



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leamington Road, Broadway, WR12 7DZ

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| Inspection date | 16 th - 17 th May 2016 |
| Reporting Inspector | Joseph Skivington |

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 | 90 |
| Appropriate authority | The Governing Body |
| Chair of Governors | Mike Davis |
| Telephone number | 01386 853337 |
| E-mail address | head@st-marysrc.worcs.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | March 2010 |
| DFE School Number | 885 3309 |
| Unique Reference Number | 116871 |

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| Headteacher | Mrs Jacqui Le Maitre |
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| Previous inspection: | 2 |
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| This inspection: | 2 |
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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 4 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lessons were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- 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 a governor, the headteacher, and the subject leader.
- The inspector attended a class Mass, and prayer time in every year, 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, and teachers' planning.

Information about the school

- St Mary's is a small primary school with 90 pupils on roll serving the Catholic community in Broadway and surrounding areas
- The intake is predominantly White British with ten or twelve children from mixed ethnic background
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 48%.
- There are below average numbers of disadvantaged pupils
- A fifth of pupils are registered as having SEND
- Attainment on entry in RE is below expectation
- The executive headteacher oversees two other schools in a hard federation. There has been no full time head of school for over a year.

Main Findings

- The provision and quality of Catholic life is good. There is a strong Catholic ethos and the pupils contribute to and benefit from it through their good behaviour and willing involvement.
- The pupils' response to collective worship is very positive. They are keen to lead and be actively involved in preparing assemblies and liturgies. They are reverent and reflective during Mass and other times of prayer in lessons and whole school assemblies.
- The quality of teaching in RE is good overall, and leads to good learning outcomes and progress over time.
- The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and plans and acts to make improvements, but the leadership structure requires improvement, particularly middle management, if it is to sustain the good quality of Catholic life and religious education.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school

- The pupils benefit significantly from the Catholic life of the school and participate fully regardless of faith background or none. This is evident in their positive attitudes and behaviour, and their willingness to be involved in specifically Catholic aspects of school life. For instance, they led discussions, with governors and parents, on the introduction of prayer bags, and they have become prayer leaders. They also monitor the quality of classroom displays and critical reviews of the impact of assemblies.
- The school mission statement is displayed around the school, interpreted by the pupils themselves, and frequently alluded to by staff.
- The pupils are able to articulate what it means to be in a Catholic school and have internalised the values promoted by the ethos of the school.
- They have regular opportunities to feedback on what they think about the quality of the Catholic ethos through questionnaires and the school council. As a result the school leadership is able to react, and plan, with the pupils, measurable steps which lead to improvement.
- The pupils are proactive, through the school council, in organising their own charity fundraising efforts, demonstrating compassion for others in need, both locally and globally, such as the orphanage in Tanzania, and fostering among their peers a real sense of vocation and service.

The quality of provision for the Catholic life

- The quality of the provision for Catholic life is good. 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.
- Respect and understanding of other faiths are inculcated and practised. The provision for pupils' sex and relationship education is underpinned by Catholic values and guidelines.
- The pupils, through the school council and pupil voice, are constantly invited to interpret and share with others what the Catholic life of the school means for them.
- Children and their families who are preparing for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion participate in the Enrolment Mass, workshops and meetings. These are planned and delivered solely by the parish priest.
- The school has identified closer collaboration with the parish as a crucial area for development, so that the children can more clearly see and experience the school as part of the mission of the parish, and the wider mission of the whole Church.

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

- The pupils respond with attentiveness and reverence during prayers and acts of worship. The younger pupils at the Mass during the inspection behaved impeccably and were keen to answer the priest's questions during the short homily. They are encouraged in no small way by the role modelling of the older pupils and the example set by the staff.

