



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Whitefields Road, Solihull, West Midlands B91 3NZ

Inspection dates	24 th – 25th February 2015
Reporting Inspector	Mr Paul Nutt

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	242
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mrs Helen Super
Telephone number	0121 705 4355
E-mail address	office@st-augustines.solihull.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22-23 February 2010
DFE School Number	334-3502
Unique Reference Number	104100

Headteacher	Mrs Tina Willmott
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Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	1

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life.
- To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed 5 full RE lessons with the headteacher or her deputy
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held 2 discussions with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the RE subject leader, members of the mission and strategy committee of governors and parish priest.
- The inspector observed 4 examples of collective worship 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.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals were read alongside the self evaluation.

Information about the school

- St Augustine's is a smaller than average Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Augustine in Solihull.
- The parish is an area of predominantly private housing
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 98%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 20%.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average as are the numbers with special needs and/or disabilities.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average overall.

Main Findings

- St Augustine's is a school in which the Catholic life, collective worship and religious education are outstanding. The judgement in the school's self evaluation that they are is accurate and comprehensively evidenced. This impacts directly upon continuing and sustained school improvement
- Strong and committed leadership by example is a strength of the school, ensuring positive outcomes in progress, attainment and achievement for all pupils
- Improvement planning in all areas is marked by clear priorities, success criteria and review intervals, supported by a targeted programme of professional development
- A positive engagement with community cohesion and vocations is evident throughout the school

School self-evaluation

Catholic life and collective worship

- Self-evaluation is central to all areas of the school's work and its continual drive towards school improvement. It is predicated on very good knowledge and awareness of the school and strong commitment to its mission by all involved.
- The mission statement, devised and formed by members of the school community, is a constant point of reference for self-evaluation and maintenance of the quality of school life and ethos. Opportunities for reflection upon mission and vocation are embedded within the daily life and routines of the school and monitored for effectiveness by staff at all levels. Pupils bore witness to this throughout the inspection.
- The school has a secure, structured approach to monitoring and evaluation, which is managed most effectively by school leadership and provides a significant evidence base that supports its self-evaluation judgements. The evidence is used to inform subsequent stages of the school improvement cycle.
- Senior leaders evaluate very closely the impact on the life of the school and outcomes for all children's learning and development in faith; the outcomes are shared with all stakeholders and included in future planning.
- A range of structures is in place to support the school's inclusive approach to the application of evidence and outcomes, which include all staff, children, families and governors.
- Senior leaders report regularly to governors, both formally in meetings and less formally during frequent visits to school, sustaining the self-evaluation judgements through a balanced combination of support and challenge.
- There is a published annual programme of activities, which ensure regular opportunities for ongoing analysis and evaluation to identify best practice and possible areas for further development.
- Pupils contribute to the evaluation processes through school council, RE council, surveys and daily contact with class teachers and teaching assistants. Children are very capable of, and eager to, evaluate the Catholic life of the school: how they could do better and how they should be involved.
- Staff continually monitor pupils' engagement, development and progress, and are expected to report on any anxieties, plan appropriately their collective worship, and ensure that cross-curricular opportunities are rich and frequent. They are well supported by senior leaders, who hold them to account through the performance management cycle.
- Parents receive regular information from the school and are invited to express their views through parents' meetings and occasional questionnaires; the results are collated and subsequently discussed.
- Regular audit of the school curriculum and discussions with pupils, ensure that it is rich, relevant, ensures progression, and encompasses externally-required development. The wider school curriculum equips pupils very well for their spiritual moral and vocational development;
- Collective worship is monitored by senior staff on a regular basis; governors and the parish priest are also very active in ensuring the quality and appropriateness of whole-school, phase or class worship

- In response to the last inspection, pupils are fully involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship, using a planning sheet developed by pupils in Key Stage 2. Staff work closely with the pupils throughout this process.

Governance

- Governance at the school is very strong, holding leadership to account, both formally and less formally, to sustain and improve the Catholic life, and to discharge its responsibility for evaluating both its work and ethos
- Governors are very well informed about the school, to which they have a strong commitment, and recognise the quality of its ethos
- The mission and strategy committee, including a nominated link governor for RE, has evolved since the last inspection; it has a good understanding of all aspects of the school, is involved in learning walks and pupil interviews, and maintains detailed records with which to offer challenge and support.
- Governors monitor the planning cycle very effectively, and play an integral part in ensuring its relevance, delivery and impact. Clear priorities, timescales, and success criteria are strong features of the improvement planning.
- Targeted external visits, visitors to school, and professional development opportunities are built into the planning and delivery cycle, many arranged by the head and her deputy who have leading roles with local clusters of schools.
- Governors maintain careful oversight of teaching and learning, with the link governor meeting regularly for minuted meetings with the subject leader.

