



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

St MARY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Daventry Road

Southam

Warwickshire

CV47 1PS

Inspection date	15 th and 16 th November 2016
Reporting Inspector	Maureen O'Leary
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	89
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Andrew Lambe
Telephone number	01926812512
E-mail address	admin3505@welearn365.com
Date of previous inspection	November 2013
DFE School Number	9373505
Unique Reference Number	125708

Headteacher **Jane Price**

Previous inspection: 3

This inspection: 2



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 2 RE lessons (four age groups,) to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning, and assessment. Both of these lessons were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- 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, parents, and the headteacher (who is also the RE subject leader.)
- The inspector attended a whole school assembly, a class collective worship, the lunchtime liturgy group and undertook an environmental 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, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

Information about the school

- St Mary's is a smaller than average primary school with a nursery within the parish of Our Lady and St Wulstan, Southam, Warwickshire. Pupils who attend the school live in the market town of Southam and the surrounding rural district. The area has a mixture of private and social housing with some rural deprivation.
- The number of pupils belonging to minority ethnic heritage groups is below the national average.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 48%.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below expectations.
- Pupils are taught in mixed age classes.
- Since the last inspection, a new subject lead for religious education has been appointed and all the teaching staff, except the headteacher, are newly appointed.
- The headteacher teaches for two days a week and is also the current RE subject leader.

Main Findings

- St Mary's school is clearly focused on "Inspiring children to love learning" within a happy, caring, Catholic school community.
- Pupils, staff, governors and parents value and promote the Catholic ethos of the school and are very proud of it. All are committed to making St Mary's the best possible Catholic school it can be.
- Strategic and committed leadership from the head teacher and governors over the last three years has enabled the school to make good progress since the previous inspection.

- The standard of Catholic life and collective worship of the school has been successfully maintained as good, even though the expectations by the diocese of provision and outcomes in these areas has risen.
- Significant progress has been made in RE so that the provision and outcomes for RE are now good. Through regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, the head teacher has improved standards in RE since the last inspection.
- The leadership of the school has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has implemented appropriate improvement plans to develop the school further.
- The regular celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of the school community.
- The pastoral care of pupils, based on the principle that all children are made in the image and likeness of God, is a strength of the school.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

- The school's provision and outcomes for Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development are all good. Although vocational development is good, it is not as strong as other areas of Catholic life.
- Staff and governors at the school have a strong commitment to promoting the Catholic ethos of the school. They are steadfast in their resolve to educate the whole child to know and live by Catholic values.
- The school has recently consulted pupils, parents, and governors as it reviewed the school's mission and mission statement. Although the mission statement is not overtly Catholic in its language, most pupils and parents understand that it is inspired by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Further refinement of the language of the mission statement could take place so that the explicit Catholic mission of the school is more evident to all key stakeholders and the wider public.
- During the inspection, a number of parents expressed the view that the school teaches their children to live out Catholic values and helps them to grow in faith.
- The school environment actively promotes Catholic values, uses appropriate and carefully chosen religious artefacts, and proclaims the liturgical seasons of the Church. As a result, pupils have a good knowledge of the key celebrations and liturgical seasons of the Church's year.
- The central altar in the hall is a focal point for the whole school and constantly displays relevant religious artefacts.
- Each class has a prominent prayer space which correctly reflects the liturgical seasons of the Church and is a visual focus for class collective worship. This resource has contributed to pupils' good knowledge of the liturgical seasons and traditional prayers.
- Pupils learn different traditional prayers in each year group and these are displayed on or around their class prayer focus. This means that by the time pupils leave the school they know a range of traditional Catholic prayers.
- Pupils in all classes, from Reception class to Year 6, regularly participate actively in and lead daily prayers in the mornings, at lunchtime and in the evening. Some classes vary their lunchtime prayer by using interactive prayer dice. As a result, they understand that prayer is a fundamental aspect of the school day which sustains their school community.

- Each class has a prayer tree on which they can display individual prayers that they have composed themselves. This opportunity to share prayers is well used and greatly valued by pupils, reflecting their personal response to God in their everyday lives. During the inspection pupils chose voluntarily to stay in at lunchtime to compose and display prayers on their class prayer tree.
- Mass is celebrated regularly in school and is seen as an integral part of Catholic life. Mass is attended by parents and members of the parish. Parishioners are also invited to attend the school's celebration of the Stations of the Cross and the May Procession. These events have helped to foster good links with the parish.
- The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils during acts of collective worship is reverent and reflective. Consequently, pupils are able to respond to the key messages that are listened to during whole school collective worship. Some very young pupils would benefit from attending whole school collective worship for a shorter period of time.
- The school has purchased excellent resources to provide music for collective worship. This has enabled pupils to be engaged and to sing joyfully during times of worship.
- A member of the parish and school community has established a very devout liturgy group which meets regularly each week. The groups' participation in these high quality prayer sessions is outstanding. They now have all the qualities, skills, and enthusiasm to lead collective worship for the whole school.
- After suitable training from adults, pupils of all ages should now be given opportunities to plan collective worship in their own classes.
- Pupils understand that God wants them to serve one another, and the school council has the responsibility of deciding which charities the school will support each year. The school has raised money for many charities, such as the Father Hudson society and CAFOD.
- The devoted pastoral care of pupils by staff has resulted in improved pupil behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and the impact of their behaviours on others. The role model of the head teacher has been instrumental in this development. One pupil explained to the inspector: *'If we fall out Mrs Price helps us. She listens to everybody's side of the story. She teaches us to say sorry and to forgive each other because that's what Jesus did.'*
- As pupils move through the school they have the opportunity to learn about a number of other world faiths and cultures. The school has recently invested in resources to support this area of the curriculum. Pupils also take part in a range of activities with other local schools during Black History Month. Consequently, pupils are respectful about people of other faiths or none and other cultures. The school plans to further develop this aspect of the Catholic life of the school in the coming academic year.
- The staff have conducted a Catholic life audit and have rightly identified that the pupils' understanding of vocation is an area for improvement.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship are both good.

