



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

ST CHRISTOPHER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, Wolverhampton, WV8 1PF

Inspection dates : 13th–14th February 2019
Lead Inspector: Mary Daniels

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: **Good**

Catholic Life: Outstanding

Religious Education: Good

Collective Worship: Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection: Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a good Catholic school because:

- There is an excellent sense of community between school and parish. The governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example.
- Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is good because the majority of teaching is consistently good.
- Collective Worship, which is inspiring and clearly motivates pupils, staff and parents, is central to the life of the school.

It is not yet outstanding because:

- Monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is not rigorous and does not always led to well-developed action plans.
- Pupils do not regularly plan and lead Collective Worship.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils contribute in a planned and systematic way to the school's evaluation of Catholic Life and mission and take a lead in planning improvements to it.
- Ensure monitoring of Religious Education is rigorous and systematic so that it leads to continuous improvement.

- Develop pupils' skills in regularly taking the initiative in planning and leading Collective Worship.
- Ensure the new subject leader has a clear vision for teaching and learning of Religious Education and has a good level of expertise in the subject.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

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.

- Most pupils appreciate, value and actively participate in the Catholic Life and mission of the school. They describe the school as 'loving and caring'.
- They demonstrate a deep respect for themselves and others. This is clearly evident in their excellent behaviour around school. They respect each other and other members of staff. They are happy, confident and secure. The parish priest commented that the pupils are 'at ease with each other and the world and prepared for life'. They have an excellent understanding of loving relationships and follow the diocesan programme, 'All That I Am'.
- This respect for each other is further encouraged through the practice of nominating one another for various awards. Pupils have the opportunity to nominate another pupil for a kindness and a virtue award every week.
- They are alert to the needs of others and often suggest people or charities to support. There is an active Minnie Vinnies group and the school supports various other charities throughout the year.
- They enthusiastically take part in visits to places of worship and retreats. For example, they visit Alton Castle, attend annual parish pilgrimages to Walsingham and Lourdes and take part in the parish retreat.
- Pupils know what it is to have a vocation. They are called to do God's will from Reception when they look at the 'Our Father' and focus on the words 'thy will be done'. This is constantly reinforced through the Monday Message assembly to the whole school. There is a vocation week in July, when seminarians visit the school and the parish priest is a regular visitor also.
- There are excellent links with the parish, which is very active and clearly supports the school. A member of the parish leads the Rosary group in school and there are numerous joint activities planned for the parish and school.
- Parents are invited into school regularly to assemblies and Masses. They are encouraged to volunteer and they support the school in numerous ways. They help in class, on gate duty before and after school and run extracurricular activities.
- Pupils' awareness of other faiths is developed through a focused week, when each class studies a different faith.

- Pupils are involved in the evaluation of Catholic Life and are part of planning improvements to it, auditing prayer tables and the physical environment. They also take part in pupil interviews.
- The mission statement clearly states the Catholic aims of the school and it permeates all aspects of school life. 'Love one another', is embedded and the root of all relationships within the school. The headteacher sets the tone for the whole school. His vision is that pupils leave the school spiritually, morally and academically ready for the next stage in their lives.
- All staff are committed to its implementation. Relationships between all members of the school community are of the highest quality. Staff promote high standards of behaviour and are excellent role models. There is a strong sense of community. One member of staff commented they 'we're very lucky to have our headteacher'.
- The headteacher is an active member of the school community. He leads an adult parish choir, 'The Christopher Chorus', and he runs the local secondary school choir.
- The school environment reflects its mission and identity. The mission statement is displayed in the entrance and there are many varied displays throughout the building.
- The curriculum is committed to Catholic social teaching and it provides opportunities to explore moral and ethical issues. For example, persecution and oppression through a World War Two history unit and sustainability and environmental change through science. They regularly participate in anti-bullying week, Esafety week and Black History month.
- Pupils support each other in the playground as playground buddies and the choir sings at the local care home.
- Numerous opportunities for moral and spiritual development are provided for pupils, including class worship, pastoral visits from the parish priest and various places to pray around school.
- There are clear policies and structures in place to provide excellent pastoral care. The school focuses on the whole child and has a caring attitude towards pupils and families. The deputy headteacher runs several groups to support both pupils and parents. These have a strong prayer base, encouraging pupils to trust in God.
- Chaplaincy provision is excellent. The parish priest is very approachable to pupils, staff and parents. The school clearly values and benefits from this support. He supports teachers in class and often meets parents informally after school in the playground.
- The school uses a variety of platforms to promote Catholic Life with parents. There is a school Facebook and twitter page, Monday Newsletter and school family masses.