Religious Education

- The school's judgement that teaching, learning and assessment in RE are outstanding can be validated as reliable, though there is a need for the development of greater consistency and range in differentiation, building on existing best practice.
- Religious education is strongly led by the deputy headteacher, who chairs local cluster meetings and delivers inset in other schools, keeping abreast of diocesan and national developments and ensuring that the school curriculum is relevant, engaging and thoroughly planned
- In response to the last inspection, the teaching of RE is complemented in other curriculum areas and links developed more widely with our Catholic Faith; for example, the learning for each class is led by a stage-related vocational statement
- Careful analysis of performance data, beginning with baseline assessments on entry to the school, ensures that provision for all pupils is appropriate to individual ability and need, and available on inspection
- Target setting, linked to data evidence, ensures that progress across all years is accelerated, and that overall attainment outcomes at the end of key stage 2 are stronger than in Reading, Writing and Mathematics, as indicated in the school's self-evaluation
- Comprehensive systems are in place to monitor the quality and impact of teaching, providing support for individual staff, including newly-qualified colleagues, if needed. There is a published schedule of lesson observations, learning walks, work scrutiny and individual conversations, conducted by senior staff, which is documented and allows continual monitoring and evaluation of standards; records could be validated during the inspection.

- All classroom work is closely monitored and supported by the outstanding subject leader. Staff are given individual feedback after monitoring and key messages shared with SLT and all staff.
- The curriculum for Religious Education is full and thoughtfully planned, with clear links to the *Curriculum Directory* and the diocesan programme, *Learning and Growing as the People of God* and pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

- Attainment in RE is low on entry to the school, but progress for all groups is at least good, outstanding for the majority.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, all children work at levels in RE comparable to those in reading, writing and mathematics; by the end of Key Stage 2 87% are working at above expectations.
- Pupils' learning in RE, assemblies and Mass is at least good, with much outstanding. Active learning, with an emphasis on an appropriate and progressive range of assessment and feedback models, was evident in all lessons and appreciated by the pupils; marking is very full and developmental.
- All teaching in RE is at least good at all times, with outstanding subject knowledge displayed by many; it is supported by a programme of high quality, continuous inset and an excellent array of resources.
- Assessment to support learning, using active marking techniques, is outstanding, finely tuned verbally and in writing; teachers are adept at using assessment for learning to plan next stages of learning.
- Robust tracking systems are in place; these are consistent with practice in other core subjects.
- Development plans are given individually and at whole school level which leads into action plans for improvement
- The curriculum is rich, planned from each strong vocational statement, fully in line with DES guidance and matched to learning from and learning about religion.
- The RE curriculum is planned to ensure that excellent opportunities are promoted to encourage the children to ask deep, insightful and thought-provoking questions and to understand that some can only be answered through personal response that calls on belief of faith, building understanding and knowledge through each key stage.
- The curriculum in Years 3-6 has explicit opportunities to develop an understanding of other faiths and to visit other places of worship. Community cohesion is an identified strength of the school, and is readily validated through displays and written records of charitable involvements, regular and seasonal, at local, national and international levels.
- The school leadership and all governors relentlessly and successfully promote the Catholic life of the school and use careful, planned, strategic monitoring and evaluation to ensure the Catholic ethos is paramount.
- The governors are fully active and supportive in the Catholic life and teaching of RE
- Children understand the importance of the mission of the school and know that they are called upon to act in accordance with the school's prayer.

¹ As the quality of the school self evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

- The children are confident to ask questions about their faith, to pose insightful questions, to reflect on difficult challenges and probe answers from their faith in times of worldwide difficulties.
- Collective worship is planned in line with the school's agreed expectations, and reflects the liturgical year and pupils' developing understanding of prayer and mission. Children participate daily in collective worship; this is carefully planned to enable them to work independently to plan and lead collective worship.
- The children know and use a variety of different prayer styles through a range of collective worship opportunities.
- Strong links exist between the school and the parish, which enables whole school and class Masses to take place each term; the parish priest visits different classes to enhance, support and enrich the curriculum.
- The sacramental programme is very carefully planned and reviewed to ensure that it provides excellent preparation for both pupils and their families.
- Children develop a very good understanding of their faith, how to reflect it in their actions towards others and in their times of individual and large group worship.
- Children develop a real sense of right and wrong, of conscience, citizenship and vocation, resulting in a real commitment to fairness, justice, charity work and eco-school activities.

Recommendations

The school should:

- Develop greater consistency and range in differentiation within RE, building on existing best practice.
- Give careful attention to succession planning for at all levels in the school.



5 March 2015

Diocesan Education Service,
Don Bosco House,
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Coleshill,
B46 3EA

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, 2015

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

St Augustine's is an outstanding Catholic school. The leadership of the headteacher and her deputy is very positive, giving clear strategic guidance to all the staff. The school is well supported in this by its governors, who have a very clear understanding of priorities and high expectations. Catholic life and collective worship in the school are very strong. The pupils are fully engaged and speak with enthusiasm about the school, enjoy their learning and feel safe and happy. When they first arrive at the school many children have limited religious knowledge but, as a result of a rich and engaging curriculum which is well delivered and continually reviewed, they make excellent progress and, by the time they leave, have achieved very good standards. They are developing a secure knowledge of Christ's teaching and understand the basic tenets of the Catholic faith. They know and can talk about a number of Bible stories and miracles and have a good understanding of the value of personal and traditional prayers. Children understand the importance of the mission of the school and know that they are called upon to act accordingly.

I have recommended that the school should develop greater consistency and range in matching work to the different needs of pupils, building on existing best practice, and that governors and school leadership should develop succession planning at different levels.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to spend time in your school and see how well your children are doing. I was made really welcome by everyone, and was very impressed by the collaboration and mutual support between the school and the wider community to ensure that all the children live happy and enjoyable lives.

Yours sincerely

Paul F. Nutt
Diocesan Inspector