



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hill Top, Hednesford, Cannock, WS12 1DE

Inspection date 26th – 27th June 2017
Reporting Inspector Evelyn Harper

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	232
Appropriate authority	The Governing Body
Chair of Governors	Jackie Woollaston
Telephone number	01543 227225
E-mail address	office@st-josephs-hednesford.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 th – 25 th May 2012
DFE School Number	860/3461
Unique Reference Number	124354

Headteacher Karen Bennett

Previous inspection: Good

This inspection: Good

DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by one Diocesan Inspector.
- The focus of the inspection was on the quality, leadership, and impact of the school's provision of Catholic life, collective worship, and religious education (RE).
- The inspector observed teaching across 6 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic life, worship, and the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with three governors, the headteacher, the lay chaplain, a parent and a telephone conversation with the interim parish priest.
- The inspector attended a whole school assembly, a Key Stage two assembly, a lunchtime liturgy group and an early years foundation stage (EYFS) liturgy to which parents were invited. In addition a learning walk was undertaken to look at aspects of learning and teaching in RE, the presentation of the Catholic life of the school and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents including the school's self-evaluation, data about pupils' attainment and progress, RAISEonline, the development plan, teachers' planning, and learning journals.

Information about the school

- St Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school that serves the parish of Our Lady of Lourdes in Hednesford, Cannock.
- The number of Catholic pupils is currently 53%.
- The number of minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The number of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with national expectations.
- Since the last inspection the previous RE subject leader, who was the deputy headteacher has been promoted to headship. The headteacher has taken over responsibility for the RE subject lead for the last two years.

Main Findings

- The Catholic life of St Joseph's is good with several outstanding features.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher shows an inspiring vision and total commitment to the development of the Catholic life, collective worship and religious education within the school.
- The school's environment is excellent. It is a reflective and aesthetically pleasing environment that promotes Catholic values and beliefs.
- The school is firm in its commitment to the Catholic mission of the school "*To inspire, to learn, to love with God*". The pupils know what their mission statement stands for and can explain how they live it out in their daily lives.
- The pupils are confident in articulating what it means to be part of a Catholic school. They recognise the enriching, inclusive community in which they learn, and are internalising its values. This is evident in their excellent behaviour and respectful care for one another, and their practical concern for others in need.

- The pupils' response to collective worship is outstanding and shows an uninhibited enthusiasm to plan, deliver and take part in all aspects of worship by even the youngest members of the school community.
- The school has effective self-evaluation processes and systems which present an accurate analysis of what the school is doing well and what they need to do to improve further.
- The teaching of RE is good with some elements of outstanding.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Catholic life, collective worship and spiritual, moral and vocational development: provision and outcomes

- Catholic life is good with many outstanding features.
- The school has a welcoming and engaging environment. The headteacher, governors and other leaders have worked unstintingly to ensure that the Catholicity of the school is at the heart of their environment. The school's mission statement, which is prominently displayed around the school, is central in the life of all stakeholders.
- Senior leaders provide governors with formal and informal reports on the Catholic life and collective worship of the school; the accuracy is monitored by governors as they are involved in learning walks and RE book monitoring sessions.
- The Catholic Schools' Pupil Profile has been extensively promoted in the school and has been developed in line with diocesan expectations through assemblies, lessons and displays. Pupils of all ages can clearly articulate the meanings of the values and virtues included in the profile and know how they should live them out in their lives. During the whole school assembly pupils were encouraged to reflect upon how the shared gospel taught them to live out their faith virtues: Faith filled and Hopeful.
- Acts of worship experienced during the inspection showed an outstanding level of engagement of pupils, who demonstrated respect and integrity when discussing other faiths, religions and beliefs, and ways of prayer. Even the youngest pupils, during a collective worship opportunity in a reception class, were able to offer spontaneous prayers. They could then explain to the younger nursery children how prayer helped them.
- Pupils understand that they are called to serve and that their support of a variety of charities and their acts of kindness are a demonstration of this. Pupils in Key Stage 2 readily take on responsibilities and know that they have a calling or vocation in life which is specific to them. This strong understanding of vocation in Key Stage 2 should now be developed in the early years and Key Stage 1.
- The behaviour of the pupils throughout the school is consistently good. There is a strong sense of respect between pupils, and between pupils and adults. The pupils behave well because they care for one another. All adults are excellent role models.
- Supported by the school chaplain, the pupils have taken on responsibilities for collective worship which goes beyond that of normal classroom routine. During the inspection a lunchtime liturgy group gathered to share spontaneous prayer. This was led entirely by the children and the prayerful response was outstanding.
- Pupils from other faith backgrounds are at ease with the prayer life of the school because they feel their own faith is valued and appreciated by others. One parent was very keen to share her first experience of Catholic education and worship. She had moved her two children to St Joseph's from a non-Catholic school and was overwhelmingly positive about the impact the faith of the school, and parish, had on her whole family's life.

