



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL CARTERTON, OXFORDSHIRE (Part of The Dominic Barberi Multi-Academy)

Inspection dates 19th - 20th March 2014
Reporting Inspector Mrs Brenda Beale

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	98
Appropriate authority	The Board of Directors
Chair of Academy Committee	Mrs Pauline McCormack-White
School address	Lawnton Ave Carterton Oxfordshire OX18 3 JY
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Date of previous inspection	October 2010
DFE School number	931/3556
Unique Reference Number	139532
Headteacher	Mrs Breda Bowles

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 3 full RE lessons, one 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. She held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, and parish priest. She observed whole school Mass, a whole school assembly, class meditations 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. She looked at a range of evidence related to the school's self-evaluation such as RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning walks. Alongside the validation of school self-evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about teaching and learning, evidence which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Joseph's is a smaller than average diverse Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Joseph's Carterton and the surrounding villages and which is now part of The Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company. There are 98 pupils on roll 56% are baptised Catholics. It is situated close to RAF Brize Norton and has significant numbers of RAF pupils (around 35%) as well as 9% Gypsy Romany Traveller (Irish heritage) and 11% pupils with EAL (predominantly Polish). Cohorts are small, especially at Key Stage 2, and mobility rates are high. Numbers eligible for free school meals are low but this masks a range of complex social and emotional needs relating to the school's profile. The highly mobile RAF population leads to not only high pupil turnover but also high turnover of academic committee representatives.

Main Finding

School self-evaluation maintains that since its last inspection St Joseph's has made considerable improvement in its Catholic life and RE. This assessment is reliably based on monitoring of the Catholic life though the school needs to keep fuller records of their monitoring. Self-evaluation states that all areas of its Catholic life and RE are at least good with some aspects of how the pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and respond and participate in the school's collective worship to be outstanding. These also are wholly reliable judgements. Since its last inspection the school has developed and continues to develop processes to evaluate both its Catholic life and RE which involve pupils, parents, the parish priest, staff and academy committee representatives. Over recent years the school has developed a positive culture of inclusion and involvement of all staff in supporting planning for the development and improvement of Catholic life and RE. The school has a good capacity to improve under the current leadership and the active involvement of the chair of the academy committee and parish priest.

School self-evaluation

All aspects of RE are monitored and evaluated with care. Attainment and progress in RE of all groups of children is thoroughly assessed using a range of processes. Performance data shows that pupils perform in line with expected levels at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2. Monitoring of RE planning, pupils' work and of lesson activities indicate correctly that standards are good and in line with those found in other curriculum areas. Increased accuracy of information and improved quality of planning for progress across the school and through improved teacher use and understanding of RE assessment grids and level descriptors has led to improvement. Book scrutinies are carried out but more attention

needs to be paid to the level of opportunity provided for extended writing in RE. An excellent aspect of the monitoring of both RE and Catholic life are the learning walks and lesson observations undertaken by the school council 'inspectors'. On their last inspection their brief was to look at four aspects: RE wall displays and prayer, the pupils' understanding of vocation, RE lessons and how children know they are part of a Catholic school. The outcomes of these 'inspections' have led to an improvement the quality of a prayer area in one class and the need to develop the children's understanding of vocation.

School self-evaluation rightly judges the way children contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life to be good and in many aspects to be outstanding. Self-evaluation of this area tends to be descriptive and although senior leaders, chair of governors and the parish priest carry out learning walks and are highly reflective about the Catholic life the school, they would benefit from further formal process being put in place with outcomes recorded more fully. The provision of collective worship is carefully planned and pupils are offered many opportunities for a variety of worship. Self-evaluation reliably judges this provision to be good and the way in which pupils' respond to and participate in collective worship to be outstanding as worship is monitored for its quality. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in collective worship and towards prayer have been a focus and high priority for the school. Behaviour during prayer and collective worship is always carefully monitored by all members of staff and is regularly evaluated the senior leadership team. It is currently monitoring and evaluating the impact that the introduction of meditation is having on the prayer life of the school through regular feedback from teachers and pupils interviews and questionnaires.

