



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## Section 48 Inspection

### OUR LADY'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Leamington Road, Princethorpe, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 9PU

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Inspection date 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> July 2017  
Reporting Inspector Mr T J Hughes

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

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Type of School Voluntary Aided  
Age range of pupils 4 – 11 years  
Number on roll 404  
Appropriate authority The Governing Body  
Chair of Governors Jeremy Turner  
Telephone number 01926 632385  
E-mail address Madia.k@welearn365.com  
Date of previous inspection May 2012  
DFE School Number 937/3561  
Unique Reference Number 125721

**Headteacher Mrs Kate Madia**

Previous inspection: Good

This inspection: Outstanding

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



## Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector.
- 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 inspector observed teaching across 4 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. These lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher who is also the RE subject leader.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of governors, other governors, the headteacher, class teachers and the parish priest.
- The inspector attended a whole school assembly, classroom 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.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning and pupils' work.

## Information about the school

- The school is situated in the parish of St Anne, Wappenbury and serves across many rural communities in Rugby and beyond.
- The percentage of ethnic minority pupils is half the national average.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 43%.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is well below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- Attainment on entry is in line with national expectations.

## Main Findings

- At Our Lady's Catholic Primary School the Catholic life, collective worship and religious education are outstanding.
- A shared and uplifting sense of God's love emanates from everyone in the school community.
- The pupils' response to all aspects of faith is outstanding; they are thirsty for experiences of faith and demonstrate the maturity and confidence to lead the Catholic life of the school.
- The school leaders see the gifts of each individual pupil as its greatest strength and show single minded determination to ensure that the mission of the school is a reality.
- Pupils are confident when learning in RE.
- A significant proportion of teaching in RE over time is outstanding.
- Collective worship is outstanding and has a most positive effect on all members of the school family.
- The RE curriculum is rich with art, drama and a wide range of inspiring topics and approaches to learning.
- Visionary leadership of religious education has given rise to many improvements and supports the rich provision, which staff deliver with increasing skill and insight.

- The governors are faithful, committed and strategic in their management of the Catholic life of school. They whole-heartedly embrace the school's Catholic mission and seek every opportunity to grow as a spiritual community serving local families.
- The ministry of the parish priest is crucial to the growth of faith in the hearts of the children and their families.
- To improve further the school should increase the amount of teaching about the Holy Spirit and provide more opportunities for pupils to express themselves in RE by utilising their very good writing and artistic skills.

## **THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL**

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

- The Catholic life of the school is outstanding.
- Each member of the school community is committed to the mission –  
*'Our Lady's School embraces the uniqueness of each child through God's message of love.'*
- Every one in the school knows and believes this mission and feels united and connected with one another because of the faith, which is alive every day at Our Lady's Catholic Primary School.
- The school leaders have a vision for the developing enrichment of the Catholic life of the school.
- The governors show great determination in protecting the spirituality of the school, recognising that the uniqueness of each child is the greatest strength of the community.
- The headteacher lives out her vocation to lead a Catholic community. She has a single-minded and all-encompassing aim to make God's love a reality for every pupil.
- In the past two years the headteacher has taken the school on a journey of growth and improvement. With her compassion and belief she has supported all on the journey with her, prompting and challenging where necessary.
- The headteacher has presided over raising the profile of the Catholic mission and modelled liturgy practices for colleagues. She has enhanced the school environment by increasing the number of opportunities for pupils to pray around school and by providing a wealth of signs and symbols that inspire reflection.
- There has been an effective programme of training in the presentation of spiritual themes for all staff, which has improved the confidence of teachers in making the mission statement manifest for their pupils.
- When evaluating the Catholic life of the school the governors show strong and clear thinking. They are able to make good use of the range of skills they possess as a body and draw on a rich well of faith.
- The governors are fully involved in monitoring Catholic life. They have systematically undertaken learning walks, work scrutinies and the completion of audits for all aspects of RE provision. As a result of their involvement, they have been able to influence developments in the ethos of the community.
- The governors are sympathetic and realistic to the needs of all and understand their role in maintaining the momentum of the school to improve as a sacred place.

