



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### OUR LADY AND ST TERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL CUBBINGTON, WARWICKSHIRE

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Inspection dates 18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011  
Reporting Inspector Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Primary
Age range of pupils	4 -11 years
Number on roll	125
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr G Smith
School address	Windmill Hill Cubbington Leamington Spa CV32 7LN
Telephone number	01926 424420
E-mail address	admin3546@we-learn.com
Date of previous inspection	October 2008
DCSF School Number	3546
Unique Reference Number	125718

**Headteacher** Mrs Michaela Fallon

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector. The inspector visited three full religious education (RE) lessons to observe teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. She observed the school's work, including Mass, assembly, voluntary lunchtime prayer group and looked at a range of evidence, including key documentation such as the school's development plan, monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in RE, and pupils' work.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average Catholic primary school. It serves the parish of Our Lady Cubbington. There are 125 pupils on roll; 37% of the pupils are baptised Catholics. Numbers on roll are increasing. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, with about a fifth of pupils coming from a range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, although there are more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than found nationally. The school works in collaboration with two other schools in the area as part of the Leamington Catholic Collegiate. Since the previous inspection a substantive headteacher has been appointed following a period of instability when the school was led by a series of acting headteachers. The school has attained Healthy School Status and the Science Silver Quality Mark. There is a privately-run nursery on the school site. The nursery also provides before- and after-school care.

## Overall effectiveness of the school as a Catholic school

The Catholic life and religious education at Our Lady and St Teresa's are very good with a significant number of outstanding features. Since the last inspection and the appointment of the current headteacher, following a period of unrest, the school has improved considerably. It is the strong desire of the headteacher and her senior leadership team to provide an excellent Catholic education. The school has a very strong Catholic ethos. The headteacher is skilled at monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life and RE in the school. She and the senior leadership team have developed clear improvement plans which, along with headteacher's ability to inspire the whole school community, are ensuring that the school is working towards meeting an ambitious vision. Morale is high and everyone in the school has confidence and trust in the headteacher. This has had a powerful impact on outcomes for pupils in regard to their spiritual and moral development and knowledge and understanding of the Faith. The school provides a haven of security, order and spirituality; this allows pupils, particularly those from hard pressed backgrounds, to flourish. The quality of provision in RE means that all groups of pupils make good progress and reach standards that are better than expected. Behaviour is excellent and pupils show respect for all, thus truly living out the mission statement *One Family in Christ: Love and Learn together*. The older pupils also understand the value of the teaching of St Thérèse of Lisieux that every small deed should be done well and for the greater glory of God. Since the last inspection key issues have been addressed. Strategic forward planning for RE and the Catholic life of the school has radically improved and governors are fully involved in this planning. Standards in RE have been raised by ensuring that teaching and learning and progress and attainment in RE are monitored in line with other core subjects. The headteacher has become the RE leader and has got the necessary skills and knowledge and has received the professional development to enable her to carry out her role effectively and to help all teachers to deliver the RE curriculum successfully. The school's capacity for sustained improvement in its Catholic life is outstanding.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Involve pupils more fully in planning of collective worship.
- Develop the teaching about other religions.
- Build upon partnerships with local Catholic schools to develop Catholic life and teaching in RE and sharing knowledge and expertise

## How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

The quality of pupils' learning and progress in RE is very good and in some cases outstanding. Baseline assessment shows that on entry to the school children have limited religious awareness. By Year 6 most groups have made at least good progress and some make outstanding progress. Pupils approach their RE lessons with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are diligent and keen and seek to produce their best work. Behaviour is excellent and contributes to pupils' ability to concentrate and remain on task. They feel secure and safe and are willing to take risks with their learning. This applies to all pupils including those with particular learning needs or disabilities. Work is appropriately matched to ability and skilled teaching assistants are sensitive to their needs and offer the appropriate levels of support and intervention. Other pupils are caring and supportive of those pupils' needs. Work on the walls and in books, lesson observation and pupil interviews demonstrate that attainment is good and, for some pupils, well above national expectations. In some extended writing about St Therese of Lisieux Year 5 and 6 pupils had produced work showing at a very high level thinking skills and attainment in reflecting on meaning. At the end of Key Stage 1 children understand why we pray and can recite some of the traditional prayers of the faith. They understand that the Bible has two Testaments and that the birth of Jesus marks the beginning of the New Testament. They are familiar with stories from both Testaments and can talk about and sequence the events of Jesus' life. They know about Easter and Christmas and can talk about Lent and Advent. They know about baptism and what it means to be a follower of Jesus. They also have an appropriate knowledge of the signs and symbols of the Church. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have greatly matured in their understanding of the faith. They have a deeper knowledge of scripture and its meaning. Also their knowledge and understanding of the Sacraments, of prayer and signs and symbols are much fuller. They have a very good knowledge of the seasons of the Church. They can reflect on what these things mean in their lives and how being a Christian affects their choices and behaviour.

