



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL FIRST SCHOOL

Part of the Our Lady of Lourdes Multi Academy Company
Downsell Road, Webheath, Redditch, B97 5RR

Inspection dates: 11th & 12th June 2018
Lead Inspector: Maureen O'Leary

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: **Good**

Catholic Life: Good

Religious Education: Good

Collective Worship: Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection: *Good*

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- The highly regarded headteacher, with the support of governors, is deeply committed to the mission of the school to provide the best Catholic education for pupils.
- Pupils have a good understanding of their school mission which they live out fully in their school community.
- School leaders have established a strong Catholic community. This community embraces not only pupils and staff but also parents and members of the parish.
- Pupils enjoy Religious Education which is taught in accordance with the diocesan scheme, 'Living and Growing as People of God.' Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and are able to apply what they learn to their own lives.
- The school provides a range of Collective Worship that is responded to enthusiastically by pupils.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- All pupils do not routinely lead Catholic Life and Collective Worship.
- The quality of the school environment does not fully support its Catholic Life.
- Pupils could make more rapid progress in Religious Education.
- Senior leaders' and governors' understanding of the standards in Religious Education is not robust and rigorous enough.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the opportunities for all pupils to lead Catholic Life and Collective Worship.
- Further develop the school environment to support the Catholic Life of the school.
- Provide greater challenge and support for pupils. To address this issue consideration needs to be given to the use of additional adults and the opportunities that pupils are given to demonstrate learning from Religious Education.
- Ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education enables areas for development to be quickly identified and addressed.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- The whole school community is dedicated to living by its school mission to, 'Love God and Love One Another.' In a recent questionnaire, 100% of parents felt that this mission was central to the life of the school. This is a major strength of the school.
- Pupils were keen to share with the inspectors many examples of their school mission in action. For example, one pupil said that when things go wrong in school they say sorry. Another pupil explained that their teachers helped them know how to be kind to others.
- School leaders have creatively promoted the Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile (CSPP). Pupils have learnt about the virtues contained within the CSPP during assemblies and are eager to achieve recognition for acting out the virtues. One child explained how she 'got her apple' on the virtue tree for being grateful and generous. Pupils are also enthusiastic to receive certificates each week in Friday assembly. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of a range of virtues that they try to live out in their lives each day.
- Staff are positive role models for pupils. They actively promote very good behaviour through their words and actions. Staff are keen to bring out the best behaviour in pupils and, as a result, pupils are keen to help each other behave well. Consequently, the behaviour of pupils in the classroom and around the school is very good.
- The strong relationships within the school also extend out to the parish. The school priest chaplain is a frequent visitor to the school not only to celebrate Mass but also to contribute to all aspects of the Catholic Life of the school. His pastoral support for pupils, staff and parents is greatly appreciated by the school community. In turn,

the school priest chaplain is grateful for the number of pupils who act as parish altars servers for Sunday Mass.

- The school has a wide range of pastoral care provision for pupils and their families. Relationships with vulnerable families is especially strong because priority is given by the headteacher to supporting these families with sensitivity and compassion. One parent, who spoke to the inspectors, especially praised the care and support the school offered to parents who have children with additional educational needs.
- Pupils have a growing number of opportunities to lead some aspects of Catholic Life. As well as a chaplaincy team, there are also eco warriors, school councillors and every child in Year 4 has some role of responsibility. Leaders are rightly now looking for ways in which all pupils can take an active lead in the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school supports a wide range of local, national and global charities throughout the year such as Father Hudson's and Cafod. Representatives from some of these charities visit the school to explain to pupils why they need their support. This helps pupils understand why they are called to serve others.
- The school has actively taught pupils about vocation, organising a vocations day attended by various visitors, including the school priest chaplain and One Life Music. However, pupils' understanding of vocation would benefit from further development. This area for improvement has been identified by school leaders.
- The school environment reflects its Catholic character. Staff have developed the prominence and quality of the prayer spaces in each classroom. The excellent practice of changing the prayer focus in these spaces each month has supported pupils' growing knowledge and understanding of the liturgical year. Pupils are also taking more responsibility for the maintenance of these areas.
- A number of displays have also been added around the school which promote the mission of the school, CSPP, an understanding of vocation and of other faiths. The school prayer garden is used regularly by staff and for pupil led lunchtime prayer.
- The school should continue to develop all learning environments so that they truly celebrate the dignity of each person as made in the image of God.
- Pupils are taught about relationships and sex education in accordance with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.