- The governors are in touch with the day to day experiences of the pupils through the attachment of an individual governor to each class. As a result, each governor has a detailed understanding of the needs and aspirations of that class.
- The ministry of the parish priest is crucial to the school; he helps steer the spiritual direction of the young people in the school whilst engaging with and encouraging the growth of faith in their families.
- The robust maintenance of the Catholic life is due to the rigorous monitoring, strategic management and relentless hard work of the headteacher, staff and governors.
- The strong and professional relationship between the headteacher and governors has been key to the improvements made to the Catholic life of the school. The headteacher and the governors are spontaneous to challenge each other if they think that the spiritual dimension of the school is being marginalised or made random in any way. For example the governors and staff began the school year with a 'visioning day' where they debated the mission statement to ensure it was both relevant and applicable to Our Lady's Catholic Primary School as it grows.
- In their self-evaluation school leaders have correctly identified the need to engage more with parents and to provide a greater number of opportunities for parents to participate in the dialogue of faith. Senior leaders recognise that there are skills and experiences amongst the parent body which would be a wealthy source of inspiration for the pupils when discussing vocations.
- Collective worship is outstanding.
- Collective worship in the school absorbs all and has a most positive devotional benefit.
- When experiencing assembly, class prayer or class liturgy it is evident that the pupils and staff are brought closer to God and one another through their shared worship.
- Collective worship is prayerful, uplifting and at times spontaneous.
- Collective worship is well organised and skilfully delivered and includes doctrinal knowledge alongside a devotional experience. For example during a whole school assembly, led by the headteacher, the saint of the day was linked to the mission of the school. Prayers were shared between staff and pupils, pupils co-ordinated the presentation of images and everyone participated in the joyous and uplifting singing of the mission song and a well chosen hymn.
- Pupils of all ages are fully involved in designing, shaping and delivering worship.
- Staff members, with the sensitive support of the parish priest, lead liturgy in an absorbing and sacred manner.
- When planning collective worship the headteacher and staff ensure that the content is relevant to the lives of the pupils. For example in the midst of a reflective Key Stage 1 class liturgy the teacher prompted pupils to chat about their own worries. Their conversations were animated and supportive.
- Key aspects of the liturgical year are delivered through worship and embedded further in RE lessons.
- All pupils are increasingly confident and competent in reciting a range of traditional prayers.
- Prayer intentions for the needs of the wider world are shared in a meaningful way, helping the pupils to understand and empathise with their global family.

- The chaplaincy team, pupils, school staff, parish priest, headteacher and governors all take a role in leading collective worship.
- Pupils are at ease when praying, sharing their faith and when participating in sacred celebrations. The pupils report that prayer impacts on their lives both at school and at home.

### **Leadership of Catholic life and collective worship**

- The leadership of Catholic life and collective worship is outstanding.
- The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors have created a school environment which lives out its mission through carefully structured planning and evaluation and with the sincere desire to place Jesus at the heart of everything.
- The headteacher is determined and compassionate. She takes all necessary steps to communicate the ethos of the school and challenges all stakeholders to improve their delivery of gospel values.
- The governors and senior leaders are a source of inspiration for the whole community.
- Pupils and parents are confident and appreciative of the work of the headteacher in fostering and consolidating the divine dimension of the school.
- The spiritual, moral and vocational development of the pupils is an absolute priority of the governors.
- School leaders are looking to the future. They are developing the skills of the middle managers who display an excellent grasp of ways to nurture the zeal of the pupils.
- As a result of the evaluation of audits, the school has developed its delivery of experiences and resources, which enhance the ethos and affirm the special and reverent qualities of the faith life of the school.
- The governors are dedicated and active in their evaluation of the school's spirituality and promotion of gospel values. They assess provision through learning walks, the scrutiny of pupils' work, attendance at assemblies and through the reports and discussions provided at meetings with the headteacher and senior teachers.
- The leadership of the school has worked in a systematic way to monitor provision of Catholic life. The judgements set out in the school's own self-evaluation are consistent with the evidence found during this inspection.
- The pupils play an important role in leading the Catholic life of the school. They are sensitive to the emotional and spiritual needs of everyone in the school community. This empathy inspires the prayers that they share and influences their actions as members of the various councils that they are part of.
- The chaplaincy team, which comprises of pupils from across the age ranges, play an important part in evaluating Catholic life. They reflect upon the elements of faith in the school; how faith shapes all of their activities and how it unites the school family.
- In practical terms the chaplaincy team tidy prayer areas and maintain the appearance of displays and in more strategic activities they monitor prayer focus areas and make suggestions for improvements. They are also involved in sharing the faith of the school; for example they participated in a choir concert for elderly residents in a local setting. These activities demonstrate the aspiration that the school leaders have to include pupils in enhancing the spiritual dimension of the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- The provision of religious education at Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is outstanding.
- RE is very well led by the headteacher who co-ordinates the subject.
- RE as a subject has moved forward immensely as a result of excellent management, the passion of the headteacher for RE and her own personal faith, which is a source of inspiration for all.
- Standards of achievement in RE are high. From average starting points all groups of pupils make very good progress with over two thirds of pupils exceeding expectations in RE by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils make quick progress in early years, which is consolidated and built upon throughout Key Stages 1 and 2. All groups of pupils make similar progress.
- Pupils are challenged by their teachers to apply their faith in their tasks and to demonstrate deep spiritual insight in all subject areas.
- In Key Stages 1 and 2 progress and outcomes are very good thanks to the attention teachers give to the needs of all groups of pupils. It is notable that the staff recognise that a significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs will often respond very well in RE and their progress is often faster than the gains they make in other subjects.
- These standards have been driven up by the concerted effort of the headteacher to improve provision through careful planning, modelling lessons, supporting newer members of staff and making assessment systems manageable and meaningful.
- The governors' insightful management of the school budget has ensured that the ratio of adults to pupils is favourable. This allows for sturdy and consistent support for individual pupils with needs to be guided and taught in smaller groups. As a result, they improve their skills, understanding and subject knowledge in RE.
- Focus on understanding the liturgy of the Church has been a key factor in improving the understanding, outcomes and empathy of the pupils when responding to tasks and questions about scripture and the life of Jesus.
- The teaching and learning of RE is always good with a greater proportion being outstanding.
- Teachers have worked diligently to advance the skills, knowledge and responses of the pupils. As a result, the pupils are confident and enquiring. They have very good subject knowledge and are eager to share and question their faith.
- The pupils' work in their books and around the school is well presented. Attention is given to demonstrate thoroughly all pupils' experiences and interpretations of RE. Their work bears witness to the high standards recorded in their assessments and shows the incremental progress being made by all pupils in every year group.
- The pupils' RE books provide an in-depth testament to the thorough manner in which they encounter the liturgical year and the Gospels. The diocesan scheme is also covered with care. The pupils' grasp of the concepts within the scheme is impressive, thanks to the very good teaching in RE lessons. In turn, the pupils' reflections on faith issues show deep thinking.

