



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

SACRED HEART CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Earlsbury Gardens, Birchfield, Birmingham, B20 3AE

Inspection dates	8 th -9 th March 2016
Reporting Inspectors	Brenda Beale Rose Brookes

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	206
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Miss Eileen Tams
Telephone number	0121 356 4721
E-mail address	enquiry@sacredheart.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2011
DFE School Number	330/3409
Unique Reference Number	103477

Headteacher	Mrs Lisa Fahy
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Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	1

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by 2 Diocesan Inspectors.
- 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 inspectors observed 2 full and 4 part RE lessons during a learning walk with the headteacher.
- The inspectors 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 the RE link governor, staff, and community priest.
- The inspectors observed a prayer service 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

- Sacred Heart is an average size Catholic primary school serving the parish of Sacred Heart and Margaret Mary in Aston, Birmingham.
- Aston is an area of considerable social deprivation.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 38%.
- The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 98.5%.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The numbers with special needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- Attainment in RE on entry is below the national average overall.

Main Findings

- The Catholic life and worship at Sacred Heart is judged by the school's leadership to be outstanding. RE is judged to be good or better and this judgement is supported by rigorous and thorough monitoring.
- The headteacher is totally committed and passionate about Catholic life, worship and RE and drives improvement forward with the support of a competent leadership team and the governing body. A particular strength is the comprehensive induction of new staff, pupils and their parents.
- A systematic programme of monitoring and collection of feedback by staff and accurate and well informed evaluation by the senior leadership team and RE link governor leads to clearly prioritised planning and methodical implementation.
- The recent employment of new staff and a drive to improve teaching throughout the school has led to rapidly improved outcomes in RE for pupils in all key stages.
- Good relationships and a strong sense of inclusion within the school community and parish are a hallmark of Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and lead to the provision of a safe, secure and inspirational faith environment for all pupils.

School self-evaluation

Catholic Life

- The monitoring and evaluation of Catholic life and worship is excellent. This judgement is wholly reliable because it is has been reached by thorough monitoring processes and well informed evaluation.
- Leaders and governors show an unwavering commitment to developing the Catholic life of the school. To enhance this commitment the school works closely with other schools in the Caritas Christi cluster.
- Much of the success of the Catholic life of the school is due to careful induction programmes for pupils, their parents and carers and new staff. The impact of these programmes is carefully monitored by scrutiny of each cohort and teacher appraisal by senior leaders
- The school has a group of Year 6 pupils known as Faith Ambassadors who are very much involved in the monitoring and evaluating of Catholic life. They are very proactive in promoting Catholic/Christian values and assessing their impact in all key stages.
- Monitoring includes staff feedback, pupil dialogue, feed-back from visitors/external agencies, observation of pupil behaviour and activities and interviews with parents at termly parent evenings.
- Children's understanding of service to others and their developing understanding of wider vocation is further assessed by the level of success they achieve when completing the Rotary Junior Citizenship Award (Year 5) and the Catholic Citizenship Award (Year 6)
- Behaviour is very carefully monitored and the behaviour codes are deeply rooted in Catholic values, particularly the importance of repentance and forgiveness.

Worship

- The monitoring of all forms of worship is outstanding as is the provision and pupil response. A detailed programme of collective worship for all three terms is drawn up at the beginning of each academic year. It is closely linked to the Church's liturgical calendar and the Sunday Gospels. The headteacher regularly reviews the quality and impact of this programme through pupil interviews, feedback from parents and staff.
- The Faith Ambassadors play an important role in the monitoring of the worship life of the school. They are particularly rigorous in their monitoring of class prayer areas and RE displays. In the monitoring of one class the Faith Ambassador was happy to report: 'well displayed area, RE vocabulary spelt clearly, the right cloth, Year of Mercy calendar on view, parable books available and enough Bibles for class.' But sadly 'sand on prayer table, books left out of bags, class ribbon thrown on sand, prayer bag missing and Virtue book empty.'

- Faith Ambassadors also carry out pupil interviews on prayer using a pro forma provided. Their answers are detailed and highly informative and feed into the planning process.
- New teachers and members of staff are helped in their provision by the induction programme and regular training. Staff meetings are used for training and review. When new members of staff need extra support with religious education, they have received excellent mentoring from the senior leadership team.

Improvement Planning

- Improvement planning for Catholic life, worship and RE is systematic and comprehensive.
- The school improvement plan (SIP) is written annually from ideas discussed in the summer term at the governing body meeting, taking account of ideas from staff, pupils and parents/family members. The SIP is based on the five aims of the school which include: *'To foster the growth of our children in their Christian Faith. To ensure all children attending the school follow an appropriate code of behaviour. To help our children respect other people's religions and develop their understanding of other cultures'*
- June Review of the SIP allows leaders to see what progress has been made in Catholic life and worship and then the following year's plan is formulated according to how the Catholic mission of the school can best be served, taking account of any changing circumstances and guidance from the diocese.
- All aspects of the Catholic life of the school and the progress made in developing these plans are reviewed and discussed by governors at least once each term.
- The SIP is comprehensive and has clearly defined timescales and success criteria. The Catholic life, worship and RE remain the top priority despite the improvements required across the board, which are also being meticulously addressed.
- A monitoring schedule for RE, collective worship and Catholic life for each term is drawn up following the writing of the SIP comprising aspects/areas, method, findings and action.