While the school's self-evaluation provides an accurate descriptive analysis of the Catholic life it does not give much attention to the monitoring and evaluation processes which underpin it. However, it is evident that formal procedures are being developed and are already proving effective. Learning walks by senior leadership, chair of governors, parish priest and members of the school council which involved discussions with pupils have identified areas of development that would move the school from good to outstanding. For instance the development of pupils' understanding of vocation was recognised as focus for improvement and was subsequently fed into the RE action plan. The school needs to define more clearly Catholic life and RE in its development plans. A successful initiative has been the introduction of Year of Faith 4kidz which has been developed after thorough monitoring and evaluation of the Year of Faith. This involved seeking pupil opinion and inviting pupils to discuss what they wanted from a Year of Faith 4kidz and for them to be part of the whole planning process. Plans show that the school is building on the success of this venture and further involving children in planning ahead for multi-faith learning opportunities across the school linked to the school's enrichment programme. Provision of collective worship is carefully planned for the school and liturgical year. It is monitored by senior leaders and governors, including the parish priest, through formal discussion and reflection and accurately judged to good, though there are no written records of these discussions in place to match the meticulous planning.

Building upon the advice of a diocesan advisor a range of thorough processes are in place to monitor and evaluate the provision of RE and its impact on pupils' learning. Planning is scrutinised and the diocesan scheme of work tailored to ensure good coverage across the mixed age range classes. RE is led by a highly experienced leader and closely supported by the headteacher. Since September 2013, the RE leader has shared the role with a second member of staff to provide capacity for CPD and for succession planning. Teaching is judged to be good. This is an accurate judgement, but to move it from good to outstanding the school intend to take advantage of its membership of the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company and observe best practice in other schools in the company. Lessons are observed with attention paid to pupil learning, learning walks and book scrutinies all inform the RE leaders and senior leadership of standards in provision and

attainment. Greater attention should be paid to the opportunities given and quantity of extended writing found in RE books. Information about the Catholic life and RE are fed effectively to the academy representatives through the headteacher's report and further enriched frequent visits to the school by the parish priest and chair of the academic committee and their discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders and RE leaders.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Performance data shows that in RE the pupils at St Joseph's School perform in line with national expected levels at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2. Monitoring of RE planning, pupils' work, and of lesson activities indicate that achievement is good and in line with that in other curriculum areas. The introduction of meditation has had a good response from the pupils and impacted positively on their learning in RE. SEN monitoring and tracking indicates progress is good and acceleration in key skills impacts favourably on learning in RE; EAL pupils also make good progress. Baseline assessment information indicates that children enter school with a very wide range of knowledge and experience of religious practice; some with considerable knowledge and some with none. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have reached expected levels.

School and church act as a cohesive Catholic community with many diverse links supporting local, national and global issues. Pupils contribute to the ethos of the school through their interactions in class and in the playground, showing empathy and support for individuals in need, care for injured/upset peers and for the environment. Pupils display compassion and understanding when resolving differences and conflicts; they quickly show appreciation of the need for honesty and forgiveness in their relationships; they articulate clearly their understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of the example set for us by Christ. Outstanding gains in pupil behaviour have been made since the last inspection. A current focus for the school is the development of pupils' understanding of vocation. Year 5/6 have evaluated the 'Year of Faith' and enjoyed the activities so much that they have built upon it by doing another 'Year of Faith4kidz' and shared their ideas with the rest of the school

Pupils lead in school Masses as readers, writing bidding prayers, bringing offerings, altar servers and actively taking part in Mass. They lead all assemblies with their own spontaneous prayers as well as leading in the 'Open the Book' collective worship weekly. Pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm to take part fully in liturgical year events that follow the life of Christ and the birth of the early church in school are evident and affecting. Prayer life of the school in class, in assemblies, in Masses, including spontaneous opportunities to share needs and to praise and celebrate good news is valued and enjoyed by the whole community. Pupils find and use prayers for daily worship and write up their prayers for the weekly newsletters. The introduction of meditation has had a powerful positive impact on pupils' prayer life and learning.

