



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS CATHOLIC INFANT SCHOOL NUNEATON

Inspection dates 11th - 12th February 2014
Reporting Inspector Dominic Collins

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-7 years
Number on roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mr Christopher Smith
School address	Riversley Park Coton Road Nuneaton CV11 5TY
Telephone number	02476326080
E-mail address	head3520@welearn365.com
Date of previous inspection	November 2008
DFE School number	937 3520
Unique Reference Number	125712

Headteacher Mrs Caroline Pearson

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. In addition the inspector completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time. He held meetings with the headteacher, RE subject leader, RE link governor, staff, parish priest and parents. He observed the celebration of a whole school Mass, collective worship, 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. He looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self-evaluation such as RAISEonline, the school development plan, teachers' planning, RE assessment systems and learning journals.

Information about the school

Our Lady of the Angels is a larger than average Catholic infant school serving the parish of Our Lady of the Angels, Nuneaton. There are 209 children on roll of whom 86% are baptised Catholics. The school draws from a wide catchment area of mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The majority of children are from white British heritage and the proportion of children with English as an additional language is just above the national average. The number of children identified as having a disability and/or special educational need is below average. The school is popular within the area and records show a pattern of being oversubscribed in recent years.

Main Findings

In its self-evaluation the school correctly judges the overall effectiveness of its Catholic life and religious education to be outstanding. Evidence obtained during the inspection confirms that these judgements are fully justified. Although there were no key issues arising from the last inspection, the school has continued to work hard in order to develop its Catholic life and RE provision through thorough and continuous self-evaluation. This is now an embedded culture within the school that is shared and implemented by all, to ensure accurate quality assurance.

The school has successfully established a comprehensive range of processes in order to monitor and evaluate its Catholic life and RE provision. These systems are well organised and provide a broad base of formal and informal opportunities for seeking the views of pupils, staff, parents and governors, the outcomes of which inform future planning. As a consequence the school's capacity for sustained improvement is outstanding, supported through a powerful combination of dedicated staff and governors with a shared vision and passion to drive the school forward.

School self evaluation

School self-evaluation is securely based upon a continuous cycle of effective monitoring and evaluation processes that are thorough, informative, shared and consistently applied. These systems have been developed and personalised over time thus providing a detailed and accurate profile of the quality and impact of Catholic life and RE provision. Crucially, the outcomes form the basis of a comprehensive overall improvement plan that is broken down into specific focus areas. For example, in addition to RE book trawls, pupil interviews, audits, observations and discussions, several action plans are in place to offer a broad dimension of quality assurance. They are excellent working documents and,

because they are formulated in a uniform profile that clearly identify areas of strength as well as those to be reviewed and developed, analysis of agreed action taken is practical and informative. These include action for developments relating to; links with the parish and community, the Catholic environment of the school, relationships with parents and family, RE curriculum, Catholic life and collective worship. Implicit in these processes is a culture of self-evaluation that is built into many facets of the school's Catholic life and RE involving pupils, staff and governors that has a very positive impact and reflects the commitment, drive and vision of its leadership.

The school's self-evaluation judgement that pupils' attainment and progress are outstanding is reliably based upon the evidence of a variety of pupil tracking data derived from assessments that are monitored and analysed by the RE subject leader. Meticulous records are able to show the excellent level of individual and group progress and attainment over time. The RE subject leader has adapted an RE assessment schedule that clearly identifies a specific termly assessment focus for each year group. In addition, an annual audit such as the comparison of pupils' literacy and their performance in RE is also evaluated.

From initial baseline assessments on entry into school, evidence confirms that children make rapid progress across each year group. Comparison of results show that by the end of Key Stage 1, children's level of attainment is above diocesan expectations overall and there is evidence to confirm that this has been consistently maintained.

Outcomes from self-evaluation lead the school to judge that the process of monitoring and evaluating its Catholic life is outstanding. Inspection evidence confirms this view: monitoring is thorough and evaluation appropriately actioned. Monitoring is effected in a variety of ways, for example through formal and informal discussions, learning walks, pupil interviews and general observations. This is led by the headteacher and RE subject leader in liaison with the parish priest, governors and all staff. The monitoring of the Catholic life of the school also takes into account parental views. The parish priest addresses new parents as part of the induction evening and confirms the close links between school and parish.

An example of the collaborative approach to monitoring aspects of Catholic life was evident in the planning and organisation of how the school would celebrate the 'Year of Faith'. The school leadership, in close liaison with the parish priest, initiated a programme of spiritual experiences throughout the year to involve school, home and parish. These included; workshops with parents and their children to make liturgical banners, family 'Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament' and a visit by Year 2 children to 'Our Lady of Lourdes Shrine' in Hednesford. There was also a whole school focus to explore the lives of the saints as role models for Christian living with a particular emphasis on each class saint. Following every evaluation contribution, improvements and action plans are recorded, together with targets that are reviewed regularly and updated as required. As a consequence, the development of Catholic life and collective worship is a continuous focus and because such a broad dimension of effective monitoring processes are established, remains a real strength of the school. The parish priest works closely with the school and visits regularly to meet with the RE subject leader in order to plan and discuss aspects of its Catholic life. He always takes this opportunity to visit classrooms and talk to the children, who eagerly respond to his visits.

