



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST HUBERT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wolverhampton Road, Oldbury, West Midlands, B68 0LP

Inspection dates 24th-25th June 2014
Reporting Inspector Paul Nutt

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5-11 years
Number on roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Mrs Sarah Thompson
Telephone number	0121 422 2629
E-mail address	headteacher@st-huberts.sandwell.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	April 2009
DFE School number	333/3402
Unique Reference Number	103999

Headteacher Mrs Clare McNally

Previous inspection	2
This inspection	1

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 4 full RE lessons, 3 with the headteacher, 1 with her and her deputy. 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, who is also RE co-ordinator, and deputy headteacher, the parish priest, and the chair of governors. He attended a whole-school assembly, 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 and RE development plans, teachers' planning, assessment and progress records and the school's records of lesson observations over time.

Information about the school

St Hubert's is an oversubscribed, one-form entry Catholic primary school serving the parish of Our Lady and St Hubert in Warley, Birmingham. A large majority of the pupils come from family backgrounds where one or both parents work in semi-professional or manual occupations. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 91%, with 62% of White British origin. 4.2% of pupils are eligible for free school meals: the numbers with special needs and/or disabilities are in line with national averages. Attainment on entry is within age-related expectations.

Main Finding

In its self-evaluation St Hubert's judges itself to be an outstanding Catholic primary school. The evidence gathered during the inspection fully confirms this judgement, and indicates capacity to raise standards and outcomes still further, especially when the school relocates to a new site and expands to 2 forms of entry in September 2015. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate, presenting a comprehensive picture of integrated processes and outcomes that produce targeted school improvement. The Catholic ethos, Catholic life and collective worship of the school are of a very high order and all pupils contribute to, and benefit significantly from, their time in school. Generous support is given by the parish priest and governors, notably in collective worship, sacramental preparation and wider pastoral involvements. Religious education is very well led by the headteacher, who encourages collaboration from a team of committed and mainly experienced teaching and support staff. Teaching is secure and well-planned, and observations during the inspection confirmed the school's internal records over time, indicating that all teaching is at least good, with outstanding elements. Clear internal procedures for planning, marking and development are applied consistently with very positive results for learning and progress. The RE curriculum is balanced and engaging so that pupils enjoy their learning and make real progress at every stage. Leadership is very positive in all areas. The senior leadership team gives clear strategic guidance and leads by example. The school is well supported by its governors, who have close links to the school, a very clear understanding of priorities and high expectations, with a commitment that extends into the parish community.

School self evaluation

The school's evaluation of its Catholic life, collective worship and religious education is rigorous and accurate. It is an outstanding school, with many strengths and no causes for concern. The school self-evaluation document is extremely well presented, with a precision

of evaluation, though with a surprising number of areas suggested for improvement. On closer inspection, however, these focuses already form part of the school's thorough processes of self-evaluation; internal best practice keeps them under regular review. The inspection visit confirmed the school's internal judgements and revealed outstanding capacity for improvement, for which the structures and processes are already in place. There are systematic processes in place for monitoring and evaluating religious education and Catholic life, with a strong emphasis on collaboration; for example in RE, in addition to learning walks and lesson observations by senior staff and governors, all staff are involved in work scrutiny and moderation. Input from all stakeholders, including pupils, governors and parents, is sought, through questionnaires, surveys, minuted meetings and pupil interviews; the outcomes are recorded and subsequently evaluated, shared with staff, during briefings, key stage meetings and whole staff meetings, and included in school self-improvement planning procedures. The head and parish priest meet weekly, whenever possible, to review Catholic life and collective worship, and there is a weekly newsletter which supports the school's processes.

Self-evaluation in religious education is reliable as it is planned, thoroughly carried out, and discussed by school leadership. The headteacher presents all outcomes to full governors' meetings. This informs target setting and produces an action plan, which is reviewed and evaluated annually. There is an agreed monitoring cycle, which links to the cycle of staff meetings and helps to shape focuses for staff professional development. Lesson observations and book scrutiny are undertaken by the head and her deputy, with outcomes recorded and fed back to individual teachers. All staff are involved in moderation of pupils' work, producing recommendations for in-house training, moderation and assessment that support levelling and shared understanding. Books are marked regularly, but formative feedback and exemplification to enhance pupils' progress are not consistent across the school and a recommendation for improvement. The school is collaborating with 3 other Catholic schools towards the creation of a MAC, and this produces benefits in both religious education and Catholic life, as indeed does the school's regular attendance at diocesan events and consideration of recommended procedures. Leadership, including governors on occasion, undertake learning walks, and sound communication at all levels contributes to the improvement cycle. This allows monitoring of school practice, inside and outside the classroom. Records were available during the inspection, along with outcomes from formal lesson observations and meetings, providing a further thorough and consistent contribution to the secure internal processes.

