



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### **ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

#### **Part of the Romero Catholic Academy**

**Deedmore Road, Wood End, Coventry, CV2 1EQ**

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Inspection date	28 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup> November 2016
Reporting Inspector	Joseph Skivington
Assistant Inspector	Margot Buller

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	214
Appropriate authority	Birmingham Archdiocese
Chair of Governors	Mrs Eleanor Barry
Telephone number	02476 612671
E-mail address	headteacher@st-patricks.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	November 2011
DFE School Number	331/3411
Unique Reference Number	103714

<b>Head of School</b>	<b>Mrs Andrea Sherratt</b>
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<b>Interim Executive Principal</b>	<b>Mrs Debra Newman</b>
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Previous inspection:	Good
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This inspection:	Good
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## **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 7 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lessons 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 the local academy RE representative, local academy committee members, the head of school, the executive principal, the subject coordinator, and the parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Advent assembly 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' achievement and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

## **Information about the school**

- St. Patrick's is an average size primary school serving the parish of St. Patrick's, Coventry.
- There are 214 pupils on roll, a third of whom are from ethnic minorities. There are 98 pupils with English as an additional language.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 73%.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with pupil premium support is significantly above the national average.
- Pupils enter the school with attainment below typical for their age group.
- The school is led by the acting head of school, working with an executive principal from the Romero Academy. St. Patrick's is one of seven Catholic primary schools, together with Cardinal Wiseman secondary school, making up the Romero Catholic Academy.

## **Main Findings**

- The provision and outcomes for Catholic life and collective worship are outstanding, and the provision and outcomes for religious education are good.
- The outstanding, transformational leadership of the head of school has had a remarkable impact on the recent rapid improvement in the provision and outcomes for pupils. The school's overall leadership and management of Catholic life is outstanding, because it has robust and increasingly reliable processes of self-evaluation, and plans and acts very effectively. The academy committee members and the executive principal have valuable experience and expertise, and are challenging and determined to oversee and fully support these improvements.
- The pupils are confident in articulating what it means to be in a Catholic school. They recognise the enriching, inclusive community in which they learn, and are internalising its values. This is amply evident in their outstanding behaviour and respectful care for one another, and their practical concern for others in need.

- The pupils' response to collective worship is outstanding. They participate willingly and reverently, and are developing the skills of planning and presenting their own acts of worship with growing confidence.
- The quality of teaching in RE is good overall, with some outstanding practice observed. This results in good or better learning outcomes, and good progress over time

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

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

- Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes are outstanding.
- The pupils benefit significantly from the Catholic life of the school, and regardless of faith background or none, readily adopt and live the ethos and values of the school. This is most clearly demonstrated in their outstanding behaviour and care for each other, encapsulated in their words: 'There is no bullying here. We are one big family.' There is a discernible, maturing attitude as the children move through St. Patrick's, asking 'What can I do for the school?' rather than 'What can the school do for me?'
- The contribution of the pupils in developing the Catholic life of the school is growing stronger, especially in regards to their feedback through pupil voice questionnaires. Comments and observations about how they could enrich the Catholic ethos have had a direct impact on school life. For example, pupils have planned a small prayer/meditation area within the school (to match the prayer garden that they established last year) and built upon their very successful introduction of prayer bags.
- The new chaplaincy team now represents every class and has had an early influence on the prayer life of the school. They keep up the impetus of the prayer bag initiative, monitor the sacred spaces and prayer tables in each class (with a short written report with praise and advice on how it could be improved), run the rosary club and look after the attractive prayer garden.
- The pupils' understanding of the school mission statement is translated into practice, for instance, showing a genuine group care with extraordinary gentleness for less able pupils. Older children in particular are exceptionally alert to the needs of those who need support; they are quick to inform staff if there is a problem. They are excellent role models for others. Plans are in place for pupils to be involved in the school revisit of the mission statement by interpreting and expressing in their own words what it means to them.
- The pupils organise their own charity fundraising events, demonstrating compassion for others in need in practical ways, but also playing a part in the wider community and the Romero schools' community. Their concerned support for ill children, for instance, through the Zoe's Place charity is much appreciated.
- Pupils can articulate what is distinctive about their school as a Catholic community, citing the rich and fruitful prayer life they experience and the call to follow in Jesus' footsteps. The older children are on the road to becoming real animators in fostering among their peers a lively sense of vocation and service. The school is aspirational and is continuing to work to give all children more ownership and initiative in developing the specifically Catholic character of the school.
- The quality of the provision for Catholic life is excellent. The whole environment of the school reflects its Catholic mission and ethos. It is an open and fully inclusive community where all children are invited to reflect on and live out the values embedded in the ethos of the school.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is outstanding because it is at the forefront of the curriculum and the daily life of the school. It is embedded in the whole approach to teaching and opportunities to spell out links and relevance to their lives are regularly taken. For instance, in discussing Mary's 'Yes' to God's plan for her, the First

