



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

BLESSED MOTHER TERESA CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the Holy Trinity Multi-Academy Company

Somerset Rd. Stafford ST17 9UZ

Inspection dates 3rd – 4th March 2016
Reporting Inspector Denis Cody

Diocesan Inspection carried out with the framework used for s48 inspections

Type of School	Primary
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	130
Appropriate authority	The Board of Directors
Chair of Academy Committee	Paul McGarrigle
Telephone number	01785 356405
E-mail address	office@blessedmotherteresas.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2011
DFE School Number	8603479
Unique Reference Number	123470

Headteacher Mrs Catherine Horton

Previous inspection: 2

This inspection: 1

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by 1 Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the effectiveness and use of the school's self-evaluation of religious education (RE) and Catholic life.
- To validate the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation of teaching and learning, the inspector observed three full RE lessons with the headteacher.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with two members of the board of directors, staff, and parish priest.
- The inspector attended a school Mass, observed a short pupil-led prayer session 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.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals were read alongside the self- evaluation.

Information about the school

- Blessed Mother Teresa's is a smaller than average size Catholic primary school.
- It is one of two primary schools serving the parish of St Austin in Stafford.
- It is situated in an area of more than average social deprivation.
- Currently 25% of pupils are baptised Catholics.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is below average at 10%.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is significantly above average, while the number with special needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below the national average overall.
- On 1 March 2016, two days before this inspection, the school joined with six other Catholic primary schools and one secondary school to form the Holy Trinity Multi-Academy Company.

Main Findings

- The school judges its provision of Catholic life and religious education to be outstanding. This judgement is based on an extensive programme of self-evaluation covering Catholic life, collective worship and teaching and learning in RE, so it is accurate and reliable.
- Self-assessment effectively informs improvement planning and staff training through the school improvement plan and RE action plan.
- The school has a strong leadership at all levels, which is knowledgeable about its strengths and areas for development and committed to its Catholic nature. As such it has excellent capacity for continued development.

School self-evaluation

Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- Judgements about the quality of the school's Catholic life are securely based on a range of evaluation activities, both formal and informal, involving input from governors, staff, parents and pupils. Outcomes are shared and used effectively by senior leaders to drive the process of school improvement.
- The headteacher and leaders at all levels provide strong and committed leadership of Catholic life. It is given great priority and prominence in all interviews, appointments and staff induction procedures.
- Staff meetings and questionnaires have contributed to an audit of Catholic life. Diocesan self-review materials have been used by staff to stimulate discussion, debate and review of the quality and impact of Catholic life and ethos, collective worship and prayer in the school. This process is led by the headteacher, who is also RE co-ordinator, and the subsequent analysis of its results is reported to governors and used to inform school planning and staff training.
- Monitoring of prayer and worship, both at class and whole school level, is led by the headteacher and also involves the assistant head and RE link governor. Feedback is provided to staff and governors. Learning walks are conducted to monitor the learning environment and have led to a re-examination of prayer areas and how they can better reflect liturgical seasons and support learning in RE.
- As a result of the monitoring of assemblies and prayer services, staff training was provided for planning collective worship and a common planning sheet produced, slightly adapted for use by pupils. Following a review of Mass planning, the parish priest delivered staff training and experienced teachers were linked with newly qualified and non-Catholic colleagues to support their Mass preparation.
- The parish priest, who is also the RE link governor, regularly visits school and plays an active part, both formally and informally, in planning preparing and reviewing school worship.
- Pupils make their contribution to the evaluation process through questionnaires, surveys and interviews with senior staff. Their responses to collective worship, prayer and liturgy have been gathered and have led to a greater emphasis on providing opportunities for pupils to plan and lead their own worship. An example of this is the 'Three o'clock Prayers', prepared and led each day during Lent and Advent by Year 6 pupils and attended by representatives from the other classes.
- The views of parents are collected through the annual parent questionnaire which contains a section on Catholic life. The results are examined, shared with staff and governors and reported back to parents, along with any responses, through school newsletters. Parent feedback is also invited following sacramental preparation and is taken into account when the headteacher and parish priest are planning for the following year.
- The areas for development identified from monitoring and self-review are reflected in future development planning through the RE action plan and school improvement plan, whose implementation and progress is monitored by governors regarding impact and outcomes.

