



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

BISHOP WALSH CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Part of the St. John Paul II Multi-Academy

Wylde Green Road, Sutton Coldfield, Birmingham B76 1QT

Inspection date 3rd-4th October 2016

Reporting Inspector Louisa Craig
Assisting Inspector Rachel Waugh

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	11-18 years
Number on roll	1021
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair of Governors	Fr. Neil Bayliss
Telephone number	01213513215
E-mail address	enquiry@bishopwalsh.net
Date of previous inspection	September 2011
DFE School Number	3304661
Unique Reference Number	140524

Principal **Mr John Farrell**

Previous inspection: 1

This inspection: 1

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 10 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They also completed a spiritual, moral and vocational (SMV) learning walk across the school.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, collective worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with representatives of the academy committee and the board of directors, the principal, senior leaders, the person in charge of Catholic life (PICCL), the leadership team within RE, the priest chaplain, the chaplaincy co-ordinator and the lead for spiritual, moral and vocational development (SMV) across the school.
- The inspectors attended form tutor time, year group assemblies, staff briefing and a charity event. They also undertook a learning walk with the head boy and head girl 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 school development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

Information about the school

- Bishop Walsh Catholic School is an average-sized secondary school and has a sixth form. The school forms part of the St. John II Multi-Academy. The school is situated in the parish of Holy Cross and St Francis Sutton Coldfield. There are currently 1021 students on roll.
- Many of the pupils are of White British background and the school has a lower than average intake of pupils of minority ethnic heritage.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 99%.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and disability with a statement or education, health care plan is in line with the national average; the proportion supported by the school is below the national average.
- On entry to the school the attainment of pupils is significantly above the national average.
- Since the last inspection the school has become part of the St. John Paul II Multi-Academy. There has been a new leadership structure in RE, and there is a new priest chaplain.

Main Findings

- The Catholic life of the school is outstanding. Witness to Catholic life and tradition permeate the whole school and a Catholic ethos is clearly evident in the relationships between all stakeholders. Pupils live out the school's mission statement to 'love one

another as I have loved you'. They are very proud to be part of this special family and Catholic community. This fosters a spirit of true Christianity throughout the school.

- Leaders and governors demonstrate an outstanding and deep commitment to the Church's mission in education. This permeates constantly throughout the school community. Staff are excellent role models and consistently display enthusiasm and high expectations at all times. This is particularly evident during collective worship and the teaching of Religious Education. The school's relentless commitment to rigorous self-evaluation ensures that all aspects of the school's life are continually reflected upon. This results in the formation of accurate plans for continuous improvement throughout the school year and beyond.
- Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Staff ensure pupils develop a sense of awe and wonder about and inspiration from the person of Jesus Christ through planned collective worship in school. They enable pupils to examine and reflect upon their own individual faith journey.
- Attainment at Key Stage 4 is outstanding. The school has robust plans in place to maintain the exceptional progress pupils make in Religious Education with the changing curriculum. The attainment at GCSE is above the diocesan average. At Key Stage 3, attainment is again outstanding. Tracking of pupil progress is well developed and enables underachievement to be identified early and intervention to be put in place. All learners make excellent progress, gaining knowledge and understanding at all Key Stages; positive attitudes to learning were seen across the department. All pupils welcome opportunities to extend and deepen their religious learning, are confident in their use of specialist vocabulary, and demonstrate excellent religious literacy. Pupils enjoy religious education lessons and take pride in their work. They are happy to engage in whatever is being asked of them – whole class discussion, group and independent work. They think ethically and theologically and are open to listening to the beliefs of others.
- Leadership at all levels in religious education has a clear vision for the department and there is a committed team who share this vision. The structure of leadership is delivering high standards of achievement in all areas. Relationships between members of the department are strong and supportive. There is an embedded culture of sharing ideas and practices, which ensures consistency across the department and a collegiate approach which pupils recognise as being a strength of the department. Expectations of both staff and pupils are high and there is a committed drive to further improve progress and achievement.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