Governors

- The commitment and passion of governors to the Catholic Mission of school to maintaining the Catholicity of school is strong. Governors meet with families prior to admission to establish the expectations of a Catholic school
- Great regard is given to the appointment of Catholic staff. Effective and due process in the recruitment of Catholic staff has led to great success in this area.
- Governors ensure RE leadership is within the senior leadership team.
- Performance management of headteacher and RE leader includes a specific RE or Catholic life target. This has yet to filter through to all members of staff.

- The scrutiny committee and link governor review evidence within RE books – checking for coverage and amount. They also carry out learning walks observing the teaching of RE.
- RE focus weeks take place at end of each term. Governors ensure setting of school holidays mean that the school is open during Holy Week.
- Governors are involved in setting of the targets for the school improvement plan which is linked directly to the school's aims; this allows for a great input into moving the Catholic life of school forward.
- Governors are regular visitors to the school, talking with children, parents and staff and they are also informed by RE reports from subject leader and headteacher
- Governors keep in touch with parents through the regular issuing of *The Governor* a letter to children and their parents.

RE

- Monitoring and evaluation of RE are very good.
- Monitoring of RE is carried out through: lesson observations, learning walks, pupil interviews, headteacher 'drop-ins', evidence scrutinies, assessments and staff feedback.
- Evidence is gathered by the senior leadership team. Feedback is given to staff at meetings and through individual dialogue. Feedback is given to governors at full governing body and committee meetings.
- The curriculum is carefully monitored at staff meetings and its impact measured using the range of processes mentioned above.
- The school has several new members of staff and with the drive to improve standards across all key stages and subjects great attention is being paid to ensuring good or better teaching throughout the school. This impacts very favourably on the teaching of RE.
- The improving standards of literacy has also effected favourably on outcomes in RE.
- Baseline assessment is carried out on entry and each 'Living and Growing' unit is assessed by class teachers and then recorded against each focus strand.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

- Standards are good and better. Despite many children entering the school with little or no knowledge of the Faith by the end of Key Stage 2 a high proportion of children are at expected or better standard against diocesan criteria. Development in understanding is evident by end of Key Stage 1 and accelerated in Key Stage 2
- Progress is very good and evident when seen against the starting points in the understanding faith and in English language ability to express beliefs and ideas.

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.

Learning behaviours are good and pupils enjoy RE. Pupils demonstrate excellent questioning and enquiry skills.

- There are no significant variations between groups – all groups, including SEN are performing at least as well as in English and sometimes better
- The drive to raise literacy standards has had a highly favourable effect on the work found in pupils' RE books; scaffolding and literacy aids have assisted the pupils' ability to express their knowledge and understanding of the Faith.
- The teaching of RE is good or better. Teachers possess very good subject knowledge and display a high quality of questioning skills. They are supported in their knowledge by a highly competent subject leader.
- Teaching assistants play a significant role within the school. A well-attended lunch time prayer group is very effectively led by teaching assistants. The group also acts as a powerful nurturing facility.
- Each 'Living and Growing' unit is assessed by class teachers and then recorded against the focus strand. Assessment is analysed and fed into planning and curriculum development. Work is moderated in staff meetings but more needs to be done in this area to fully skill teachers and staff.
- The curriculum is excellent and is greatly enhanced by the attention paid to the liturgical year and the Sunday readings. Each child receives a weekly copy of *The Word* a publication produced by the school containing a short introduction, a family prayer and the Sunday Gospel.
- Curriculum and learning are further enhanced by links with a priest from the Cordate Community, the regular visits of a Sehion nun, the Caribbean chaplaincy and the school's good relationship with the parish and its priest.
- An example of the impact worship has on the curriculum is the attainment achieved in Year 5, which is particularly high in Lent and Holy Week units as a result of the pupils participation in the 'Born for This' drama.
- Pupils come forward with their own ideas regarding charitable activities and raising monies for charity. Children have good understanding of service to others and a developing understanding of wider vocation
- Pupils have a highly developed understanding of forgiveness and justice. They have high levels of respect, understanding that even though wrongs can be forgiven they know all choices and behaviours have consequences.
- They are proud of their backgrounds and have a strong sense of personal worth. They are confident in expressing their own ideas and beliefs. Children actively engage and reflect on and ask questions of meaning and purpose.
- Roles of responsibility are given in all classes with Year 5 and Year 6 taking some whole school responsibilities.
- The provision for collective worship is outstanding. There are a wide range of liturgical styles. The pupils respond to these with respect and reverence. They sing joyfully and enthusiastically. They are actively involved in Masses and liturgies: singing, signing, reading, leading prayers, taking up the offertory and altar serving. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for planning, leading and organising liturgy

- There is clear evidence of pupils' excellent understanding of Liturgical Year and appropriateness of certain prayers, hymns, and responses at different times.
- Pupils are comfortable praying together – and will share their own prayers and thoughts aloud in groups, whole class and whole school sessions and liturgies.
- Opportunities for liturgies are provided outside the school environment: for instance the Cathedral, other schools, Sacred Heart Church, the Caribbean Chaplaincy and the Sacred Garden. In each class pupils are given the opportunity to take home a prayer sack which they can use with their families. Year 6 pupils had written some very personal prayers which showed their deep faith.
- The provision and impact of the opportunities for spiritual, moral and vocational development is outstanding. The school's rich Catholic life, worship and excellent RE curriculum are the highest priorities in the school.
- At Sacred Heart children thrive, flourish and are immensely proud of their school where they feel safe and secure and enjoy learning.

Recommendations

- Develop moderation further to assist with assessment. This can be aided by the school's membership of the Caritas Christi group where comparisons can be made with other schools.
- Consider giving every member of staff a Catholic life target as part of their performance management. These targets should be linked to the headteacher's Catholic life target.