Direct student teacher in the lesson was able to explain why he was called to be a teacher, making the concept of vocation a reality. These opportunities encourage pupils to help and serve, for instance, in doing class jobs or becoming playground buddies, but also to reflect on and discuss moral questions such as making right choices, or foreseeing the consequences of actions.

- The sacramental preparation programmes are jointly planned and run by the parish with the school. Pupils can speak with some confidence about the basic theology and the importance of the sacraments in their lives, and this is reflected in their written work.
- Pupils' engagement, ready response and generous participation in the school's collective worship is outstanding.
- The exemplary role modelling provided by the older pupils and every staff member ensures that all children, especially the youngest, respond with great attentiveness and reverence during prayer time and acts of worship. They behaved impeccably at the Advent assembly and during the Reception class prayers observed during the inspection. The readers were well prepared and read with clarity and expression, and the well led and rehearsed hymn singing was uplifting for everyone.
- The pupils compose many beautiful prayers, which are displayed and used at the prayer tables, and this is clear proof that they are aware of the different ways of praying and types of prayer. The chaplaincy team monitor the quality of these focal prayer points, while the younger ones very quickly learn the symbolism of the religious artefacts on the tables. Pupils use the diocesan documentation to give feedback on liturgies and Masses.
- In conversation they were keen to take more ownership of their prayer life and the school is addressing this area, enabling them to develop the skills of planning and organising their own liturgy. A great start has been made with the prayer bags going home so that the whole family's spirituality is nurtured. There are many beautiful accounts and photographs of the tremendous impact this is having, all recorded in their prayer diaries.
- The dining hall is the location of a marvellous kindness tree, the leaves recording small acts of significant care to other pupils and to staff. Alongside this was a poppy strewn display with heartfelt prayers for relatives and others who died during the First World War.
- The school provides a rich diet of liturgies, worship, and prayer both in and out of school. Collective worship in the classroom is an integral part of the day. The whole school assemblies reinforce the values and mission of the school very powerfully, using the good example of pupils themselves to inspire others.
- The children say traditional prayers at relevant times of the day and according to the liturgical seasons. They also compose their own prayers, both oral and written, and lead and participate in their daily class worship; although they are not yet fully involved in the planning and organising stage.
- Special liturgies take place during Advent and Lent, as well as major feast days, in which the pupils participate with enthusiasm through drama, dance and music. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome presence in the school. Older pupils have the opportunity to go on retreat to Alton Castle.
- Parents are invited to assemblies, Masses and other liturgies. The number typically attending is on the increase. They are made welcome and their feedback is elicited verbally and through questionnaires.

## **LEADERSHIP**

### **Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship**

- Leadership of Catholic life and collective worship is outstanding.
- The promotion and nurturing of the Catholic life of the school is of paramount importance to senior leadership and governors; the transcripts of the head of school's reports, the school improvement planning, and governors' minutes provide clear evidence of this, particularly over the last two years.