In accordance with school RE improvement targets, the quality of collective worship prayer areas and displays relating to the liturgical calendar are monitored and evaluated through learning walks, classroom visits and questionnaires.

Findings from school self-evaluation judge that the systems used for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning to determine the impact of the school's work in RE are outstanding. This judgement arises from a variety of formal and informal processes used by the headteacher and subject leader to monitor provision and outcomes. In view of their high quality and effectiveness, these well-structured systems that include; scrutiny of planning, assessment of children's work, questionnaires and lesson observations, give a clear and reliable insight into the quality of RE provision and the impact of teaching and learning.

The quality of teaching is regularly monitored by the headteacher to maintain the high standards expected and written feedback is given in a supportive and professional manner. Detailed monitoring records are kept and show a consistent pattern of good and outstanding teaching across the school. Their reliability is confirmed by the excellent quality of teaching observed during the inspection.

Governors are fully involved in the Catholic life of the school. They are dedicated in supporting the headteacher and all the staff and consistently encourage all they do, while at the same time, offering an appropriate level of professional challenge in order to sustain improvement. The subject leader meets regularly with the link governor for RE, with whom all monitoring and evaluation outcomes are shared and future developments discussed.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Pupils' progress and attainment in RE are outstanding. From their initial starting point, pupils receive a very positive start to their faith journey in the Nursery and Foundation Stage and make rapid progress. By the end of their reception year the children begin to develop an understanding of how to be close to Jesus through prayer. At the end of Key Stage 1, assessments show that standards of attainment are very high and rise above diocesan expectations. These outcomes reflect meticulous pupil tracking and monitoring, high quality RE teaching characterised by stimulating well matched activities that make lessons interesting and enjoyable. Learning is further enhanced by the outstanding quality of relationships throughout the school and the excellent guidance given by classroom support staff both of which enable all pupils to engage fully.

The RE curriculum follows the Diocesan Strategy and is delivered by skilled practitioners, who communicate their faith through their enthusiasm and sound subject knowledge. All staff work as a team with a common purpose to ensure the best possible outcomes for the children. They are excellent role models and together foster a happy, secure and caring environment in which all children and adults can learn and pray together. Children enjoy their RE lessons and are happy eager learners. When asked what effect RE had, pupil interviews revealed, 'we know that you should love one another, we've learned to be kind and forgive when someone says sorry.' The RE provision is very well resourced and enriched by opportunities for children to contribute to and benefit from a variety of high quality religious experiences that stimulates their enquiry and thinking and helps to deepen their understanding of how we can be close to Jesus by relating Gospel values to our daily lives. For example; pupils' participation in the bi-annual Malayalam day, that celebrates the Catholic faith and culture of a group of families in school. An understanding of vocation is fostered through regular visits of the parish priest, deacon and a recently ordained ex-pupil, school mission week and annual year group visits to the war memorial in the local park. These are in addition to whole school Masses and celebrations throughout the liturgical year.

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.

Prayer and worship underpin the Catholic life of the school. Children are at ease when praying and they clearly enjoy the many opportunities they have, to compose and share their own prayers and petitions together. They are encouraged by caring staff, who go to great lengths to ensure that times of prayer are nurtured in a calm, reflective atmosphere. Class meditations are particularly poignant and elicit thoughtful responses from the children. Pupils' response to the Mass is outstanding. In addition to learning traditional prayers, the school has introduced a very useful, age appropriate acronym P.O.T.S. (praise, other people, thank, sorry) to help children understand there are different types of prayer. Prayer and meditation form an integral feature of school life, practised by children and staff. The subject leader worked closely with the parish priest to discuss ways of supporting the children's understanding of the celebration of Mass. This resulted in a parish Mass being photographed and is now used as an excellent PowerPoint resource. Underpinning the high quality provision and outcomes for RE, is the excellent organisation by the subject leader, who works closely with the school leadership to support colleagues and ensure the high quality of provision.

The school is effective in fostering a close partnership with parents who are very supportive and who speak highly of the school and of the education their children receive. At Our Lady of the Angels School, the outstanding Catholic ethos permeates all aspects of its daily life. The school leadership communicates a clear vision to promote and enrich it, a vision shared by a caring and dedicated staff. There is a strong sense of purpose that striving to fulfil the Catholic mission of the school is the highest priority together with the spiritual and moral development of all the pupils.

Recommendations

Inspection confirms that the school has firmly established and effective processes for monitoring and evaluating its Catholic life and religious education provision and has accurately identified areas for further development. No further recommendations are required.