



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newtown Rd, Malvern WR14 1PF

Inspection date 10-11 November 2016

Reporting Inspector Denis Cody
Assistant Inspector Christine Finnegan

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	169
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Mrs Pamela Taylor
Telephone number	01684 573016
E-mail address	office@stjoesmalvern.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	December 2011
DFE School Number	885 3358
Unique Reference Number	116901

Headteacher Mrs Therese Langford

Previous inspection: 2

This inspection: 2

Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors.
- 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 inspectors observed teaching across three RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All of these lessons were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors 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 headteacher, subject leader and parish priest.
- The inspectors attended two prayer services 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 inspectors 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 Joseph's is a smaller than average size primary school in the parish of St Joseph in Malvern.
- Most pupils are from a white British background, with a smaller than average proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Currently 22% of pupils are baptised Catholics.
- The degree of pupil disadvantage is similar to that of most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Attainment on entry is below national expectations.
- From the beginning of this term the school has abandoned mixed-age classes in favour of single-age classes.
- There have been continuous staffing changes since the last inspection, especially during the last twelve months. A new headteacher was appointed in May 2016, having served as acting head for two terms. There is also an acting assistant head, and a new RE leader was appointed last Easter.

Main Findings

- Throughout a difficult period, Catholic life has remained a strength of the school. Leaders have continued to foster and promote a strong and effective Catholic life and ethos, understood and valued by staff, pupils and governors, within which pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is prioritised.
- The quality of collective worship is good. Public and private worship is woven into the school day and is an integral part of school life.
- Pupils have a good knowledge, understanding and experience of RE and its relevance to their daily lives, but there are gaps in historical data relating to attainment and progress.

- School leaders are committed to all aspects of Catholic life and RE, both of which are essential elements in all school self-assessment and improvement planning.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

- The school's commitment to its Catholic ethos and the importance attributed to all forms of worship ensure that Catholic life is good. This is reflected in the school's, promotion of spiritual and moral development, and in the environment it fosters of care and support for and between pupils.
- Pupils know and respect the fact that St Joseph's is a Catholic school. They can discuss the implications of this for their behaviour, attitudes and relationships.
- Following in-service training for governors and staff at the beginning of this academic year, the school mission statement was reviewed and rewritten with the involvement of pupils and parents. The pupil-friendly motto, "Together we Love, Live and Learn," is now displayed in classrooms and around the school. Even the youngest children are able to talk about its meaning and what they have to do to make it a reality.
- Children respond positively to the opportunities provided for them to play an active part in the Catholic life of the school through helping others within and beyond the school community. For example, as prefects or members of the school council, they support younger children in praying during Masses and assemblies, and as play leaders in the playground they help young children play together as friends, ensuring no-one is left out. A school choir entertains senior citizens at a local residential home, pupils raise funds for charities such as Cafod and food is collected and donated to local food banks.
- Their active involvement and interest in Catholic life and worship is shown in the prominent part children are playing in the planning and design of a prayer garden which is being developed in the school grounds. They do not, however, play a significant role in the evaluation of Catholic life in the school.
- Catholic life also encompasses support for staff spirituality. Staff meetings begin with prayer and to emphasise and support their role within the Catholic life of the school there are plans to hold a spiritual retreat for staff.
- Provision of collective worship is good. Regular prayer and reflection time is built into the school day, and Catholic ethos and teachings are reinforced through school and class Masses, prayer services and assemblies. Each class has its own prayer area, a focus for classroom prayer, which reflects the liturgical season, special feast days or celebrations or the current RE topic. As a result pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical seasons and celebrations of the Church's year.
- Parents are invited to attend prayer services, assemblies and school Masses, and through distribution of the *Wednesday Word* families are encouraged to discuss together the gospel themes of Sunday Masses, which are revisited in school the following week.
- Pupils are reflective and reverent during collective worship and eager to participate by reading or composing prayers, answering questions or through their singing and acting.
- Although children often lead prayers at assemblies or special Masses and have sometimes been encouraged to reflect on the message after taking part in collective worship, they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop the skills of planning, leading and evaluating worship independently.

