



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### ST ANNE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL CAVERSHAM, READING

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Inspection dates 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011  
Reporting Inspector Rev Michael Dolman

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School	Catholic Primary
Age range of pupils	4 - 11 years
Number on roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Tess Taylor
School address	Washington Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 5AA
Telephone number	0118 901 5537
E-mail address	head@st-annes.reading.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	July 2009
DCSF School Number	870 3302
Unique Reference Number	110003

**Headteacher** Mrs Káit Feeney-Nash

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector. The inspector visited 3 full religious education (RE) lessons to observe teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour. He held meetings with the parish priest, the chair of governors, the headteacher, the RE co-ordinator and groups of pupils. He observed the school's work, including Mass and assembly 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

St Anne's Catholic Primary school is situated in Lower Caversham and serves the parish of Our Lady and St Anne. There are 199 pupils on roll of whom 73% are baptised Catholic with other pupils coming from the Christian denominations and others being Muslim, Hindu or of no religion. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average and a majority are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the number of children eligible for free school meals is broadly average.

## Overall effectiveness of the school as a Catholic school

St Anne's is a good Catholic primary school where the mission to 'live, learn, love (and laugh!) together as children of God' is communicated especially in the way that all children are helped to belong to and participate in the school community, irrespective of their background or needs. This is reflected in the good progress made by pupils as they move through the key stages. Most pupils achieve average attainment, although some more able pupils reach above average attainment. Pupils benefit from the Catholic life of the school and recognise prayer and charitable concern as important features of Catholic life. They are diligent in their responsibilities and as they advance in years they mature in their ability to reflect upon and apply their faith in daily circumstances.

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good. Assessment procedures enable the school to monitor the progress that pupils make and to analyse standards reached. The RE curriculum provides suitable interest and challenge to pupils and is enriched with extra-curricular activities that allow pupils to reflect upon their faith and to appreciate the value of faith in the lives of those who come from different faith backgrounds. There is satisfactory provision for collective worship and the school is aware of the ways in which this can be further developed.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement in its RE and Catholic life is good. The school has made significant progress in addressing the areas identified for improvement during the last inspection. The school's self-evaluation is honest and accurate: it has good systems of monitoring and evaluating RE and Catholic life. The headteacher is animated in her commitment to the success of the school as part of the parish community and she is very well supported by a capable governing body and staff. Plans for further improvement for the school's Catholic life and RE are based upon a shared vision and commitment.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Train staff to prepare and lead class based prayer and liturgy.
- Provide training for staff, where necessary, to develop their subject knowledge and understanding.
- Develop assessment so that there is more substantial evidence of pupils' work to support judgements on progress and attainment.
- Develop the role of RE link governor.

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

Overall pupils make good progress as they move through both key stages and attainment is generally average, although some more able pupils demonstrate above average attainment. The majority of children begin the school with limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding and achieve average attainment with some that is above average. Pupils know some of the basic prayers of the Church and are able to write their own simple prayers of petition, thanksgiving and praise. They can sequence some bible stories and offer a simple re-tell of these using different genres. Children know that Jesus is the Son of God and that this is why he is able to perform miracles. They know the principal feasts and seasons of the Church's year and what they celebrate. They are able to name some of the Sacraments of the Church such as baptism, Holy Communion and marriage: during a conversation with Year 2 pupils they said that marriage is where a husband and wife promise to be together for ever to look after, care for and love each other. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress and attainment is average with some that is above average. Children understand prayer as an important way to know God. They have a deeper appreciation of sacred scripture and are able to ask relevant questions to explore its meaning. They know the Sacraments of the Church and of their importance for our lives of faith, allowing us to draw closer to God. Children have a basic knowledge of some world religions such as Hinduism and Islam and they make significant progress in reflecting upon the importance of their own faith. Children throughout the school enjoy their RE and are interested in learning more about the person of Christ and about the Catholic faith. The school's very good provision for pupils with SEN means that they are supported by members of staff and difficult behaviour is very well managed so that these children make good progress in RE.

Pupils' contribution to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school are good. Children respond very well to the Catholic ethos that is promoted throughout the school. The school mission, 'live, love, learn (and laugh!)' as children of God', is very much alive in their minds and hearts. They are quick to identify important aspects of school life that contribute to this such as the prayer life of the school, the school's environment, its link with the parish community and the charitable fundraising that goes on. Pupils value the school's Catholic identity and are diligent in their various contributions and responsibilities which include volunteering as altar servers, buddies, librarians, mediators, school councillors, house captains and sports leaders. As they move through the school they become more reflective and enquiring and are spontaneous in their fundraising for those who are in need. One Year 6 child was privileged to visit a school related project in India through which she was able to share important personal insights with the rest of her school community.