There is enthusiastic, serious and genuine drive towards high levels of achievement in RE and high standards in Catholic life by all leaders. There is varied and appropriate provision for spiritual and moral development in all curriculum areas. Leaders have a clear view of strengths and areas for development. They have established very positive working relationships with colleagues, giving appropriate support/training to non-Catholic colleagues. There are active links with the parish priest in promotion of the church community life and mission and celebrations.

Formal monitoring of plans, lesson observations, work trawls, informal observations by all

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 staff, academy committee representatives and the diocesan consultant indicate that standards of learning and teaching are good. Increased use and understanding of RE attainment level descriptors by all staff to track progress has led to improved focus upon developing religious literacy and more evidence of pupils' attainment and progress.

Assessment for learning strategies are used effectively at all levels, including peer and self-assessment to review learning, which in turn supports planning for next steps. Children know how well they are progressing owing to focused learning objectives and success criteria are routinely shared and children are clear about what they need to do to succeed.

Activities are carefully planned in line with the diocesan curriculum strategy framework throughout the year and are linked with celebrations from other major world faiths through enrichment opportunities and a multicultural week. Sex and relationship education contributes to pupils' personal development and, as they learn about God's love for them, the children learn how to love and respect themselves and others. The school follows the diocesan programme which reflects the Church's teaching on sexuality and the dignity of life. Pupils learn about self-respect and the respect for each other that underpins all relationships.

The provision of collective worship is very good and the involvement of pupils in its planning and delivery is excellent. Pupils report that they enjoy quiet, prayerful times in school and initiate prayers of thanks and consolation whenever they feel the need. The pupils across the school are provided with an opportunity to take time to reflect on their thoughts. Following an INSET day, meditation was introduced into the children in class and as a whole school activity. This has increased teachers' confidence in providing opportunities to encourage pupils to experience silent prayer. The whole school community enjoys a rich and abundant prayer and worship life. The school is particularly proud that it provides pupils with opportunities to develop their own techniques of thoughtful prayer and reflection. A further strength of the school is the confidence it engenders within the pupils enabling them to question aspects of the faith in the context of good subject knowledge throughout the school. The pupils can talk about all aspects of the Faith with confidence.

This is a school that has worked hard to improve in all areas including RE and Catholic life. It has the capacity to improve still further, to move from good to outstanding.

Recommendations

- Ensure that monitoring and evaluation of Catholic and collective worship are carefully recorded.
- In order to improve teaching and learning from good to outstanding the staff should be given the opportunity to observe and experience best practice in other settings within the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company.



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March 2014

Dear Parents and Carers

**Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Carterton
19th-20th March 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.

The school is a good Catholic school. The school's own judgement that it is good is reliable because:

- Your children flourish in the school's secure and happy Christian environment; this is reflected in their excellent behaviour and respect for others.
- Children make good progress in RE because teaching is predominantly good.
- The children's response to the collective worship, which they help to provide, is outstanding.
- RE and the Catholic life is very effectively led by the headteacher, senior leadership team, the subject leaders and governors. They are assisted in their work by a unified committed staff.
- Children make good progress and achieve because they are well taught and enjoy their learning in RE.
- The introduction of meditation has impacted very positively on pupils' spiritual life and learning in RE
- Pupils' contribution to and benefits from the Catholic life of the school are outstanding.

We have recommended that the school develops further processes for the monitoring and evaluation of its Catholic life. We would also like the school to raise teaching from good to outstanding by observing outstanding practice in other schools in the Dominic Barberi Multi Academy Company

Throughout the inspection the children were welcoming, extremely well behaved, and able to share their knowledge confidently. They are proud of their school. We thank you for the part you play, whatever your own faith may be, in supporting the Catholic life of St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Brenda Beale
Diocesan Inspector