- The interim parish priest speaks highly of the involvement of school families during weekend worship. The school's participation in the May procession reflects their strong and active commitment to parish life. This is greatly appreciated by the parish priest.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- Leadership of Catholic life and collective worship is securely good. The school demonstrates a determination to effectively reflect upon what makes the distinctive nature of the school and how that reveals itself in the daily lives of the pupils.
- The headteacher and school governors have a clear understanding of their role in the leadership of the Catholic life of the school. They have high expectations; they are fully committed to ensuring that the pupils' experience of Catholic life is rich and meaningful and that it helps each child to know and live out their lives according to the teachings of Jesus.
- The school works closely in the Cannock Chase Catholic Collaboration, which is made up of one high school and five primaries, to share good practice, moderate activities and further develop closer links within the local community as well as across the diocese.
- Leadership has a keen understanding and commitment to the further development of all staff both professionally and personally. The headteacher has worked in collaboration with other Catholic schools to develop a programme to support newly qualified teachers and staff who are new to teaching in Catholic schools. The impact of this training can be seen in the work of these teachers through both observations and in learning outcomes. The lay chaplain is also providing excellent training opportunities for planning liturgies with the whole school body.
- The school lay chaplain provides strong links with the parish community and takes advantage of all opportunities to support and appropriately extend the school in terms of knowledge, skills and understanding of the faith. At the time of the inspection she was working with the pupils and staff across several Catholic schools to plan their end of year Mass. This enabled the children to join together in celebration of their time at Catholic schools and made meaningful links between them before they move on to high school.
- Good whole school leadership has ensured that pupils are very sure of the distinctive mission for their school. All pupils, from the very young in EYFS to the oldest in Key Stage two, were able to articulate their school's mission statement and say what it means for their school.
- All staff, governors, pupils and many parents, demonstrate a high regard for the Catholic life of the school.
- The governors are well informed through the headteacher's/ RE leader's report; they have high regard for her leadership skills and speak from an informed viewpoint due to their strong presence in the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- Evidence seen during the inspection validates the school judgment that religious education at St Joseph's School is securely good with some elements of outstanding.
- The headteacher, as RE lead, is committed and dedicated to her role. She is constantly raising standards through her use of effective systems of assessment and moderation, which are fed back to staff, other leaders and governors on a routine basis.
- School leadership has conducted a range of monitoring activities relating to provision and outcomes and the analysis provides an effective basis for the diagnosis of the school's strengths and areas for development. The impact of this can be seen in the work the subject leader has done in developing feedback through marking. This now needs to be further developed to enable pupils to have adequate time to make a thoughtful response.
- Tracking of pupil performance is embedded and trends and cohort data is readily available for analysis by the RE lead and other senior leaders. Data for vulnerable groups, SEND and English as an additional language (EAL) is also collected and analysed. This then leads to targetted support from adults.
- Collection of performance data is embedded and begins with an annual scrutiny of the baseline assessment in early years. This enables the school to review provision in line with the growing needs of the pupils as they enter school with sometimes limited knowledge of religious artefacts or prayers. Standards observed during the inspection show that these very young pupils make at least good progress and many outstanding in the early years.
- Teachers have an excellent subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about how they can inspire and motivate pupils in their lessons. Less experienced staff and non-Catholic staff feel happy and confident that they are well supported and are able to gain advice and help from more experienced members of staff. Induction of new staff takes advantage of the diocesan courses as well as school based learning.
- RE is clearly seen by senior leaders as a core subject and evidence seen during lessons, showed that expectations of staff were in line with other core subjects. Pupils are productive during lessons and use a variety of ways of recording and applying their skills.
- The recent review and subsequent developments of the RE curriculum show a whole school dedication to providing high quality experiences for all pupils. This ensures outcomes for most groups are at least at the expected level with many pupils achieving more. Data over time shows that pupils make at least good progress with many making outstanding progress from their low starting points. Expectations for the SEND group however should be higher both in presentation standards and in the learning outcomes.
- The school chaplain makes a strong contribution to the delivery and development of the curriculum, and adds strength and depth to the evaluation of the outcomes for pupils. She sets an outstanding role model for staff to follow.
- Religious education is monitored in line with other subjects and there are regular and planned lesson observations, drop-ins and work scrutiny. Outcomes are reviewed and discussed with senior leadership so that professional development within school can be planned to accommodate individuals and groups of staff.
- Education about equality and diversity is a strong component of the curriculum and children respond positively to their learning about other faiths, religions and cultures during an annual focus week. The school has gone to great lengths to

make links with schools who have a more diverse intake so that pupils have opportunities to work with children from different faiths and beliefs.

- Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and are able to relate previous learning to new and extension tasks. Observations and interviews show pupils are keen to learn, are able to work collaboratively or independently, and when opportunities are given, enjoy debating and discussing key messages within their lessons.
- Marking and feedback in RE books is in line with other core subjects and pupils know how to make improvements to their work. Teachers regularly provide challenging questions in their RE books. This feedback, when responded to encourages deeper learning and asks pupils how they will apply this learning to their own behaviours. However, pupils do not always respond to teacher's thoughtful questioning and therefore, opportunities for challenge are sometimes missed.
- Support staff provide high quality input and are skilled and well deployed to support pupils' learning. They demonstrate good subject knowledge and sometimes staff use questioning skills that extend learning and clarify misconceptions.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- Further develop the understanding of vocation in EYFS and Key Stage 1 so that pupils are able to articulate their understanding of who God calls them to be.
- Have high expectations for less academically able pupils so that their work is presented to the same high standards as all other groups.
- Give time for pupils to respond to teacher's thoughtful questioning through marking so that opportunities to respond to challenge are not missed.