Pupils' contribution to the Catholic life of the school is excellent. The secure, safe and spiritual environment of the school impacts very favourably on all pupils who have a strong sense of personal worth. They listen well to adults and to each other. They know the importance of forgiveness, given and received. They understand that they are faced with choices and that there are consequences following from the choices they make. They are quick to congratulate and praise others; they enjoy sharing humour and receive kindly banter in the spirit in which it is given. They are very conscious of social justice and relish the opportunity to help others. They are keen fundraisers and are very proud of the use of their previous uniform by a school and orphanage in Kenya. The pupils are polite, courteous and friendly and show great respect towards adults and other children.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is outstanding. They are fully involved in the vibrant acts of worship provided and are inspired to reflect, pray and praise God with enthusiasm, reverence and respect. They understand the importance and purpose of prayer and they participate respectfully and reflectively. At a well prepared Mass attended during inspection pupils read with clarity and confidence. The children sang hymns with joy and gusto. They undertook their various duties perfectly and received communion with reverence. The children are familiar with the changes to the liturgy and make their responses clearly and with confidence. The children who were not baptised Catholics were included and fully involved in the liturgy. The children are proud of the prayer room and garden and make regular use of these facilities. A good number of children attend before school and lunchtime prayer group. They talked with enthusiasm

about the May Procession and are very familiar with the Rosary and the relevance of the months of May and October to Mary. The pupils have been very much involved in the religious art work, producing excellent Stations of the Cross and many other pieces of work.

## **How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school**

The way in which the headteacher monitors and evaluates the Catholic life, plans for and implements improvement for outcomes for pupils is outstanding. The headteacher is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. For her and her senior leadership team the moral and spiritual development of the pupils is their highest priority. During the turbulent period of nine terms led by a series of acting headteachers the Catholic life of the school had declined but since her appointment the school has seen a rapid improvement particularly in this aspect. Her work is greatly appreciated by pupils, parents and staff. She has transformed the entrance, corridors, hall, prayer room and created a prayer garden making a modern vibrant spiritual environment for the pupils. She uses her artistic abilities to good effect and takes a very 'hands on' approach. She has developed a hard working united staff fully committed to providing the best possible opportunities for pupils on their journey of faith. All of this has had a strong positive impact on the moral and spiritual development of the pupils. The headteacher is skilled in monitoring and evaluating the Catholic life of the school. Practice and resources are carefully audited and clear analysis has led to highly focused plans leading to rapid improvement.

The headteacher is also the RE subject leader and she places great importance on the quality of teaching and standards of attainment of pupils in the subject. She monitors the subject carefully through lesson observations, book trawls and analysis of assessment data. She ensures RE is well resourced and that the curriculum meets the needs of all groups of pupils. In-service education is provided in line with improvement plans. Currently inset is focusing on developing the understanding of staff of the RE attainment levels and ensuring consensus across the school. In respect of the Catholic life of the school the effectiveness of the governing body is good. There are no vacancies and members of the governing body possess the expertise to meet the needs of the school and help to determine the direction of the Catholic life of the school. They discharge their statutory and canonical duties effectively. They are very conscious of maintaining the Catholic ethos of the school when recruiting staff. They are very supportive of the headteacher and seek to help her implement her vision for the Catholic life of the school. They set challenges and the chair of governors, who is also the RE link governor, is fully involved in monitoring RE through going into lessons and carrying out book scrutinies with the subject leader. He meets regularly with the headteacher and attends acts of worship and events in the school. Governors gauge the views of parents through surveys which include opinions about the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher keeps the governors well informed. The headteacher is always given a Catholic ethos target as part of her professional development. Training took place in September 2011 for all schools in the Leamington Catholic Collegiate, led by the Diocese, concerning 'governance in a Catholic School'. This was well attended by the school's governing body.