- The outstanding leadership of the head of school is both inspirational and transforming. She has successfully communicated her vision for the school's future, and through clear distributed leadership has been able to implement change very swiftly and effectively.
- The processes for the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life, which have already enabled leadership and governors to plan further improvements, are being swiftly and effectively embedded. This includes regular termly audits of the impact of strategies to enhance ethos and spirituality. The feedback from pupils and parents is seen as a key element in the school's own self-evaluation, which is both honest and accurate as a result.
- The school's mission statement 'Under God's Umbrella We Will Achieve Together', is visually prominent and is often addressed and interpreted in assemblies and in lessons. There are further opportunities planned for pupils to reflect on and discuss their own interpretations of what mission means for them, and their own ideas on how to promote it.
- The involvement of the governing body in the monitoring and evaluating of, and participation in, the Catholic life and collective worship of the school is ever present and strategically astute. They take the responsibility upon themselves to keep up to date with current expectations through diocesan training. They also share expertise and experience throughout the Romero community, for example, encouraging joint sessions with all the RE leaders across the academy group. These take place to provide mutual support and the dissemination of best practice.
- The provision for collective worship and the implementation of improvements are closely monitored by leaders and managers, both for compliance and for impact.
- The audits for spirituality and Catholic life have been very fruitful, leading to a growth in the variety of opportunities for prayer and worship, including provision for the staff's own spirituality and prayer life. The real practical concern for their spiritual growth is seen on the staff room notice board, where courses such as the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA), Blue Sky, and other course vacancies are continually advertised throughout the year.
- The local academy committee members are conscious of the number of Catholic teachers in the school, and ask appropriate questions of new applicants to ensure they have a good knowledge of the Catholic Faith and/or that they will support the Catholic life and the collective worship of the school.
- Romero Inspires was a recent uplifting event where all 250 school staff came together for a day of professional development based around prayer and reflection supported by the schools' clergy. This is a powerful expression of the direction and ethos the academy is determined to take under its academy committee and the interim executive principal.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

### **Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education**

- Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education are good.
- The head of school who takes responsibility for RE ensures in-service training to develop staff's understanding and commitment to the Church's mission in education. This is vital as the new teachers that have joined the staff need this support both for their own spirituality and to secure their RE subject knowledge.
- The head of school has put structures to monitor and evaluate the impact of provision on RE outcomes in place, through lesson observations and work scrutinies, as well as asking the pupils themselves what helps them to learn better. As a result, provision and learning outcomes are continually being improved. Although, there are inconsistencies in the rate of practice, quality of teaching, and resultant progress in some classes.
- Effective and close support is given to all teachers to enable pupils to learn well. Guidance and support on planning, teaching techniques, and assessment skills through in service training offer valuable support, especially for the less experienced teachers, in drawing up lesson plans, learning objectives, and challenging, engaging activities. As a result, pupils'



interest and enjoyment in the learning process, and the learning outcomes, are steadily improving.