- Catholic life in the school is outstanding. There are excellent structured and systematic processes in place for self-review which support the school's drive for excellence.
- The school's membership of the St. John Paul II Multi- Academy has developed a greater understanding for pupils across the company of how virtues and values impact on their daily life.
- Joint action planning by the principals of the four schools of the academy has led to strengthened collaboration and is promoting the sharing of best practice.
- The school provides a wide range of activities and opportunities to support the personal development of pupils. All students are given the opportunity to participate in residential retreats as well as outreach retreats. Pastoral care is a real strength of the school and staff ensure that no pupil is overlooked. Through this care the school community witnesses daily to living out the gospel values. Consequently, pupils are happy, confident and secure in developing spiritually and emotionally.
- Parents talk positively about the school; they are very grateful for the opportunities provided by the school to support their children's spiritual and moral development believing the school to be a very caring community. Regular communication through the pupil planners, website and the school parent view tool demonstrates the strong support of parents.
- Pupils play a full and active part in the Catholic life of the school. The chaplaincy team help prepare for Mass in school and plan and lead assemblies and Masses for other year groups. The pupils describe their role as 'an important role that supports liturgy, prayer and the Catholic life of the school'. It is important that the work of this team is included in the Catholic Life monitoring and evaluation cycle.
- The provision of collective worship is outstanding. Prayer and collective worship are intrinsic to the daily life of the school. There is a well-structured programme, which provides the basis of the prayer life of the school.
- There is a range of opportunities available to both staff and students and participation levels are high. Hymn Karaoke and Youtube samples are used to encourage singing and hymn practice is a feature of this year's assembly calendar.
- A range of media technology, used during collective worship, augments the experience and engagement of all pupils especially in the well-resourced chapel and main hall and dance studio. Pupils are provided with opportunities which are well planned and strive to promote private thought and reflection.
- Pupils are generous in support of others in need and have a well-developed sense of justice both within the school community and beyond. This is evidenced by the school raising money each year for a variety of local, national and international causes, including support for the 'Feed my lambs' project in Uganda.

- SMV and its context were made explicit across the curriculum and carefully linked; this broadens pupils' experience and makes it relevant. A recent audit has reviewed provision across the curriculum and has clearly identified further strengths and areas for development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is outstanding. The school successfully promotes respect; tolerance and compassion, ensuring that all pupils develop into well rounded moral human beings who model their lives on the example of Christ. The recent in-house fund-raising activities for Lepra and the McMillian Coffee morning are some examples.
- Spiritual, moral and vocational reflections in form time are based on gospel values and provide pupils with the opportunity to discuss prayer. This develops the pupils respect for others and this is clearly evident in lessons across the school community.
- Gospel value trees are used as a reminder to 'love one another 'and for pupils to aspire to be more. Aspire stickers are awarded to pupils in recognition of service and or compassion. This encourages students to put their faith into action in accord with the Catholic social teachings of respecting the life and dignity of the human person, responding to the call to participate in the family and community, placing priority on the needs of the poor and the most vulnerable, building unity among people, and caring for all of God's creation.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to recognise gospel values in everyday life through their yellow reflection pages in their diaries. This activity prepares students to be agents of change and of social transformation at the service of the common good.
- Pupils in the sixth form are positive role models for younger students and their Catholic identity is at the centre of all their endeavours. All pupils complete a minimum of 10 hours Christian duty across the year, showing a commitment to serve God and his people with their time, energy and gifts, some students have been successful in being awarded the Pope St. John Paul II Award for such work.
- School policies are clearly placed in the context of the school's distinctiveness as a Catholic school where staff understand their roles in serving and enriching the ethos of the school.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- The principal provides inspirational leadership of the Catholic life of the school. The sense of common purpose in the school stems from the school's clear vision of what a Catholic school should be. Every member of staff and every pupil feels valued by the principal and in turn this is modelled by all.
- All governors humbly acknowledge the great responsibility they have to promote the provision of Catholic life. They speak knowledgeably and with an astute confidence about all aspects of the school. This knowledge ensures they fulfil their function of

being a "critical friend" to the school by holding the principal and senior leaders to account.