- The pupils are keen to participate and increasingly plan and lead their own assemblies and liturgies, such as the well planned Sacrament assembly, and a colourfully documented drama of the Last Supper. They produced excellent art work in depicting the Stations of the Cross.
- The school's dedicated Prayer Reflection areas are very popular and used well by all pupils. They compose many beautiful prayers which are displayed and used at the class altars, and this is proof evident that they are aware of the different ways of praying and types of prayer.
- There is a successful drive to further involve pupils right across the school in planning and presenting collective worship, as well as enhancing the children's skills of reflection through guided meditations.

The quality of the school's provision of collective worship

- The school provides a rich diet of liturgies, worship, and prayer both at school and at home. Collective worship in the classroom is an integral part of the day.
- The children say traditional prayers in relation to the times of the day and the liturgical season. They compose their own prayers, both written and orally, and have many opportunities to lead their class worship. Prayer and mercy bags for each class further enhance and encourage prayer at home.
- The Mass is celebrated in the adjacent parish church with different year groups once a week. Special liturgies take place during Advent and Lent, as well as major feasts. Traditional prayers and Catholic practices such as the Rosary services during October and May are enthusiastically attended.
- Staff are growing in confidence in planning and leading worship and consequently are now more confident in passing on ownership of worship to the pupils themselves.

Leaders and Managers

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

- There are well established processes for the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life which are embedded, and enable governors and leadership to plan further improvements. Due prominence is given to the sustaining of the Catholic ethos of the school, as evident in the minutes of the governors' meetings.
- The feedback from pupils and parents is seen as a key element in the school's own self evaluation of its effectiveness, as well as the regular audits of Catholic life. School leadership and governors audit provision for Catholic life and RE every term. All this is fed into the school improvement plan, which is a working document, reshaped where necessary and reactive to developments through the year.
- The mission of the school is prominently displayed and referred to frequently, so that it becomes a way of life for the whole school community. The audit of different subjects' contribution to the school's spirituality has been a successful focus, as well as the recent introduction of the Catholic Pupil Profile values.
- Prayer areas are monitored together with the pupils. They play a growing role in evaluating the quality of provision and resources, and then initiating changes.

- The headteacher and RE subject leader regularly lead in-service training to develop staff understanding and commitment to the Church's mission in education. The recruitment and induction of new staff places a strong emphasis on the Catholic nature of the school and the support for its ethos through recently revised recruitment questions.
- The present leadership structures, however, require improvement. While all the above processes and structures are in place, there is a need for the closer monitoring of the impact of the steps taken to sustain and improve outcomes. There has been no permanent head of school since the start of the year, the role being shared part time between the executive head and a senior teacher. This is not an ideal situation. There is a danger that over time this will have a deleterious effect on outcomes, particularly in RE, where the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations and book scrutinies needs to be even more frequent and robust. This is necessary if the school is to move to be better than good. The governors are aware of the extra pressures on the executive headship but there is as yet no permanent solution.

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate provision for collective worship and implement any necessary improvements

- The provision for collective worship and the implementation of improvements is well monitored by leaders and managers both for compliance and for impact.
- A strong partnership between leaders, pupils and parents is developing, instanced in the joint planning of the Prayer and Mercy initiative, as well as the vital feedback which enables leadership to evaluate where the school is and what it needs to do to improve even further.
- The audits for spirituality and Catholic life have been particularly fruitful and challenging. There is a sense of growth and initiative in the variety of opportunities for prayer and worship, including the staff's own spirituality and prayer life.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils

- The structures to monitor and evaluate the impact of provision on outcomes for pupils are in place, through lesson observations and work scrutinies, as well as eliciting the feedback from pupils on the quality of their learning. The impact of these evaluative processes could be enhanced by a more immediate, daily hands on involvement of both senior leadership and governors to support middle management.
- Where there are relative weaknesses in teaching, effective and close support is given by leaders so that the pupils continue to learn well and make expected progress over time. Inset on planning and teaching strategies through professional development have provided valuable and fruitful support
- Assessment and moderation of pupils' progress provide a clear picture of individual achievement over time, and feed into the planning of lesson objectives especially for the disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs.