Pupils' response to collective worship is good. They appreciate the importance of prayer in their lives and recognise this as an important feature of the school's day. During times of prayer children participate with confidence, respect and reverence. They understand that prayer is expressed in different ways such as silence and joyful singing. Pupils have begun to play an active role in school collective worship composing and leading their own prayers and they demonstrate growing maturity in the prayers that they write. During school Masses pupils competently support the celebration as altar servers, readers, choir members and as members of the recorder group. Overall, collective worship makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

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

The leadership of the headteacher is good and she shows strong commitment to the mission of the Church and the contribution that the school makes to that mission in Caversham. Her hands-on approach provides critical inspiration for the development of Catholic life in the school. Since the last inspection, the review of the school mission has engaged teachers, parents, governors and pupils, generating a shared vision for the improvement of its work. There is a range of monitoring activities that allows the leadership team to plan for improvement: this has included staff prayer

time, important building works and the development of the outside environment. All members of the school community value its Catholic identity and they are encouraged to make their contribution. Non-Catholic staff are well supported by experienced Catholic members of staff.

The RE co-ordinator provides good leadership and management of the subject with support and oversight from the headteacher. There are good systems for monitoring and evaluating the subject that include lesson observations, book trawls and planning scrutiny. Feedback to staff on a collective and individual basis has led to improvements and the identification of priorities for the RE action plan. Good summative assessment allows pupils' progress to be tracked and appropriate intervention made where necessary. The gathering of pupils' work samples will help the school to gain a fuller picture of their progress and attainment. The RE co-ordinator offers good support to new members of staff on how to deliver the RE strategy. Resources have been updated to support the strategy: recently this has included new age-appropriate Bibles, RE artefacts and resources to support the new translation of the English Mass.

The governing body is mostly staffed by parishioners and includes members with a good range of professional backgrounds and relevant expertise. They are committed to the school's success, have a clear understanding of their role and provide good leadership and management. Governors are able to monitor and evaluate the school's Catholic life and RE through the headteacher's reports, monitoring visits to the school, and the annual Governors' Day. There is good formal and informal communication with parents and pupils through means such as the bi-annual governors' newsletter and interviews with groups of children. The role of the link governor for RE and Catholic life is established but the school acknowledges that this role requires further development.

The school's leadership promotes good community cohesion where there is a common sense of belonging based upon the value of each person as a child of God. This is evidenced particularly by the way that school works with and cares for those children with learning needs or challenging behaviour. Children from other cultural and religious backgrounds are given the opportunity to share their traditions in class or through the multicultural week and parents have willingly contributed to this project. The Catholic ethos of the school fosters very good relationships between all pupils irrespective of background. The good natural link with the parish is a strength of the school. The school also sustains good links with the Catholic secondary school and with the local Catholic school cluster.

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

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good. The lessons observed, pupil interviews and the book scrutiny show a variety of learning activities that are effective in maintaining pupils' interest and enjoyment of the subject. Where teaching is at its best there is good pace and questioning, challenging tasks matched to pupils' ability and teachers with good subject knowledge who are able to witness to their faith. Classroom management is very good and the teaching assistants are well deployed to support individuals and groups of pupils: consequently behaviour is good and pupils remain engaged in group and individual learning. Where teaching is less effective more substantial input on the subject in hand is required from the teacher before students begin the main task and pupils need to move beyond empathetic re-telling of scripture passages.

The school's quality of assessment in RE is good. Informal assessment takes place during the lesson and plenary activities allow pupils and staff to make judgements against the lesson's learning objectives. There is a good quality of marking that includes further questions for pupils and comments affirming their understanding of the learning objective. Analysis of end of unit assessment is used to check pupils' progress and to inform planning.

The RE curriculum is good. It meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference and good planning means that it builds upon pupils' prior knowledge and is appropriately customised to meet their needs and interests. A multicultural week draws upon the first-hand knowledge and experience of parents and provides opportunity for pupils to explore other world religions. Sacramental preparation programmes are successfully undertaken in collaboration with the parish: this includes

some Saturday workshops where pupils have the chance to work with children based in non-Catholic schools. The school maintains close communication with parents in the review of provision for sex and relationship education, respecting them as the first teachers of their children. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular opportunities that include a week in Wales with other local Catholic schools, a visit to Alton Castle and the annual Corpus Christi Mass and Blessed Sacrament Procession at Mapledurham House. These provide time for prayer and reflection and further enrich the good spiritual and moral development that the curriculum offers.

Provision for collective worship is satisfactory. There are regular times of prayer throughout the school day in class and whole school gatherings. Pupils make contributions to writing and reading some prayers for these assemblies but there are limited opportunities for them to take responsibility for planning and leading acts of collective worship. Children attend Mass regularly at the adjacent parish church either as class groups or as a whole school and parents are encouraged to attend whenever possible. There is good communication between the parish priest and the school to ensure that the liturgy is well prepared. The school's provision for collective worship and traditional devotions such as the Corpus Christi Blessed Sacrament procession reflects the seasons and feasts of the Church's year.