



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

SS MARY AND JOHN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Beaufort Road, Erdington, Birmingham, B23 7NB

Inspection date 3rd & 4th April 2017
Reporting Inspector Rose Brookes

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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| Type of School | Voluntary Aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3-11 years |
| Number on roll | 424 |
| Appropriate authority | The Governing Body |
| Chair of Governors | Mary Keelan |
| Telephone number | 0121 382 3522 |
| E-mail address | enquiry@stmryjon.bham.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | July 2013 |
| DFE School Number | 330 3350 |
| Unique Reference Number | 103442 |

Headteacher Matthew Emery - Executive Headteacher
Lisa Boland - Acting Headteacher

Previous inspection: Requires Improvement

This inspection: Good

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 11 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Most 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 the chair of governors, the link governor for RE, the executive headteacher, the acting headteacher, the RE subject leader and the parish priest.
- The inspector attended a whole school Mass and classroom 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.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning and learning journals.

Information about the school

- The school is situated in the parish of SS Mary and John and serves the community of Gravelly Hill, approximately 4 miles north-east of Birmingham City Centre.
- The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above the national average.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 46%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well above the national average.
- Attainment on entry is well below the national average.
- Since the last inspection there have been significant changes in staff. In September 2016 a temporary leadership structure was put in place. All teaching staff, except one, are new to the school since the last inspection.

Main Findings

- Strong, dedicated senior leadership and governance has led this school through a period of rapid development and progress ensuring that the school provides good standards in all areas of Catholic life and religious education.
- This inspection verifies that a programme of regular monitoring, evaluation and continual review means that the school knows its strengths and areas for development. This has helped it to lay firm foundations for the future.
- Inexperienced and non-Catholic staff have had regular professional development in the teaching of RE. This means that they are highly motivated to make RE lessons interesting and pupils enjoy their learning.
- In this very inclusive school, all staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to the pastoral and spiritual care of all the pupils and parents. The school, in partnership with the parish, provides a safe and loving Catholic environment where everyone can thrive.

- Collective worship is good. Pupils read with confidence, pray with reverence and sing with fervour. They are well supported by a dedicated parish priest.
- The school is working closely with the parish to provide innovative sacramental programmes that will catechize both pupils and their parents.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

- The Catholic life of the school is good.
- Good links have been re-established between the parish and the school. The parish priest has a very good relationship with the school.
- Innovative sacramental programmes have been implemented. These are starting to establish catechetical programmes for the parents and the pupils. The parish is becoming involved in these.
- The pupils have a tangible knowledge of the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile. It is a real focus of the Catholic life of the school. Pupils speak with passion about how their faith needs to be lived out in the way they treat others.
- There is high mobility of pupils at the school and new pupils are frequently admitted throughout the year. The schools' strong Catholic values lead them to embrace this opportunity to show love and compassion to others. Many new families are offered practical assistance by the Father Hudson's family support worker and the St Vincent de Paul. Pupils are welcoming to new comers and show a deep understanding of the need to open their hearts to all.
- Parents who have recently come to the area speak positively about how the school and parish of SS Mary and John have received them. Parents feel welcomed to attend whole school worship, Masses, assemblies and the sacramental programmes.
- Twice a year staff donate food and gifts to make Christmas parcels for deprived families of the school. The impact of this practical example of staff living out the school's Catholic values, is an improved Christmas for the families who would not otherwise be able to celebrate Christmas fully.
- Since September pupil behaviour has improved to a very good standard. The Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile, and the values and virtues it promotes, is being used successfully alongside the school's reward systems to act as an incentive to sustain this rapid improvement.
- Dedicated, hardworking staff deeply care for the wellbeing of all pupils and they continually provide good role modelling. This enables pupils to feel safe and loved in a Catholic environment.
- Class values and virtues books proudly display the variety of Catholic life and collective worship that takes place within the school. These books enable each class to celebrate and share their faith journey.
- In classrooms, all prayer areas have motivating displays that reflect the current liturgical season. These have contributed to pupils' knowledge of liturgical colours and important feasts and celebrations within the Church.
- The school governors and staff have reviewed and adapted the school mission statement so that it clearly reflects the Catholic ethos of the school. It is displayed prominently throughout the school. It now needs to be reviewed with pupils to ensure it can be easily recalled and understood by them.
- Collective worship is good.