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education

- Children exhibit varied levels of knowledge and understanding of faith, traditions and prayer life on entry to the school, with generally low knowledge and understanding of religious artefacts, as evidenced from baseline assessment. By the end of Key Stage 1 assessment data shows that almost all pupils are working at, and some above, the average expectations. This represents good achievement. Children in vulnerable groups and SEND children make similarly good progress through targetted support. This reflects the good and sometimes outstanding teaching at this key stage.
- The end of Key Stage 2 data shows that by the end of their time at St Mary's almost all Year 6 children are working at or above expectation. The number of pupils making more than expected progress, especially the more able, would increase if they were given more challenging learning tasks. The school has recognised this, especially the need to provide more opportunities and a higher expectation for extended, reflective writing tasks.
- Pupils enjoy the RE lessons and have developed independent and peer learning skills which has supported their good achievement over time.
- Most can explain how religious beliefs arise and show a growing understanding of how religious beliefs shape their lives and actions.
- Comments made during a regular link visit by the governors indicate pupils can confidently show their understanding and are willing to ask questions.

The quality of teaching and assessment in Religious Education

- The quality of teaching is good overall, with stronger practice observed at Key Stage 1. Teachers plan their lessons using a variety of strategies, coupled with secure subject knowledge. The rapport with pupils is strong and this, together with the pupils' very positive behaviour for learning, results in good progress over time.
- The pupils' written work generally consists of short pieces of writing on a variety of topics usually done well. The opportunity for more extended writing would enable the teachers the better to evaluate their progress more reliably, especially in coming to a judgement on the depth of their understanding.
- Teaching is not yet better than good as there is some occasional inconsistency in the level of teachers' expectation and challenge, in terms of presentation and quality of written work, and the impact of questioning which elicits real intellectual effort from the pupils. Again the school has identified this, and understands the benefit of even closer monitoring and support where it is needed.
- All teachers use the RE level descriptors to assess samples of work. Assessment pieces are moderated termly and this promotes consistency, especially the joint moderation with the other federated schools' RE subject leaders.
- Dialogue marking is well established, with formative comments by teachers responded to by the pupils. The quality of the pupil responses could be more thoughtful and extended in order to get the maximum impact on learning and progress.

The effectiveness of the curriculum in RE in promoting pupils' learning

- The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets all canonical and statutory requirements of the Bishops' Conference. It contributes significantly to the pupils' spiritual, moral and

vocational development through the topics covered in the syllabus, the opportunities to discuss these in class, to reflect on what it means for their actions and relationships with others, and to take on responsibilities and care for others.

- Pupils have the opportunity to explore other faiths in the study of the major world religions, supplemented by visiting speakers and visits to other places of worship.
- Family life education follows the All that I Am programme in Years 5 and 6, and is preceded by letters to parents. The programme is monitored to ensure it is consistent with the teachings of the Church.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL AND VOCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The effectiveness of the whole school curriculum in developing pupils spiritually, morally, and in their understanding of vocation

- The curriculum is very effective in promoting these aspects of personal development. A vocations day is planned to further develop the children's sense of vocation and the understanding of God's personal call in their daily lives. There are many opportunities to reach out to the local and global community in a spirit of service to others and the opportunity to exercise their feelings of generosity and concern for others.
- The provision for their spiritual and moral development is a strength of the school and has resulted in the outcomes noted above. The audit of spirituality across other subjects has begun to raise teachers' awareness of opportunities to point to links with what pupils are learning in RE to subjects such as English and Geography, as well as of course Art and Music.

The quality of provision for pupils' development of Catholic Christian values

- The provision for pupils' development of Catholic Christian values is good. The introduction of the Catholic Pupil Profile in the short term planning, will add a new dimension to the already effective assembly programme covering the core Catholic values.

Recommendations

The school should:

- strengthen the role of middle management to ensure a closer scrutiny and monitoring of the day to day provision and outcomes of RE and Catholic life and continue efforts to appoint a head of school
- encourage pupils to write reflectively and at length in their written tasks, including their response to their teachers' formative comments.