- There is, however, an urgent need to develop the role of a full time RE leader separate from the head of school, so that the latter can exercise an overseeing, strategic role, rather than the day to day organising of the subject: a leader who could inspire, communicate, and sustain the present high expectations, and maintain the remarkable impetus in St. Patrick's to provide nothing but the very best outcomes for the pupils.
- On entry to the school, pupils' prior knowledge and experience of religious matters is below age related expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is good, and consistent over the three years, with a large majority meeting diocesan expectations. Progress is good over time, although some units prove more challenging than others, for example, the Sacraments.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils are in line with diocesan expectation, with some exceeding expectation. A large majority of disadvantaged pupils are also in line with expectation. There is some variation in year groups such as Year 3. The school is monitoring these assessments to secure accuracy and reliability, and recognises the need to use the new diocesan resources to support this process.
- Pupils with special educational needs make similar good progress to the others thanks to effective interventions and the pro-active support of learning assistants.
- Pupils are keen to learn with very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour for learning. They experience different learning styles, including paired discussion, independent work involving some research skills, role-play and drama. They can explain how religious beliefs arise and show a sound understanding of how belief can shape lives and behaviour.
- Their written work often consists of short pieces of writing on a variety of topics, usually completed to a good standard. The number of pupils making more than expected progress would increase further if teachers set challenging learning objectives, and well differentiated tasks pitched more nearly to individual learning needs. More extended, reflective pieces of writing would enable teachers to assess individual progress more accurately from a greater body of work.
- The quality of teaching overall is good, but inconsistent, with some outstanding and some weaker practice observed. Where it is weaker, there is lower teacher expectation and focus is on the lesson tasks, rather than the different learning needs and prior knowledge of the pupils. There is however, evidence of real improvement through support and successful coaching.
- Teachers have generally sound subject knowledge, good rapport with their pupils, and plan their lessons well using a variety of strategies, which engage most pupils. This, together with the pupils' very positive behaviour for learning, results in good progress over time.
- The much improved procedures for recording and reviewing the quality of teaching, through lesson observations and book trawls, have highlighted the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, thus enabling precise support and advice to be given exactly where it is needed.
- End of unit assessment is becoming more accurate and with the growing use of moderation with the other Romero schools, judgements on attainment and achievement are becoming more sophisticated and reliable.
- Dialogue marking is at an early stage but already making a difference when the formative comments made by teachers are challenging, and the written response by the pupils more thoughtful and extended.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all canonical and statutory requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- The diocesan strategy is effectively used through topics which are extended and made relevant by well-planned activities, such as role playing the sacraments or exploring the parish church and identifying objects and symbols. This gives the pupils first hand experiences and increases their knowledge and understanding.
- The head of school, who is the RE leader, maintains excellent detailed records on the delivery and impact of the subject. Notes and evaluations are updated almost daily, allowing objectives and targets to be re-shaped when necessary, so that the pace of

progress and improvement can be shared with the staff, and action taken where weaknesses have been identified. This exemplary practice is a significant driving force behind the school's rapid improvement.

- Pupils have the opportunity to explore other faiths in the topics covering world religions. Those pupils and their parents, who belong to a different faith background, provide an excellent resource, which enables the other pupils to understand and respect other faiths and cultures. This is reinforced by the engaging activities and projects during a week dedicated to learning about other faiths, parents from other faiths speaking to the children, and hands on experiences such as learning Sikh dancing.
- The relationship and sex education programme is in place and monitored to ensure it is consistent with the teachings of the Church and reflects Catholic teaching and values.
- The curriculum is effective in developing pupils spiritually, morally and their understanding of vocation. There are many opportunities to develop their moral sense of responsibility towards others, especially in exercising their spirit of generosity through outreach to people less fortunate than themselves, and to live out their faith in practice and to meet Jesus in others. This is clearly seen in the many fruitful fundraising events run by the pupils in aid of local and global charities, but also in anti-bullying awareness and their instinct to help and care for each other. They are aware of the work of St. Chad's Sanctuary for asylum seekers and refugees, and support the local food banks.
- The pupils are able to articulate what it means to answer a vocation. They explore the lives of others such as St. Francis, or a calling to religious life. They produced, for instance, insightful work in drawing up an advert to be an apostle, listing the qualities needed but also the commitment and difficult demands and choices that following a calling entails.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve the school should:**

- Increase opportunities for all pupils to take more ownership in the planning and organising of their own liturgies and prayer life, and to increase their input and responsibility for the promotion of the Catholic life of the school.
- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching to match the best, by raising the expectations of teachers as to what the children can achieve.
- Address the need to establish an independent RE leader role, which is dynamic, with a vision and up to date training, modelling best practice, and driving forward the existing progress towards outstanding provision and outcomes in religious education.