The headteacher reports termly to governors on RE and Catholic life; they are thus able to hold her to account and oversee the production of documentation towards continuing school improvement. Annual audits, feedback from parental questionnaires, pupil surveys and others from the school council, are shared with governors and staff, and again inform improvement planning. Engagement with charities and outside agencies is regular and generous, and children are sensitive to the suffering and needs of others, locally, nationally, and internationally. Year 6 exit surveys give powerful evidence of what pupils have learnt from their life at St Hubert's.

Collective worship is monitored informally by the headteacher, the parish priest and governors, who plan and discuss the school's programme of assemblies and Masses. Collective worship and Catholic life form part of each headteacher's report to governors. There are good links between the school and parish and pupils contribute regularly to Masses at the church. The school assesses attainment in RE to be outstanding. There is much evidence to confirm this judgement. Baseline records indicate that nearly all pupils enter the school with little knowledge and understanding of RE or the Catholic faith; however, accelerated progress is evident across both key stages, delivered through relevant teaching and learning opportunities and closely targeted support from a strong

team of classroom assistants. Attainment data indicates that outcomes in RE are close to literacy before the end of Key Stage 1, and are broadly comparable by Year 6. The quality of learning and understanding in RE is of a high order, as indicated in lesson observations, pupils' exercise books, the range of evidence available, and in discussions with school council, who speak positively of their lessons and teachers, and who clearly benefit greatly from all aspects RE and Catholic life. This judgement was shown to apply to all groups within the school. The school has an internally-developed programme of termly citizenship topics, which is extremely effective in enhancing the whole school curriculum, especially the area of Spiritual, Moral and Vocational development. Year staff are encouraged to tailor the themes to their curriculum, and outcomes are celebrated in school.

Leadership and management are a strength of the school and justifiably judged outstanding. The headteacher and her deputy have a clear vision of the nature of Catholic education, the importance of continuing to raise standards and the promotion of individual faith development for pupils and staff. Strong and committed leadership is evident at all levels within the school. As indicated earlier, there are effective procedures in place for monitoring and evaluating both Catholic life and religious education, leading to focused planning for school improvement. Staff meetings afford opportunities for discussion and targeted professional development. The governing body plays a significant role in challenging and supporting school leaders and staff. Individual governors visit the school when commitments allow, and the chair has been involved in learning walks and lesson observations. They have close personal links to the school; monitor and evaluate its work; receive and discuss termly reports from the headteacher; oversee the production of documentation; maintain active involvement in school improvement.

Internal evaluation of teaching and learning, together with records of internal observations over time, is secure in its judgements. The head and deputy have a clear understanding of current practice in school. Assessments in RE are structured, books regularly marked, and effective use is made of this information for planning. Learning outcomes are good. There are target sheets in exercise books, though these are not used as consistently as is ideal; formative assessment and feedback, especially in exercise books, despite examples of good practice, need to be applied with greater regularity and exemplification to enable all pupils to maximise their progress. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and use a wide range of strategies, including open questions, IT, music and prayer. Greater use of scripture and source materials would enhance standards even more. The school is aware of these areas for continuing development.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Outcomes and provision for pupils are outstanding. Baseline evidence indicates that most pupils enter the school with very low levels of knowledge and understanding, but that progress is rapid and sustained and, by the end of Year 6, almost all children have achieved, or are working within, Level 4. Learning and progress are outstanding throughout the school and for all groups. Lessons are well planned and incorporate a wide variety of approaches that interest and engage the pupils. These include music, drama, role play, art and dance, with a consciously planned balance between learning about and learning from religion. All classrooms are well resourced and have excellent displays which are relevant and colourful, with celebrations of pupils' work and prayer corners. The headteacher, as RE co-ordinator, attends training offered by the diocese and meetings of local Catholic schools, which ensures that colleagues are conversant with current trends and new initiatives.

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.

Teaching is secure and well planned, with all lessons at least good, often with outstanding elements. Assessments in RE are well structured, with a common school focus evaluated three times a year, and effective use is made of this information for planning. Teachers and support staff demonstrate very good subject knowledge, and lesson observations indicate that teachers use a range of learning opportunities, questioning techniques and clear differentiation; books are marked regularly. As a result, pupils participate enthusiastically in RE lessons, where relationships, as around the school more generally, are positive, empathetic and consistently appropriate. The use of prayer and reflection contributes significantly to this. Pupils speak confidently about the positive impact on them; they enjoy school and feel safe and valued.