- Children are familiar with a variety of prayer forms and styles. They learn traditional prayers and can write their own personal prayers and psalms. During Mass they volunteer spontaneous bidding prayers.
- Presented within a Catholic context, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is good. Its impact can be seen in the children's growing confidence in discussing their understanding of right and wrong and the need for forgiveness, as well as in their ability to relate to the feelings of others.
- Pupils are able to discuss their views and beliefs and how these impact on their daily lives.
- Pupils understand vocation as a duty to provide help and support for others and this underpins their charitable work and fundraising activities. In this context the school has joined with others in Malvern to establish a link with a school in Tanzania. Staff have visited the school and were able to send back video clips and photographs. This link helps to develop the children's cultural understanding as well as providing practical help to children in the Third World.
- Catholic Christian values, founded on gospel teachings, are taught through the diocesan '*Values and Virtues*' programme. These values are taught in school assemblies, displayed around the school and reinforced in class lessons, supported by diocesan teaching materials.
- The Year of Mercy has also provided a learning focus for pupils in their understanding of how we should respond to others.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- Leadership of all aspects of Catholic life and collective worship is good. Leaders are committed to the Catholic mission of the school and they understand the importance of accurate self-evaluation.
- After a period of uncertainty and significant staff change, last term saw the appointment of a new headteacher and RE leader. Together with the governing body they share a vision and ambition for the school, central to which is support for and promotion of its distinctive Catholic nature and ethos.
- The headteacher and governors assume responsibility for leading and developing the Catholic life of the school. They have carried out audits of Catholic life in the school and of physical evidence of Catholicity throughout the school building. These have been reported to the governing body and have contributed to school improvement planning, for instance in the case of the planned development of an outdoor prayer garden.
- A governor-led report on Catholic life and collective worship was carried out following a learning walk, assembly observation and interviews with staff and pupils.
- Governors know the school well through regular attendance at school assemblies, celebrations and Masses where they can observe pupils' involvement in worship and with one another. They also carry out learning walks in school, meet with the headteacher and subject leader and have interviewed pupils.
- To maintain and promote the quality of Catholic life, school leaders ensure it is included in staff training and induction, sometimes attended by governors as well as teaching staff.
- The headteacher and chair of governors attended the diocesan School Leadership Conference, working together to develop ideas on promoting forgiveness and mercy in school. Governors have also visited Our Lady and St Hubert's in Oldbury, a Catholic teaching school, to see and discuss how its Catholic nature can be embedded throughout school life.

- Governors are kept fully informed of developments in Catholic life through termly reports from the headteacher. They are confident in questioning and holding school leaders to account. The headteacher meets half-termly with an RE governor, with feedback provided to staff and included in the head's report to governors.
- Targets for Catholic life and collective worship are included in the RE action plan, which stands alongside the school improvement plan, and is agreed with governors and continually monitored throughout the year by the headteacher, assistant head and RE leader. A Catholic life target is also included in the performance management arrangements of all staff, including the headteacher.
- Collective worship is reviewed and monitored by senior leaders. The headteacher carries out a half termly observation of an act of worship in school and feedback is given to staff. Prayer tables are monitored throughout the year, also with written and verbal feedback to staff.
- The headteacher and RE leader have worked closely with the RE Department to promote Catholic life in the school. Following a series of reviews supported by the school's diocesan RE adviser, changes were made to the timetable of school collective worship to introduce more prayer services in classes, and phase assemblies led by all teachers were introduced along with greater opportunities for extended classroom worship.
- The RE leader, though new to the post and still receiving training herself, provides good support for teachers in planning and delivering prayer services. She has introduced new planning templates and a set of relevant prayers for each year group to introduce and use. Staff have recently received training on providing effective liturgy in the classroom.
- The school self-evaluation document was produced by the headteacher and then discussed and agreed with governors. Leaders now need to use this document to establish a stronger focus linking monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning. Review of different sections of this document should be a regular agenda item at staff and governor meetings.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education are all good.
- The new headteacher and leadership team have made a strong start, identifying and beginning to address significant long term areas for development, and also making an immediate impact on teaching and learning in the school.
- The leadership team inherited a situation in which Key Stage 2 comprised three mixed-age classes without clear records showing how the RE curriculum had been delivered. From the beginning of this term single-age classes have been introduced throughout the school and curriculum delivery is illustrated in the long term curriculum plan.
- Governors are fully involved in monitoring and planning for RE through reports to committee and governor meetings. They take part in regular book trawls to monitor curriculum coverage, teaching and learning and pupil attainment and progress. All such information is shared with governors at curriculum meetings. The parish priest is a regular visitor to classrooms supporting and delivering RE teaching.
- School leaders have worked closely with the diocesan RE adviser in their self-review processes to ensure they have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development upon which to base their RE improvement planning.