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

- All leaders and governors are deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. Provision of Catholic Life is given the highest possible priority by leaders and areas identified for improvement are included in the school development plan.
- There are a variety of monitoring activities completed by leaders and governors. They conduct pupil interviews, learning walks and audits. The headteacher reports about Catholic Life as part of his report to governors.

- The Catholic Education Service (CES) governors audit is completed annually and areas for development identified.
- There are strategies in place to engage parents, and as a result, they understand the school's mission in education and are supportive of it. They comment that St Christopher's is a 'very nurturing school' and that pupils with additional needs are well supported.
- The governing body is highly ambitious for the Catholic Life of the school and leads by example, making an excellent contribution to Catholic Life. They are very visible in school, attending assemblies and masses.
- Governance is a strength of the school and it is integral to its success. Governors understand their strategic role and there is an excellent balance of challenge and support. They are very experienced and professional, providing support and training for other governing bodies. They attend diocesan and local training and have developed their own inhouse training for new governors. They have a wide range of skills which are utilised to support 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.

- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points and there is no significant variation between groups.
- Pupils are religiously literate and engaged in lessons. They are beginning to use their knowledge to reflect spiritually and can link lessons to their own experiences. In one lesson, pupils could link the parable of the Prodigal Son to repentance and forgiveness and in another, younger pupils could recall the different parts of the Mass and link the breaking of bread to the Feeding of the Five Thousand.
- Most pupils are actively engaged in lessons and want to improve their learning.
- Behaviour is excellent and relationships between pupils and teachers are relaxed and positive. There is a genuine sense of support and care in lessons.
- Pupils concentrate well and understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy challenging activities and respond well to opportunities which extend their learning. They are actively engaged in discussions. In pupil interviews, they comment on being able to express their own views and that often there is no right or wrong answer.
- In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were challenged to use their Bibles independently to match passages to the correct Bible reference as a starter to the lesson.

There followed a series of well-planned and imaginative activities. Pupils clearly enjoyed the lesson and made good progress.

- In some lessons, pupils are given a choice of differentiated activities and encouraged to choose one they feel confident to complete. Activities provide opportunities to develop skills of reflection with questions such as, 'Do you think God would want you to give up all the things you love and cherish and follow him?'
- Philosophy for Children (P4C) is also used as a tool to provoke deeper thinking and the ability to express opinions in a safe environment, where all opinions are respected and valued.
- Pupils attainment is good and in line with other core subjects and their current work is good because teachers plan good lessons linked to assessments.
- Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and they use a range of strategies to engage pupils. These include revision of previous learning, good use of resources including adult support, hot seating and a combination of individual and group work.
- Teachers are beginning to use questioning to deepen the skills of reflection and finding meaning. This is reproduced in books, where there is some evidence of reflective questions. This could be extended further, if comments from teachers were differentiated and matched to individual pieces of work.
- Sessions begin with a prayer and end with a reflection, which is purposeful and completes the learning.
- Generally, teachers have high expectations of pupils. However, this is not always reflected in their written work.
- Achievement and effort are often celebrated in class and at achievement assemblies. The pupil who is 'Star of the Week' in each class is displayed outside the classroom door for all to see.

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

- Leaders and managers ensure the school meets the requirements of the Bishops' conference. It is evident that Religious Education is taught regularly by the amount of work completed in books.
- Religious Education is comparable to other core subjects and is given the same priority as them. Capitation, monitoring and evaluation of Religious Education is similar to core subjects.
- Religious Education follows a cycle of monitoring and evaluation, this includes lesson observations, book trawls and pupil interviews and there is some evidence of analysis of assessment data. However, it does not always inform action planning. It would have a greater effect if it was more systematic and rigorous.
- Religious Education is planned and taught using, 'Learning and Growing as People of God' and this ensures there is a consistent approach across the school.
- Standards in Religious Education are reported to governors in curriculum meetings and headteacher reports. The parish priest is the link governor and he meets regularly with the headteacher. Governors have visited classes and commented on the quality of open questioning and discussions among pupils and teachers.
- Training is regularly provided for staff through diocesan and cluster courses.