Governance

- The school has this week formally converted to an academy as part of the Holy Trinity Multi-Academy Company, so governance will transfer to an academy committee and board of directors. However as almost all members of the previous

governing body will be joining the academy committee they are confident the transition should be smooth.

- The outgoing governing body has provided strong leadership and commitment to the school's Catholic life and religious education. It has played a full part in school self-evaluation and both supported and held school leaders to account.
- Its members are closely involved in the life of the school and as regular visitors to school Masses and assemblies have a good understanding of how pupils respond to prayer and worship.
- All governors take part in self-evaluation and provide feedback to the full governing body. The RE link governor in particular has been involved in action planning, RE learning walks and carried out pupil interviews.
- Governors are kept informed of developments in Catholic life and RE through the headteacher's termly report, which is subject to discussion and questioning. All governor committee agendas include standards and self-evaluation. The mission and ethos committee receives reports from the RE co-ordinator and monitors progress of the RE and School Improvement plans.
- The production of the school's RE self-evaluation document is managed by the headteacher and senior staff, but governors are fully involved in the process. At every stage evidence and judgements are presented to them for discussion and consultation.

Religious Education

- The school has a thorough system of monitoring and evaluation for all aspects of religious education. It has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development and is well placed to move forward in terms of its own provision and the learning of its pupils.
- RE is well led by the headteacher, supported by senior staff and school governors. It is given a high priority in school improvement planning and staff development. There is always an RE target in the school improvement plan and all staff have an RE target as part of their performance management agreement.
- The school has a tradition of close collaboration with local schools through the diocesan cluster group and a group of partner schools in Stafford. These partnerships allow the school to share ideas and expertise in evaluating its procedures for provision and quality.
- The school's judgement that teaching is good or outstanding is supported by a comprehensive programme of lesson observations, learning walks and work scrutiny. Teachers receive feedback and development points which are later revisited and good practice is shared. Where appropriate staff training may be arranged, as when the need for a renewed focus on differentiation was identified and addressed.
- Teachers review their own lesson planning and the headteacher monitors all planning termly, again highlighting strengths and areas for development to ensure the needs of all pupils are met in terms of differentiated activities and curriculum coverage.
- Pupils' learning in RE is judged to be at least good and often outstanding. Following a review of teaching and learning in RE the school adopted the diocesan document, 'Thinking Skills in RE,' to promote this aspect of learning, which has now been incorporated into the planning of learning activities.

- Through interviews with senior staff pupils are able to give feedback on their attitude towards RE, what they enjoy in RE lessons, and how they like to learn.
- As a result of monitoring lesson planning a new planning sheet was introduced which identifies the skills and understanding required to achieve the various levels within Attainment Targets 1 and 2, so these can be incorporated into lesson planning and assessment activities.
- The judgement that pupils' attainment is good and their progress outstanding is reliable because it is supported by detailed analysis of pupil performance data starting with baseline assessment and including class and end of key stage results. Assessment meetings are held where progress is tracked and analysed both for individual pupils and groups based on gender, entitlement to pupil premium, and for Catholic pupils. This also provides the school with detailed and accurate information to support future planning and better meet the needs of all pupils.
- Teachers work together, and with colleagues from partner schools, on moderation exercises using pupils' work to produce samples of levelled written work. This helps them develop a common understanding of what constitutes each level and improves the confidence and accuracy of their marking.
- Aspects of the curriculum are constantly under review to ensure it provides opportunities for all pupils to develop educationally, spiritually and morally, and reflects school improvement targets and diocesan initiatives. This year it has been adapted in the light of the Year of Mercy, references to which are in evidence throughout the school. A curriculum review was also carried out when British Values were introduced to identify opportunities to promote corresponding gospel values. As part of the same review process the school has adopted the diocesan Catholic Values and Virtues programme to identify and promote the qualities and characteristics associated with the Catholic ethos and vocation of the school.
- Although spiritual, moral and vocational development has a high priority in the RE curriculum and is actively promoted through the school mission statement, its impact has not been evaluated as thoroughly as have other aspects of Catholic life and RE.
- Since the last Section 48 inspection greater emphasis has been placed on providing opportunities to increase pupils understanding and appreciation of other cultures and faiths.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