Catholic life is identified as outstanding in the school. There is a clear ethos, all pervasive throughout, and showing an evident commitment from all – staff, pupils, and governors. The school motto is central to its life, and there are artefacts, statues and displays prominent, with links to the liturgical life of the Church. Pupils participate actively in the many aspects of Catholic life, for example engagement in prayer life and leading the multi-faith evening for families and community. They enjoy opportunities to discuss matters of faith, and gain greatly from studying other faiths, visiting places of worship, and the school's retreat programme. They show great moral awareness and an active wish for justice for all, as shown in their whole-hearted involvement in charitable activities, and engagement with the vocational implications in their own lives. The contributions of the parish priest are hugely significant in the Catholic life of the school, but also in sacramental preparation, collective worship, prayer life and aspects of the curriculum. Whole school Mass is celebrated fortnightly and there are regular whole school assemblies and hymn practices, where all pupils engage fully. There is considerable pupil involvement in the faith life and worship of St Hubert's, notably in preparing and leading Masses and assemblies, but also in support for a range of charities, at home and internationally. All pupils benefit greatly from all these opportunities and demonstrate high degrees of behaviour and interpersonal relationships at all levels. The prayer life of the school is outstanding, with prayer featuring significantly throughout the school day. The purposes and development of prayer are taught progressively year by year, and all pupils are encouraged to compose their own prayers for particular occasions. The recently introduced prayer bags are helping to develop links between school and home, and pupils are very active in the school's several buddying schemes.

Leadership and management are a strength of the school. The three members of the senior team operate a collaborative model of management, which consolidates and strengthens processes for self-evaluation and school improvement. There are a clear vision and a sense of purpose and direction shared at all levels throughout the staff and governing body, whose enthusiasm and close knowledge of the school bring support and challenge. Communication is very strong and includes families and the parish community through meetings, letters, newsletters and questionnaires. There is a keenness to consider suggestions and initiatives with the continual aim of improving provision and outcomes for all pupils.

Recommendations

- Develop greater consistency in formative assessment/feedback, especially in exercise books, to identify attainment and progress and to support future learning
- Sustain and develop a multi-faith/multi-ethnic dimension to the wider curriculum to link with citizenship themes, vocation and charitable works.



June 2014

Diocesan Education Service,
Don Bosco House,
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Coleshill,
B46 3EA

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Hubert's Catholic Primary School, 24th-25th June 2014

I am writing this letter to share with you the findings of the diocesan inspection of your children's school. Diocesan inspection now explores in detail the school's own view of itself as expressed in its self-evaluation. For this reason, much of the report is more technical than used to be the case. You are still entitled to have a copy of the full report should you want one and it will be available on the school website or by request from the school office.

St Hubert's is an outstanding Catholic school whose Catholic life and collective worship are especially to be celebrated. The leadership of the headteacher and her deputy is excellent, giving clear strategic guidance to all the staff. The school is well supported in this by its governors, who have a very clear understanding of priorities and high expectations, and by the parish. The pupils speak with enthusiasm about the school, enjoy their learning and feel safe and happy. When they first arrive at the school many children have limited religious knowledge but they make excellent progress and, by the time they leave, they have achieved very good standards. They are developing a secure knowledge of Christ's teaching and understand the basic tenets of the Catholic faith. They know and can talk about a number of Bible stories and miracles, and have a good understanding of the importance of personal and traditional prayers. Teaching is good and often has outstanding qualities. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, and use a wide range of strategies, including good questioning techniques, IT, music, and prayer. Pupils participate actively in the many aspects of Catholic life, for example engagement in prayer life and leading the multi-faith evening for families and community. They enjoy opportunities to discuss matters of faith, and gain greatly from studying other faiths, visiting places of worship, and the school's retreat programme.

There are no major issues resulting from this inspection. However, I have suggested that, in order to further its outstanding work, the school could continue to develop and refine its processes for assessing children's work, and extend learning opportunities in the wider curriculum.

It was a pleasure and a privilege to spend time in your school and see how well your children are doing. I was made really welcome by everyone, and was very impressed by the collaboration and mutual support between the school and the wider community to ensure that all the children live happy and enjoyable lives.

Yours sincerely
Paul Nutt
Diocesan Inspector