- Presently, the school is in a period of transition with a newly appointed Religious Education subject leader.

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.	Outstanding
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.

- Collective Worship engages all pupils and inspires them. There is a genuine enthusiasm for all worship. The headteacher is an accomplished musician and the music during Collective Worship lifts the entire community. The pupils respond by singing with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The headteacher skilfully uses hymns to help pupils reflect and pray by focusing on one particular line or phrase.
- Pupils have some opportunity to prepare and lead worship, but this is not yet embedded. They regularly read at Mass and class worship and are altar servers.
- Pupils are exposed to and have a variety of prayer experiences. There is evidence of pupils writing their own prayers. Prayer bags are sent home in Reception class and pupils can post prayers on a prayer wall, which is divided into different types of prayer of adoration, intercession, thanksgiving and contrition.
- Pupils can articulate what they do to help them pray. They comment that prayer is a "moment of silence to be with God".
- There are different places to pray in school, including areas in classrooms. A prayer garden is in the process of being replaced.
- Pupils respond to voluntary acts of worship. There is an excellent response from pupils to attend Rosary prayer and they regularly invite their headteacher to pray with them.
- Spiritual welfare is given a high priority. There are retreats for pupils and staff, class mediation and reflection.
- There is a wide range of liturgy available at the school, which includes a rolling programme of school Masses, prayer services, hymn practices and assemblies.
- Sacramental preparation is led by the school with involvement from the parish priest. He visits families in their homes as part of the sacramental programme.
- Collective Worship is central to the life of the school and has a high priority in terms of planning, evaluating and resourcing. It is of a high quality and is relevant and well-planned. It always has a clear message and purpose. Staff provide pupils with experiences that engage them.
- Collective Worship is led by a number of adults across the school. Key members of staff are very skilled in delivering high quality Collective Worship.

They reflect on aspects of the liturgical year, explore key themes about saints and promote the virtues of the Catholic School Pupil Profile (CSPP).

- Pupils have a good understanding of the Church's year. Themes and events are planned in accordance to the seasons of the Church.
- Parents are invited to be involved in the prayer life of the school. Attendance at Mass and assemblies is good.
- There is a well-developed sense of respect for those of other faiths. Pupils from other faiths support their peers, especially in sacramental years. There is a focused week when pupils find out about other Religions and faiths.

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

- Collective Worship is well organised and planned by the headteacher and senior leadership team.
- Monitoring of Collective Worship is part of the overall monitoring and evaluation schedule of the school. The evaluation of Collective Worship is shared termly through governor reports and meetings with key members of staff.
- Governors visit the school regularly, sharing in celebrations and Masses with the pupils and staff.
- Leaders are very visible as leaders of Collective Worship and are excellent role models for staff and pupils.
- Leaders know how to plan and deliver quality Collective Worship that all pupils can access. Staff are excellent role models and guide and support pupils during Collective Worship.
- Collective Worship has a clear message and purpose. Themes for Masses and assemblies reflect the liturgical calendar to ensure pupils have a good understanding of the liturgical year, seasons and feasts.
- Leaders offer staff the opportunity to receive liturgical formation and the planning of Collective Worship. This is generally provided through support and coaching by senior leaders.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	124374
Local authority	Staffordshire
This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	208
Appropriate authority	Governing Body
Chair	Noel Gallagher
Headteacher	Karl Babarczy
Telephone number	01902 297820
Website address	www.st-christophers.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@stchristophersprimary.org
Date of previous inspection	4 th –5 th March 2014

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- St Christopher's Catholic Primary School is a one form entry Catholic primary school. It serves the parish of St Christopher and St Thomas of Canterbury, Codsall.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 58%.
- The percentage of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds is well below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is in line with national expectations
- Since the last inspection there have been a number of significant changes. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed and Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship are led by a team comprising of headteacher, deputy headteacher and part-time Religious Education Subject leader. A new parish priest was appointed in 2015.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Mary Daniels and Denis Cody.
- 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 seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. All 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 the governors which included the chair of governors, headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader and parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass and undertook a learning walk to look at Collective Worship across the school, aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors 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.