- The headteacher is deeply committed to the Catholic mission of the school. She sees it as a whole school priority and actively promotes its realisation.
- Parents and governors rightly regard the headteacher very highly as a leader of a Catholic school.
- Governors clearly have a very positive relationship with the school and receive lots of information about its work through headteacher reports, link governor reports, newsletters and the school website.
- The link governor attends the school regularly. Many of the governors are frequent visitors to the school in an informal way.
- The headteacher has established a schedule for the monitoring and evaluation of Catholic Life which is now being embedded. Pupil, parent and staff opinions are sought and acted upon.
- Monitoring and evaluation of previous experiences has led to a well thought out sacramental programme. Consultation with the school priest chaplain, parents and staff has resulted in a highly effective programme. This has included school-based parent and child workshops, as well as attendance at Sunday parish Masses. This

year's celebration ended in a parent initiated and led First Holy Communion party which reflected the success of the whole programme.

- This process of monitoring and evaluation has been embraced by the governors and is already having a direct impact on improvement planning. Consequently, the governors have a good understanding of the strengths of the Catholic Life of the school and the areas that need to be improved.
- The school has actively implemented the decisions of the Archbishop in regard to the Catholic Life of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Good

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- The provision, outcomes and leadership of Religious Education are good.
- Pupils generally make good progress in their knowledge, understanding and skills in Religious Education. However, this progress is not consistent through the school.
- Teachers provide pupils with a variety of tasks, including opportunities for extended writing and drama, to complete in Religious Education which generally engage and interest pupils. This variety could be extended further. Tasks should also be matched more clearly to pupils' abilities. This would help all pupils, but especially boys, to consistently remain on task during lessons.
- Progress is rapid in the Reception classes. Inspectors observed a thoughtfully planned lesson where careful questioning and choice of tasks helped children to learn about the call of the disciples. The teaching in the lesson led to highly engaged and knowledgeable children who were able to apply their learning to their own lives. One child explained, "I trust Jesus".
- Behaviour in lessons is mainly very good. Many pupils are able to work co-operatively and independently for sustained periods. Where off task behaviour was seen, it was low level and usually due to a lack of challenge and support.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good. Teachers' assessment of pupils is largely correct. However, more precision is needed to accurately identify those pupils who are exceeding end of unit expectations. Currently, some teacher assessment is over generous.
- Most staff have a good subject knowledge of Religious Education. Where this subject knowledge is lacking it is important that adequate support is given to support lesson planning.
- Many teachers are able to use questioning to develop pupils' thinking and understanding in Religious Education. This results in them posing their own 'big' questions and observations. During a thought provoking lesson in Year 3, the assistant headteacher's skilful questioning led a pupil to conclude, "When we eat the body of Christ he transforms us into him".

- Inspectors observed additional adults being used in a variety of ways during lessons. Some adults were used to good effect to support individual and small groups of pupils. However, given the high level of adults available during lessons, too many opportunities to support and challenge pupils were missed.
- Pupils' work is regularly marked, and teachers often pose questions to deepen pupils' understanding. The quality of this feedback is not consistent across the school and would benefit from further development.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

- Religious Education is planned and taught using the diocesan strategy, 'Learning and Growing as People of God' and meets all the requirements of the Bishops' Conference.
- All classes spend the required minimum 10% of the taught curriculum learning about Religious Education. Earlier in the year, school leaders had identified that the 10% requirement by the Bishops' Conference was not being met in a few classes. They quickly acted to make sure the correct time is now given to Religious Education.
- The monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is planned and routinely carried out by the subject leader and headteacher. Areas that are identified as requiring improvement are then shared with staff. Follow up monitoring, to check that recommendations to improve teaching have been carried out, is not routinely used.
- Current monitoring and evaluation needs to be more robust and rigorous. This will enable all key areas for improvement, which are not presently being identified, to be addressed. It will also ensure that improvement targets that have been set are met.
- Although governors have a general overview of standards in Religious Education there are gaps in their knowledge and understanding of pupil outcomes in this subject. They are not familiar with the range of Religious Education performance data available to them. This reduces their ability to fully hold leaders to account.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	Good
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Outstanding
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Good

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.

