold the established high standards when they organise class Masses and liturgies.
- Senior leaders monitor Collective Worship on a weekly basis and governors receive termly feedback on the provision.
- Pupils play an important part in evaluating Collective Worship. Their views are collected, analysed and then used to inform future developments.
- Governors are regularly present at liturgies. The Religious Education link governor formally monitors Collective Worship each term. The findings are shared and acted upon with the staff and governing body.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	141929
Local authority	Sandwell
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Multi Academy company
Age range	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	213
Appropriate authority	Board of directors
Chair	Stephen Godber
Headteacher	Carmel Hinton
Telephone number	0121 558 1643
Website address	<a href="http://www.st-philips.sandwell.sch.uk">www.st-philips.sandwell.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@st-philips.sandwell.sch.uk">office@st-philips.sandwell.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	14 <sup>th</sup> November 2013



## **INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL**

- St Philip's Academy is a one-form entry Catholic primary school with a nursery serving the parish of St Philip Neri, Smethwick.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 56%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is significantly above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is significantly higher than the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is significantly higher than the national average.
- Attainment on entry is well below the national average.
- Since the last inspection a number of changes have taken place. In April 2015, the school became an academy and became part of the Catherine of Siena Multi Academy Company. In September 2018, a new deputy headteacher was appointed. In September 2017, a new Religious Education subject leader was appointed. A new parish priest was inducted into the parish of St Philip Neri in October 2018. He is a Spiritan Father.

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION**

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Rose Brookes and Sr Susan Collins.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school's provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of 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, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship. The mission team and the school council were also interviewed.
- Meetings were held with the vice-chair of governors, the Religious Education and Catholic Life link governor, the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, the deputy headteacher and the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass and whole school Collective Worship.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.