The way in which leaders promote community cohesion is good with some outstanding practice. The headteacher participated in the North Leamington Cluster's Community Cohesion Conference. This enabled the school to complete an audit of community cohesion. The school celebrates diversity through the curriculum, e.g. Black History Month, visiting other places of worship e.g. Sikh Gurdwara. Children participate in a range of charity events and projects within the community like the Cubbington Arts Festival. Partnerships with other schools and community groups have helped children recognise the common sense of belonging. Parents are increasingly involved in the life of the school; attendance at class led assemblies is excellent. The school has improved communication with parents significantly since the last inspection. Leadership asks for and acts upon the views of parents regularly. Links with parents have been greatly improved through a weekly newsletter, parent notice boards, the school website and Catholic home/school diaries. The parent teacher association is a very active group and provides many fundraising and social events. Pupils from different backgrounds have had the opportunity to work together; local Catholic schools joined for the *Big Sing Literacy Thing* and the school joins with local Church of England school for

school council projects. There are no significant trends in the performance of vulnerable groups which indicate equal opportunities for all. School has strong links with Kind Aid Orphanage in Kenya and raises funds for several other causes. The prayer garden was developed in partnership with the local Catholic secondary school. The school enjoys very close and positive partnership with the parish.

## **The quality of the school's work in providing Catholic education**

The teaching of RE is good with evidence of some outstanding practice. Book trawls, pupil interviews and lesson observation indicate that teaching is effective and that pupils make at least good progress. Subject knowledge is good and those teachers who are not from the Catholic tradition are fully supported and informed by their colleagues. Teachers plan well and ensure a variety of activities which engage pupils and keep their interest therefore they find lessons enjoyable and engaging. Teachers manage behaviour extremely well. Pupils with special needs, disabilities, emotional and behaviour problems are supported effectively by dedicated and skilled learning assistants. The books are well presented and the quantity and quality of work found in them is good. Marking is thorough and at its best is closely linked to the RE learning objectives. Teachers make clear to pupils what they are expected to learn at the beginning of each unit and at the start of every lesson. All lessons observed during inspection involved prayer and time to reflect on learning. Teachers encourage thinking skills. Teachers listen to, observe and question pupils during lessons; this helps to develop and reshape activities thus providing clarification and improvement to learning. Good use is made of ICT in lessons and evidence of pupils using ICT can be found in books and on the display boards. Lessons are built upon pupils' prior knowledge. Teachers have high expectations and provide pupils with the support and resources they need to meet these expectations.

The time allocation for RE meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and the curriculum fulfils the *Curriculum Directory for Religious Education*. The pupils follow the diocesan *Strategy for Religious Education*; long term and medium planning is clear and explicit and monitored by the subject leader. The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors. Strategies are imaginative and engaging. Earlier this year the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the school's royal wedding celebrations which involved lots of role play and the 'royal couple' arriving at the parish church in a vintage Rolls Royce where they were greeted by the whole school (the royal guests). The parish priest 'married' the young couple and the occasion was used to teach about the beauty and solemnity of the Sacrament of Marriage. Pupils are starting to be taught about a variety of other faiths and have opportunities to participate in a huge range of extra curricular activities enabling them to have a range of experiences. Sacramental preparation is delivered in partnership with the parish. As part of this candidates for First Holy Communion visit Harvington Hall. *All That I Am*, the diocesan sex education and family life programme, is used in Years 5 and 6.

The provision of collective worship is outstanding. It is central to the life of the school and a key part of every school celebration. The environment for prayer is outstanding. The entrance, hall, prayer room, prayer garden and the classrooms are vibrant and rich with child friendly religious displays, pictures, wall hangings, statues and artefacts. Collective worship is greatly enhanced by the skill of the music teacher who inspires the children to sing with such joy and gusto. The children are familiar with a large repertoire of hymns and the music subject leader is deeply committed to providing the pupils with a wide variety of religious songs, from the more traditional to the modern. Weekly Mass is celebrated in a variety of ways, whole school Masses in the hall and church and also class Masses are provided. Both the Mass and assembly attended during inspection were of the highest quality keeping the pupils fully engaged and participating. There are frequent opportunities for all members of the school community to pray and worship together. The Wednesday Word and prayer bags help families to come together in prayer.