



June 2014

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

Mrs Sue Tomkys
St Joseph's Catholic Primary School
Headley Way
Headington
Oxford
OX3 7SX

Dear Mrs Tomkys,

Section 48 Monitoring inspection: 18th June 2014

Thank you for the welcome you, your staff and pupils gave to me when I inspected your school on 18th June and for the information you provided both before and during the inspection. I am grateful for the time given by all including the parish priest governor in speaking with me.

The inspection was a "light touch" monitoring inspection because your school was judged at the last section 48 inspection to be an outstanding school and because it is now five years or more since you last received a diocesan inspection.

The purpose of the inspection was to assess the quality of the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning for Catholic life and religious education. In order to make this judgement I read school documents, including a summative self-evaluation, interviewed senior leaders, a governor representative, the subject leader for RE, and pupils, observed three part lessons, and looked at a sample of pupils' written work. In addition, I gathered evidence of some of the outstanding practice in the school as part of a diocesan wide survey of good practice in Catholic life and religious education.

Catholic Life

The way provision for and outcomes from the Catholic life of St Joseph's school is monitored and evaluated, is judged by school self evaluation to be outstanding. Evidence obtained during the inspection confirms that these judgements are reliable and fully justified. The school has successfully established a comprehensive range of processes in order to monitor and evaluate its Catholic life and RE provision. These systems are thorough, well organised and effective in providing a broad base of formal and informal opportunities for seeking the views of pupils, staff, parents and governors, the outcomes of which inform future planning. It is evident, that this cycle of self evaluation is an embedded culture within the school that is shared and consistently applied to ensure accurate quality assurance.

The spiritual direction of the school, that strives to provide the best possible outcomes for all pupils by living out its Catholic mission, underpins the high quality of its Catholic life and outstanding Catholic ethos. The governors are fully involved in all aspects of school life and make a very valuable contribution to the school self evaluation process. In addition to regular visits in order to share religious celebrations, assemblies and school events, they support the school staff and leadership and encourage all they do while at the same time offering challenge as critical friends to ensure that the Catholic ethos is at the centre of the school life. The parish priests support the school well, have a thorough knowledge of its Catholic life and are effective as key partners in planning its continuing development.

The governors' Catholic ethos sub-committee is highly effective in this role and has a significant involvement in monitoring and evaluating Catholic life. The bi-annual school Catholic ethos review day is an excellent example of the innovative and collaborative way governors and leaders encourage all stakeholders to combine with a shared vision to promote and develop the religious life and faith of the school. The Catholic ethos committee has reviewed the school mission statement and this formed the focus for discussion at a recent Catholic ethos day. Outcomes from these discussions form the basis of a current action plan that includes areas for development relating to: the prayer life of the school in a variety of ways, pupils' views in relation to celebration assemblies and opportunities



for more outreach work in the community. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are clearly defined for each area of focus together with measurable and specific success criteria.

The outcomes of a variety of pupil voice strategies such as questionnaires, pupil forum and school council, indicates how immensely proud they are of the school, how valued they feel, and how greatly they benefit from the Gospel values, promoted so effectively by the school. The opportunity for pupils to contribute to the mission statement has empowered them in a very positive manner which is reflected in their mature attitudes and awareness of others. Living out the school mission is rigorously monitored on a daily basis by staff, who recognise it as the responsibility of all to ensure pupils live up to the high expectations made of them.

There are a variety of opportunities for pupils to participate in daily collective worship which they are actively involved in planning and leading. Pupils confidently share their own written and spontaneous prayers with reverence and sincerity. As a result of Catholic partnership staff training the school is currently trialling daily meditation to which the children display a positive response. The provision of and pupil response to collective worship is monitored and evaluated by the RE subject leader and all staff, formally and informally through observation, review and pupil voice.

All staff have an annual performance review focus relating to Catholic life. In view of evidence to confirm the way Catholic life is monitored and evaluated by processes that are shared and consistently applied by all, outcomes for pupils are excellent and remain an outstanding strength of the school.

Religious Education

Self evaluation is accurate and reliable in its judgement that pupil progress and attainment in RE is outstanding, a judgement based upon a variety of pupil tracking data derived from assessments that are monitored and analysed by the subject leader. This process is part of a well structured programme that forms an effective cycle of monitoring, analysis and challenge. Crucially, outcomes are shared and appropriately actioned. Those areas deemed in need of change or review are linked to a school RE improvement plan, which is a very useful 'work in progress' development strategy involving staff, leaders and governors. For example; data analysis indicated that the level of progress for children making up their own prayers was not fully developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage. After discussion and review, this is being successfully addressed by including a variety of additional prayer activities, some using the outdoor prayer areas around the school. In the same way, outcomes of a recent book scrutiny showed that consistency in the quality of pupils' work and feedback marking given by staff needed to be more focused. Outcomes from school self evaluation judge the systems used for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning to determine the input of the school's work in RE, to be effective. They are based upon areas of focus that are discussed and agreed with governors, in relation to the overall RE action plan.

RE is monitored throughout the year by the RE co-ordinator and headteacher in line with the monitoring cycle of other key areas of learning. Within this cycle, the quality of teaching and learning is monitored through scrutiny of lesson planning, RE lesson observations and the quality and content of pupils' work. Careful records are kept and lesson feedback is shared in a professional and constructive manner. Monitoring records show a consistent pattern of good and outstanding teaching over time. The governors monitor RE provision through an effective and fruitful partnership which the RE link governors have established with the school, in addition to discussions with the headteacher and RE co-ordinator, who report outcomes of monitoring and evaluation to the governors' pupil and curriculum committee.

St Joseph's School has established high quality and effective processes for monitoring and evaluating its Catholic life and religious education. It represents a consistent momentum of continuous improvement that has an outstanding impact on the outcomes for its pupils and reflects the commitment, drive and vision of its leadership.

Yours sincerely

D G Collins
Diocesan Inspector