- Following a review of RE, an action plan was drawn up prioritising development of the RE leader's role, and ensuring consistency and accuracy in assessment of pupils' work and in planning and monitoring of RE. Each of these areas is being carefully addressed but it is too soon to identify any positive impact.
- Formal assessment of pupils' work is carried out three times a year in line with diocesan recommendations. To ensure consistency and accuracy in marking, staff have worked together to level work samples using the *National Levels of Attainment*, and with colleagues from teaching schools to carry out collaborative moderation exercises.
- Attainment data has been analysed to compare performance of different classes and of different groups within each class. However, this data could be used more effectively. With more ownership of their own class data, collecting and analysing it throughout the year, teachers would have immediate feedback on their teaching and planning and could intervene quickly to support individuals or groups of children as necessary.
- Because last year's Key Stage 2 attainment data referred to mixed age classes which no longer exist, and as no historic data is available, in the short term, attainment data will be of limited use in supporting judgements about pupil progress over time.
- The judgement that attainment is good across the school is supported by last year's data which indicated that for all groups performance in RE was similar to that in other core subjects, despite the low starting point for religious knowledge and experience indicated by baseline records on entry to school. It is also reflected in the confidence with which children discuss their learning in RE and what it means in their lives.
- Supported by the headteacher, the new subject leader has made an effective start in the role, focusing on improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment of RE, while continuing her own training. Staff meetings have been held to review planning, to discuss the scheme of work and how to approach different units and how best to teach the skills associated with Attainment Target 2, learning from religion. She has also produced curriculum folders for each class containing resources for planning and assessment.
- A high priority is given to induction, training and support for newly qualified, inexperienced and non-Catholic staff. They receive support in the classroom and with planning, and are able to observe the lessons of more experienced teachers. In addition, they all attend diocesan training courses in understanding and delivery of the RE curriculum.
- The school's judgement that teaching in RE is good is supported by pupil interviews in which they discuss their learning and their understanding of RE, by book trawls in which their work is scrutinised and compared to their literacy work, and by the lessons observed during the inspection.
- School leaders have drawn up a programme of lesson observations to supplement the current self-evaluation processes in RE but these have not yet taken place and there are no records of previous observations.
- Teachers promote learning through strategic questioning, verbal feedback and challenging marking. In the best lessons observed by the inspectors work was carefully planned to meet the learning needs of all pupils. Pupils report that they enjoy RE lessons and the varied activities, such as drama that are included in the lessons. This is reinforced by their written work and their enthusiasm to contribute to lessons.
- 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.

- Governors and school leaders strongly support the pivotal position of RE in the school curriculum. They ensure that the requirements of the Bishops' Conference are met in terms of curriculum time for RE and that the RE leader has the same curriculum support time as leaders of other core subjects.
- Catholic Christian virtues and values are incorporated into the curriculum.
- The curriculum offers support for sacramental preparation which is not delivered in school but through the parish.
- The curriculum is enhanced by outside speakers and representatives of different agencies, for example to support teaching about vocation and family life and sex education. Teaching about other faiths and cultures involves visits to other places of worship.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Provide opportunities for pupils to play an active part in monitoring Catholic life and collective worship, and to plan and lead collective worship independently.
- Carry out and make use of extended analysis of RE attainment data with greater involvement of class teachers.
- Incorporate the school self-evaluation document, with input from school leaders, governors and staff, into the improvement planning process for all aspects of Catholic life and RE, clearly linking review, evaluation and improvement planning.