- Pupil, staff and governors' continual evaluation of collective worship has contributed to its rapid improvement.
- During whole school Masses pupils read well, sing with reverence and serve on the altar. Key stage assemblies are led well by staff.
- Pupils actively participate and lead prayers in key stage assemblies and class collective worship. This has been evaluated by the RE leader and RE link governor.
- Prayer is shared with parents and pupils at sacramental preparation classes. Throughout the liturgical year pupils participate in key stage school retreats. This is enabling the school community to deepen its prayer life.
- Key Stage 2 pupils lead the hymns and liturgy at the YMCA during Christmas and Easter with other faith groups in the local community. This has enabled pupils to respect other faiths and cultures and it has deepened their own faith.
- In partnership with the parish, the school has started to re-establish some of the traditional forms of prayer. This has strengthened the prayer life of the school and is giving pupils more opportunities to lead prayer.
- To further raise standards in Catholic life, teachers need to recognise and develop their responsibility to contribute to pupils' vocational development across the whole curriculum.
- Pupils are now ready to support the Catholic life and collective worship of the school through pupil led initiatives. This could take the form of pupil liturgy or chaplaincy groups.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- The leadership of the Catholic life and collective worship is good.
- The executive headteacher and his dedicated senior leadership team have quickly implemented a systematic monitoring and evaluative programme for Catholic life and worship.
- School developmental planning is founded on this sound evidence. Development in all areas has been rapid and systematic. All changes are continually measured for their impact on pupils and the Catholic school and parish community.
- The governing body has a significant role within the school. They are committed to supporting staff and appreciate the improvements that have been made in the last nine months.
- The chair and vice-chair have delivered whole school training about vision and values of the Catholic community. This has motivated staff, governors and parish to work more closely to fulfil the school's mission.
- A recently appointed link governor for RE is very committed and since September she has been pro-active in monitoring and evaluating worship, Catholic life and RE. Consequently, the governors are well informed and have a growing involvement in the development of these areas of school life.
- The RE subject leader has up-dated and trained governors in all areas of Catholic life. As a result, the governors know the school's strengths and the areas for development. A focused plan is in place to continue with the rapid developments that have already taken place.
- The acting headteacher has successfully led staff training about the key elements of collective worship and developing prayer with pupils. The impact of this has been that

all teaching staff are now confident to lead key stage assemblies and take part in Masses.

- The Catholic life of SS Mary's and John's is strongly led by the executive headteacher and his dedicated senior leadership team who have had to challenge some extreme behaviour from pupils and parents. Behaviour around school is now of a very high standard. Parents are happy with the excellent progress that the school has made.
- The school has established a safe, friendly environment with well-behaved and highly motivated pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education are all good.
- The senior leadership team have implemented a systematic monitoring and evaluative programme for RE teaching and learning. This means that newly appointed staff have had immediate support with the planning and teaching of RE.
- The RE subject leader has up-dated and trained governors in all areas of RE so that the governors have an oversight of religious education and fulfil their statutory duty well.
- Senior leadership keep the governors well informed and ensure that they know what the school needs to do to improve in RE. Governors have participated in joint staff and governor training; they ask challenging questions about how RE standards can continue to improve.
- Since September there has been a focused programme for staff development, much of which been delivered by the RE subject leader. This has contributed significantly to the consistently high standard of marking and feedback provided by teachers. Dedicated time for pupils to respond to this feedback has enhanced their understanding of RE.
- Teaching of RE is mostly good, and is outstanding in some years.
- It is a growing strength of the school that many class teachers work together to improve their teaching and learning. The rapid staff development for RE is successfully led by the RE subject leader, the acting headteacher and the deputy headteacher. As a result, teachers have grown in confidence and are enthusiastic about teaching RE.
- To raise standards, some teachers need to improve their RE subject knowledge. In some lessons pace could be faster and learning could be more stimulating and memorable.
- Standards in RE compare favourably to English and the volume of work in all classes is good. Pupils' work in their RE books is of a good standard and it indicates the use of an appropriate range of resources and strategies to promote good learning.
- Upper Key Stage 2 pupils are encouraged to be reflective and enquiring. During RE lessons they are encouraged to ask questions about the world and the part they play in it. During the inspection, some outstanding teaching involving higher level questioning was observed.

- Throughout the school pupils can speak with conviction about how they have enjoyed learning in RE. During the inspection pupils spoke specifically about the psalms and how they have been able to relate them to the events in their everyday lives. They also spoke about their understanding of Bible stories and stated, 'This went very deep'.
- Pupils do their very best in RE lessons. They are interested and highly motivated and most importantly they know how to put their beliefs into practice in the way they behave and their attitude towards each other. They are considerate and kind to those in need. Pupils' behaviour has improved to a very good standard.
- Engaging RE lessons encourage the pupils to ask questions and to think philosophically about their lives. This deeper understanding of their faith and Gospel values helps them realise that they need to forgive and to be forgiven.
- All teachers have a performance management objective for RE and they discuss RE at pupil progress meetings. As a result, pupil progress for all groups is improving.
- The school has successfully worked hard to improve attainment for non-Catholic pupils.
- The school has addressed the key issue from the previous Section 48 inspection regarding attainment of high achievers. Attainment for this group across the school is now outstanding.
- Well over half of pupils are entitled to pupil premium with the vast majority of this group achieving in line with, and in some cases, better than non-pupil premium pupils.
- The school's analysis of assessment data rightly shows that SEND pupils and boys are still below age related expected levels of attainment.
- Every term, a focus week is taught in each year group about a world faith. This helps pupils to gain an understanding of the beliefs and practices of other religions.
- The learning environment enhances the teaching of RE.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Review the school's mission statement with pupils to ensure that they can understand its meaning and implement it in their lives.
- Promote a whole school focus on pupils' vocational development.
- Raise standards in RE teaching and learning by ensuring that new staff develop their RE subject knowledge.
- Increase the number of all pupils, but especially boys and pupils with SEND, achieving age related expectations for RE.