- Governors and leaders work very successfully together to ensure that the promotion of the school's Catholic life is at the centre of its strategic direction. This is immediately evident to any visitor to the school and is the result of constant review and improvement.
- Leaders and governors conduct a range of systematic monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes in RE. Their analysis provides a firm basis for accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for development which lead to improvement for all.
- All the staff at the school provide high quality pastoral care and effective discipline; they encourage an aspirational ethos and a strong feeling of respect for others and for their environment.
- Provision for staff induction and training which further develops an understanding and commitment to the Church's mission in education, is strong. New teachers to the school are very well supported in understanding what is meant by the 'Bishop Walsh Way' through a tailored induction programme.
- Leaders have effective and established systems to manage staff performance. All staff have a Catholic life target.
- Leaders effectively plan for the provision of collective worship and there is a clear assembly rota for form groups, assemblies and Masses. The assemblies and reflections are rooted in The Beatitudes and this planned approach ensures consistency across the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- Outcomes for pupils in RE are outstanding. Pupils achieve very well, enjoy religious education, understand the importance of the subject and are able to explain their views. At all key stages achievement and progress are outstanding. At GCSE year on year pupil achievement exceeds the national average and the diocesan average.
- The department analysis of internal examination outcomes at GCSE supports intervention strategies for groups of students and staff resulting in excellent outcomes for all groups of pupils.
- Teaching inspires pupils to want to know more resulting in excellent outcomes for all pupils.
- Teaching in all key stages is typically outstanding in its impact on the pupils' progress. Individual lessons are never less than good and this consistency in provision provides the students with an excellent platform for learning. Students' progress is rapid and sustained, not least because of the high expectations of the RE department in

pursuing excellence. As a result, staff plan meticulously to support the students' learning and track their progress very effectively.

- Year 10 are exceptionally well supported in their final revision for their GCSE religious education examination because of the systematic, thorough analysis of the requirements of the examination, and the robust sharing of information about students' previous learning.
- Positive relationships in the classroom between pupils and teachers and amongst the pupils fosters a climate of high achievement where the vast majority of pupils are working at or above the expected level. Pupils commented that 'the teachers really care about us, they want us to do well and they notice when something is wrong'.
- The curriculum is carefully planned and in line with guidelines set out by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Schemes of work are detailed and good lesson planning successfully translates the schemes into meaningful learning experiences for all pupils.
- Pupils enjoy RE and clearly recognise it as an important and integral part of their education. They speak with enthusiasm about their lessons and the staff who deliver the curriculum. Within RE lessons there is a real vibrancy and interest. Pupils are encouraged to challenge their thinking in a way that promotes and develops their own personal response to God's call.
- Evidence from written work demonstrates good and better learning across lessons. Good assessment procedures mean that teachers build upon pupils' prior learning. Marking and constructive feedback, both oral and written, are used well although pupil response is not as consistent. In the best practice pupils were given time during lessons to respond to teacher feedback and teachers acknowledge subject specific development. Pupils comment that they value being given time to improve their work and value this dialogue.
- The department has made excellent inroads towards the delivery of Judaism for the new GCSE. The training arranged by the school has supported the development of schemes of work to deliver the teaching about other major world faiths.
- Religious literacy is well-developed with keywords evident both in planning and in lessons observed. An example of religious vocabulary being used in context was observed during a meeting with student leaders when a Year 10 pupil, referring to cross-curricular themes, said, 'In English some literature refers to Biblical allusions.'
- Rich questioning techniques are used to develop thinking and teachers effectively check pupils' understanding. Pupils express and justify their views confidently even when discussing sensitive subject matter.
- The RE department recognises that the new curriculum poses challenges in terms of content, assessment and provision of RE, however they have established systems in place to monitor and evaluate its impact on learners.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Monitor and evaluate new curriculum changes at both GCSE and A level to maintain high outcomes for all students.
- Formalise the monitoring of the student chaplaincy team to demonstrate their impact on the Catholic life and collective worship of the school.
- Ensure there is consistency in the marking policy across the RE department by giving students the opportunity to respond to written feedback from teachers and by teachers acknowledging the subject specific development of pupils in their written work.