The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- The school provides a good range of opportunities for the community to pray and worship together which reflect the liturgical seasons and Catholic character of the school. Prayer and worship are a valued and regular part of the life of the school. One pupil, who was a member of a group of pupils who spoke to the inspectors, naturally asked at the end of the meeting, "Shall we end with a prayer? Shall we say the Memorare?"

- During the inspection, the headteacher led worship that enabled pupils to reflect on how they could live out the virtues of being attentive and discerning. She provided a prayerful setting, enabled the participation of pupils through drama and reading and time for quiet contemplation. These allowed the pupils to reflect on how they could be attentive and discerning in their own lives for the glory of God.
- A growing number of worship opportunities are led by the older pupils. Members of the Year 4 chaplaincy team plan and lead monthly lunchtime prayer times. These thoughtfully planned liturgies are very popular with younger pupils. The school is now developing more opportunities for younger pupils to plan and lead prayer.
- A dedicated team of Year 4 altar servers have received training from the school priest chaplain and a visiting seminarian. As a result, they carry out their role in Mass with great confidence and care.
- Staff participate in times of prayer with the highest sense of respect and reverence. Pupils follow the excellent example of the adults and take part in worship with both great joy and quiet reflection. This was clearly seen at the whole school Mass attended by the inspectors, where pupils' behaviour was impeccable, and their singing was uplifting.
- The school uses a variety of approaches to prayer. For example, staff have supported pupils to know and understand the traditional prayers of the Church. Prayer bags are also provided regularly by the school for pupils to take home. These bags have helped pupils to pray with their families. Feedback from parents has shown that they welcome this opportunity to pray with their children. In addition, pupils in Years 3 & 4 are provided with copies of the Wednesday Word to take home and share with their families.
- Pupils enjoy the times they are able to spend in meditation and value the peace and reflection that it allows. However, for a small number of pupils this can be a time of relaxation rather than a spiritual experience.
- Members of the parish and parents are frequent and welcome visitors to the celebration of Mass within school each fortnight. Nearly fifty adults attended the Mass celebrated during the inspection. The school especially values a member of the parish who acts as greeter to all visitors to school Mass. His cheerful welcome creates a wonderful start to the celebration of Mass for the whole parish community.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

- School leaders ensure that Collective Worship opportunities are carefully planned and structured. All staff, supported by senior leaders, are expected to plan and lead Collective Worship.
- Well received training, from the Religious Education subject leader, has also helped staff to guide pupils, as they increasingly plan and lead Collective Worship themselves.
- Additional support from the lay chaplain has helped develop staff's own spiritual life. Monthly meditation sessions, which have also been shared with governors, have been greatly appreciated by staff and governors.
- Collective Worship is regularly monitored and evaluated by senior leaders. The school priest chaplain contributes well to this monitoring process. In consultation with him, the school made the celebration of Mass a continuing priority when the time of Mass needed to be changed to the afternoon, due to the unavailability of the priest in the mornings.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	141058
Local authority	Worcestershire
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	First School
School category	Academy
Age range	4-9 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	297
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair	Mike Tilt
Headteacher	Michelle Woods
Telephone number	01527 546398
Website address	www.mountcarmelfirstschool.co.uk
Email address	office@mountcarmel.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4 th June 2013

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a larger than average over subscribed first school. It is situated in the parish of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the town of Redditch.
- 95% of pupils are Catholic.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average but is increasing.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average but is increasing.
- Attainment on entry is in line with age-related expectations.
- Since the last inspection a new headteacher and Religious Education subject leader have been appointed. The school became an academy in July 2014.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Maureen O’Leary and Mark Hinton.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school’s provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across ten Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with four governors (including the Catholic Life link governor), the headteacher, the senior assistant headteacher, the Religious Education subject leaders and the school priest chaplain.
- The inspector attended a whole school Mass, a whole school assembly, key stage 1 Gospel assembly and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, 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’ attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school development plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers’ planning and learning journals.