- Data from the last three years shows pupil attainment in RE to be good and progress excellent. Baseline assessment indicates most pupils enter school with very little knowledge or experience of religion. Class and end of key stage assessment shows all groups of pupils make rapid progress in each key stage so that the great majority leave school working at or above expected levels of attainment.
- Pupils make good or outstanding progress in their learning about and from RE, progressively developing skills of reasoning and enquiry.
- Teaching of RE is good or outstanding, supported by an effective programme of staff training and excellent working relationships within the school. Skilled additional classroom support promotes differentiated learning to address the needs of all pupils.

¹ As the quality of the school self-evaluation has been affirmed, the judgements in this section of the report conform to those of the school.

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are committed in their approach to RE. Lessons are well planned and delivered, making links between RE and other subjects and good use is made of ICT to support learning.
- Using self and peer assessment, strategic questioning, shared learning intentions and success criteria teachers ensure pupils are fully involved in their own learning. Detailed marking of written work includes questions and comments designed to challenge children and help them move forward in their learning.
- The school has a clear assessment policy under which attainment and progress in RE are carefully tracked and monitored so that teachers are aware of pupils' capabilities. This information is used effectively to inform planning and promote purposeful learning.
- The RE curriculum effectively promotes pupils' learning. It follows the diocesan strategy, 'Living and Growing as the People of God,' so there is progression and continuity of learning. The school meets the ten percent curriculum timetable requirement for RE.
- Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures, and in Years 5 and 6 they follow the sex and relationship education programme recommended by the diocese.
- The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development. Children participate actively in the prayer life of the school and take on roles of responsibility within their classes and in the wider school promoting a sense of community and living out their moral and spiritual beliefs. For example pupils from Year 6 support younger children in a variety of activities as Early Years Buddies.
- The school mission statement, "We learn to live and grow in love by following Jesus," is a constant reference point in developing pupils' sense of vocation and enabling them to realise it in a practical way, for instance through projects in support of a link school in Kolkata. They also have opportunities to plan and organise their own charitable fundraising in support of local and national charities.
- All school leaders are fully committed to a shared Catholic vision for the school, and actively ensure that its Catholic ethos is at the heart of all aspects of school life.
- At a level appropriate to their age, children understand and can discuss the distinctive Catholic nature of the school, how it is represented in the mission statement and what it asks of them.
- Catholic life is reflected in positive and supportive relationships between all members of the school community. Children respect each other's views and opinions and understand right and wrong and the importance of fairness.
- Prayer is a key feature of the school's Catholic life, punctuating the day, and is used in RE and other lessons when appropriate. Pupils are familiar with traditional and formal prayers and confident in composing their own.
- Pupils value and enjoy taking part in collective worship and do so with reverence and respect. They plan and lead acts of worship for their own class and for class assemblies.
- A parish Mass is celebrated in school each week with pupils from all year groups represented as altar servers, readers, singers and musicians, or taking part in the offertory procession.
- School assemblies and prayer services reflect the liturgical seasons and curriculum or spiritual, moral and vocational themes.
- The sacramental preparation programme is carefully planned and reviewed by the headteacher in partnership with the parish priest and St Austin's school, the other Catholic primary school in the parish. Preparation is carried out in school, supported by the parish priest who also leads parent meetings. This exemplifies the close and supportive links between the school and parish.

Recommendations

- Compile an overview of monitoring and self-assessment procedures for Catholic life and RE
- Include a formal review of spiritual, moral and vocational development and its impact in the school's self-assessment programme