- The head teacher and governors view their responsibility for promoting and maintaining the Catholic ethos of the school as their first priority as leaders.
- The governing body is regularly informed about the provision and outcomes of Catholic life, collective worship, and RE in the school through a growing range of formal and informal monitoring and evaluation. Formally, the head teacher's report to governors and informally, the school newsletter, provide valuable information to governors.
- The school has in place a long term strategic plan for the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life.
- A dedicated RE link governor meets with the head teacher to discuss current diocesan advice and resources. She also participates in the monitoring and evaluation process. She has taken part in the formal monitoring of books, participated in learning walks and has attended pupil interviews and a variety of collective worship. During the learning walks and pupil interviews, aspects of Catholic life, collective worship, and RE were explored by the governor. She also has a very good understanding of the current professional developmental needs of staff to enhance teaching in RE.
- Many governors also informally monitor collective worship through their regular attendance at school services and liturgies. Consequently, the governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school in this area.
- The governors rightly identify the head teacher/ RE subject leader's perceptive and accurate evaluation of the school as a strength in improving the school further.
- The school development plan, in which RE is the first priority, is monitored termly by the head teacher and governors against set milestones at full governing body meetings.
- Although the RE self-evaluation form has been discussed in detail with the RE link governor, it now needs to be shared formally with all governors at least once a year.
- The governors ensure that the head teacher's performance management targets include an objective directly related to the Catholic life of the school.
- The head teacher and the governors of the school have prioritised the successful induction and ongoing support for teachers who are new to teaching in a Catholic school. This has resulted in newly appointed staff being able to actively support the Catholic life of the school, plan and lead collective worship, and to deliver good quality RE teaching. This has been achieved through appropriate attendance at diocesan training for new staff and by ongoing formal and informal support from the head teacher.
- The school has been working successfully with other local Catholic primary schools and the local Catholic secondary school through the Central Warwickshire Catholic Pathway. There is strong leadership support amongst the head teachers of this group.
- Although the school teaches relationships and sex education to pupils in line with the teachings of the Catholic Church, the current Sex and Relationships Education Policy does not reflect this practice.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- The leadership, outcome, and provision for religious education are all good.
- Both the head teacher and governors prioritise RE as a core subject and the school fulfils all the requirements of the Bishops' conference.
- Sufficient and appropriate resources have been allocated to RE which have contributed to the improved quality of teaching.
- The RE subject lead has established processes to monitor RE provision and outcomes through scheduled pupil interviews, lesson observations, book scrutinies and planning scrutinies. Findings from these monitoring activities are evaluated carefully and the key areas of strength and any areas for development are feedback to staff and inform future improvement planning. This schedule of monitoring and evaluation has enabled staff to directly improve teaching and learning in RE.
- The school's own self-assessment of teaching, and all teaching seen during the inspections, is judged to be good or better.
- A strength of the school has been their support of teachers with no experience of teaching in a Catholic school. Through attendance at diocesan training, provision of key resources, and on-going internal support from the RE subject lead, staff are able to teach RE with confidence, skill, and with good subject knowledge.
- Pupils' attainment in RE is regularly assessed against age related expectations in accordance with diocesan recommendations. The school conducts a baseline assessment in Reception class which informs the teacher's future planning. Key groups needing targeted support are identified.
- The RE curriculum meets the needs of pupils. It is based on the diocesan scheme, *'Learning and Growing as the People of God,'* and follows its recommendations in terms of planning and assessment.
- Teacher's written feedback often engages pupils in questions about their faith. However, these thought-provoking questions are not always responded to by pupils.
- Pupils' oral and written responses in RE clearly demonstrate their good subject knowledge and that they make good progress in each year group and across phases.
- Teachers have made some excellent cross curricular links with RE. This was especially evident in the Year 5/6 class where pupils learnt about St Maximillian Kolbe as part of their World War II history work. Pupils had a profound understanding about how St Maximillian Kolbe's actions were motivated by his belief in Jesus Christ.
- Pupils regularly link their learning in RE to their own lives; they can discuss confidently how Catholic values learnt in RE lessons inform their own actions.
- Teachers plan a wide range of stimulating activities in RE which has resulted in pupils greatly enjoying their lessons.
- Most pupils are reflective and enquiring during their RE lessons. During the inspection, pupils were engaged in collaborative peer and whole class discussions where they were able to question and explain their thinking coherently. These qualities would be enhanced further by the increased opportunity to write at length in RE to develop pupils' responses to questions about their faith.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Refine the mission statement so that it promotes the explicit Catholic mission of the school.
- Involve all pupils in planning collective worship.
- Develop pupils understanding of vocation.
- Formally discuss the RE self-evaluation form with all governors at least once a year so that they have a thorough understanding of the provision, impact, strengths and areas for development of the Catholic life, RE and collective worship of the school.
- Review the Sex and Relationships Policy so that it reflects the diocesan model policy.
- Promote pupils learning from religion through their response to written feedback from teachers and by giving them more opportunities to write at length.