- Standards of writing in RE are in line with the very good standards evident in English. However, in English pupils are given more opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings in extended writing. This should be echoed in RE as pupils would better be able to express their perceptions of faith.
- The RE curriculum is inspiring, broad and enjoyed by all age groups. Art, drama, discussion and debate all feature in enriching the learning and connecting with the hearts and minds of the pupils.
- Whilst RE is very well expressed through art in the displays around the school more could be made of the pupils' own illustrations in their RE books. In this way those pupils who favour self-expression through art could explore this as part of their response to RE in lessons.
- Furthermore, although the planned structure for teaching and learning is in line with the diocesan scheme, activities around the sacraments are limited in lesson time. There is not enough work undertaken about the Holy Spirit and the formal structure of the Catholic Church in Upper Key Stage 2. A greater focus on this element would support the teaching of Confirmation and assist pupils in their emotional growth at this important transitional time in their lives.
- The school has been strategic and inspired when setting out an annual programme for teaching and learning about other world faiths and religions. Again, in Upper Key Stage 2 more experiences could be provided to help older pupils understand the place of different faiths and religions in the wider world.
- The school has effective systems to match tasks to pupils' abilities in RE. Pupils are prompted to judge their own challenging entry point into a task. This in turn enriches pupils' thinking about faith.
- Pupils are well equipped to apply their faith in their day to day discussions and tasks across the curriculum.
- Pupils have a sincere understanding of vocation. They know God has given them gifts to use in the service of others. Pupils talk with genuine hope and intention for the careers to which they aspire. They are able to articulate how the belief, strength and talents they have gained at Our Lady's Catholic Primary School will help them in the future.
- The school's marking policy, which is adhered to by all staff, allows pupils and teachers to have a conversation about faith. Often classteachers will extend a pupil's thinking or offer a further challenge so that deeper consideration is given to what faith means to children today.
- Regular charity events for local and global causes, visits to places of worship and venues of social importance add to the breadth of the RE curriculum. A good example of this was the 'grow a pound' activity where pupils were challenged to select a worthy cause and use their entrepreneurial skills in making more money for charity. This experience taught pupils to both think strategically and use their practical skills for the benefit of people less fortunate than themselves.
- Pupils work independently to organise and deliver charitable outreach supporting many local and global charities including CAFOD, Children in Need, Mary's Meals and in the provision of Christmas hampers for the needy.
- The governors fulfil their statutory and canonical responsibilities in regards to RE. They ensure that the requirements of the Bishops Conference are met in terms of curriculum time for RE and the priority that RE is given in the school. This is borne

out by standards of achievement in RE which are in line with the good standards achieved in the core subjects of reading and writing.

- The teaching of relationships and sex education is in accordance with the recommended approach of the Catholic Church and is delivered sensitively to meet the needs and understanding of the pupils of all ages.
- The children at Our Lady's Catholic Primary School are secure in their awareness of God's love. They recognise and are confident about the range of different paths God sets out for them to follow, knowing he will be beside each of them on their journey.

## **Recommendations**

### **In order to improve the school should:**

- Provide opportunities, when learning about the Sacrament of Confirmation, to explore more about the Holy Spirit and the formal structure of the Church.
- Raise greater awareness of the place of different faiths and religions in the wider world.
- Prompt the pupils to utilise their very good writing and artistic skills to better express themselves and their faith in their RE books.