



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Diocesan Monitoring Visit

HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the St John-Paul II Multi-Academy Company

Walmley, Sutton Coldfield.

Inspection date	22 nd September 2015
Reporting Inspector	Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out using the framework for s48 inspections

Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	209
Appropriate authority	The Board of Directors
Chair of Academy Committee	Mrs Mary Hope
Telephone number	0121 675 2158
E-mail address	enquiry@holycross-sch.net
Date of previous inspection	December 2010
DFE School Number	330/3402
Unique Reference Number	140525

Principal	Mrs Teresa Cotter
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Previous inspection:	1
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This inspection:	1
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September 2015

Diocesan Education Service,
Don Bosco House,
Coventry Road,
Coleshill,
B46 3EA

Miss Teresa Cotter
Holy Cross Catholic Primary School
Part of the St John Paul II Multi Academy Company
Laburnum Drive
Walmley
Sutton Coldfield
Birmingham
B76 2SP

Dear Miss Cotter

Section 48 Monitoring inspection: 22nd September 2015

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school on 22nd September and for the information you provided both before and during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by all including the parish priest in speaking with me.

The inspection was a "light touch" monitoring inspection because your school was judged at the last inspection to be an outstanding school in respect of Catholic life and religious education and because it is now five years or more since you last received a section 48 inspection.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess the quality of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning for Catholic life and religious education. In order to make this judgement I read school documents, including a summative self-evaluation, interviewed senior leaders, two academy committee representatives, the subject leader for RE, and pupils, observed two lessons, and looked at a sample of pupils' written work.

Catholic Life

In its self evaluation the school correctly judges all aspects of its Catholic life to be outstanding. This judgement is secure because it is based on thorough auditing and review, efficient monitoring and careful evaluation. Development is consistently and effectively driven forward by ensuring that the findings from monitoring and evaluation are fed into detailed and regularly reviewed improvement plans. Under two years ago, a new principal was appointed who has revitalised the monitoring and evaluation process across all areas of curriculum and school life. All aspects of Catholic life were reviewed by herself, senior leaders the school committee within her first year in post. From this review process careful costed and appropriately detail plans were drawn up. All monitoring and evaluation processes have been streamlined making them more coherent, efficient and effective. There are systems in place to enable pupils, parents, all staff and academy representatives to feed their views into the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school. Pupil consultations and pupil questionnaires indicate how proud pupils are of the school and how they benefit greatly from the Christian values and virtues promoted so effectively by the school. Pupils' behaviour and living out of Catholic values is rigorously monitored on a daily basis by a staff, who recognise it the responsibility of all, to ensure pupils live up to the high expectations made of them. Pupil driven charity and fundraising events are taking place and their value and level of success are carefully monitored by the staff.

The parish priest, an ex-teacher and chair of the board of directors of the St John Paul II MAC, works closely with the school and meets regularly with senior leadership to discuss and reflect upon many aspects of the Catholic life, particularly the provision of and pupil response to collective worship. He is closely involved in the preparation of children for the sacraments in which school and parish work



closely together; programmes are regularly assessed and evaluated. Academy representatives frequently attend Masses, liturgies and assemblies and readily feed into the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. The subject leader and senior leadership systematically carry out audits of the Catholic life and worship environment of the school and are scrupulous in ensuring displays and prayer areas are of the highest quality, up to date and reflective of the liturgical calendar and latest Church initiatives such as the promotion of Christian virtues. Parents have very good access to and input into the Catholic life of the school. The excellent highly informative school website is regularly visited by pupils and parents and provides a forum for information and comment. Improvement plans are clear and comprehensive; they are regularly reviewed to ensure that objectives have been achieved. One planned objective was to introduce the 'Christian Virtues'. Strategies and training were put in place and resources purchased and already it is apparent that this term's work on 'gratitude and generosity' has permeated across the life of the school and pupils are inspired and enthused by these virtues. This school provides an outstanding Catholic life which is greatly appreciated and beneficial to all in the community.

Religious Education

The way RE is monitored and evaluated by the subject leader is rightly judged by the school's self evaluation to be outstanding. It is also accurate in its assessment that pupil progress and attainment are outstanding. Meticulous assessment procedures, book trawls, pupil interviews and questionnaires have enabled the subject leader, senior management team and staff to judge that, by the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 standards of attainment are above average in RE. All vulnerable groups are tracked and assessment procedures are used to identify gaps which require addressing. Recent tracking and analysis have shown there is no gender difference in attainment. The school judges all aspects of its provision in RE, teaching, curriculum and opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development to be outstanding. This monitoring visit validates this judgement. Teaching and learning are carefully monitored by lesson observations, book trawls, assessment outcomes and pupil questionnaires. They are correctly judged to be at least good and predominantly better. The RE leader and senior leadership are very clear about their expectations and, whilst acknowledging excellent teaching, they give clear advice for improvement. The RE leader is exceptionally knowledgeable and he and the parish priest work closely with non-Catholic and newly qualified teachers. The curriculum is carefully planned and based on the Diocesan Curriculum Strategy 'Learning and Growing as the People of God'. Planning is scrutinised by the subject leader and new and innovative ideas from young teachers and new members of staff are welcomed. When monitoring planning, attention has been paid to reflection on meaning and to ensure that provision for a range of learning styles is found in all lesson planning. Self evaluation judges that the opportunity for pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development is greatly enhanced by the school's rich worship life, well-planned curriculum, use of music art and drama, meeting with other faith schools, community links, distribution of the Wednesday Word, and co-operation within the MAC. Resources are regularly reviewed and replenished. An explicit improvement plan for RE is in place and findings from effective monitoring procedures used to ensure it is updated. The school provides regular high quality INSET and its impact is carefully monitored. All levels of the governance of both at school level and throughout the MAC are informed through reports created by the RE Leader on the standards in RE. The parish priest keeps the academy representatives well informed about provision in the subject and all aspects of Catholic life.

A particularly outstanding aspect of the Catholic life of the school is the sense of a Christ centred community where parents have complete trust in all staff and pupils to respect and value their children whatever their needs and differences may be. The exceptionally strong links between school and parish impact greatly on the pupils' spiritual, moral and vocational development. The school is making a significant contribution to the life of the St John Paul II MAC.



School leaders have successfully identified all necessary areas for improvement. Through the appointment of a competent and effective principal the capacity to remain an outstanding Catholic school is ensured. It is school where children thrive and grow in their faith.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Beale
Diocesan Inspector