



Archdiocese of Birmingham

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MODWEN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL BURTON ON TRENT

Inspection dates 26th – 27th February 2013
Reporting Inspector Edward Byrne

Inspection carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Type of School	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11 years
Number on roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governors	Prof. Paul Bowen
School address	Belvoir Road Burton On Trent
Telephone number	01283 239050
E-mail address	office@st-modwens.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19-29 February 2008
DFE School number	860/3420
Unique Reference Number	124326

Headteacher Mrs Amanda Newbold

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 four full RE lessons, one with the headteacher and one with the subject leader. 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 chair of governors, staff, and parish priest. He observed a Stations of the Cross prayer service, two assemblies 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 development plan, teachers' planning, and action plans. Alongside the validation of school self evaluation, the inspector gathered evidence about collective worship which will be shared with other diocesan schools.

Information about the school

St Modwen's is an average size Catholic primary school serving the parish of St Mary and St Modwen's in Burton on Trent. The school is currently situated in Horninglow, and is in a relatively low socio-economic area of town. The school has been invited to grow in numbers by Staffordshire County Council, and a new school is currently being built, ready for occupation in February 2014. The number of Catholic pupils is currently 76%. The proportion of ethnic minority pupils is 46% and increasing steadily. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average as are the numbers with special needs and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry is slightly below the national average overall.

Main Finding

In its self-evaluation St Modwen's judges its overall effectiveness as outstanding. The school's judgements about its effectiveness, and judgements about collective worship and Catholic life of the school, are securely reliable. Since the last inspection the school has undergone a period of significant change in senior leadership, but has since been stabilised by the appointment of a new headteacher in September 2011 and a very recent appointment of a new deputy headteacher. The school has maintained its excellent standards in Religious education and enhanced them further by clear strategic direction of the headteacher and subject leader, and the high commitment, expectations and support of the parish priest and governors.

School self evaluation

The self-evaluation of RE at St Modwen's is very clear, thorough and robust. Evidence provided by the school is checked and scrutinised by Governors. Content of the self-evaluation is accurate; however some of the judgements appear to have been cautious. The school has a clear insight into the provision it makes. The overall effectiveness judgement that it is an outstanding Catholic school is justified in that by the time pupils leave St Modwen's, they have experienced high quality religious education and can articulate their faith in many ways.

The clear direction of the headteacher, expectations of the governing body and an exemplar subject leader all contribute in determining the excellent outcomes for

pupils. The self-evaluation rightly acknowledges what the school is doing well but is also reflective in its drive to challenge and improve. Clear strategic direction and targets for the Catholic life of the school naturally lead to consistently high expectations and standards.

The parish priest has a strong presence in school and is rigorous in his involvement of monitoring and evaluation. The liturgy group meets each term surrounding provision in the school. They include the headteacher, subject leader, link governors, and staff members who are also parishioners; one member feeds back to the full governing body. Within the group, they evaluate the outcomes of the school's self-evaluation, offer challenge to the senior leadership team and ensure that all can be readily evidenced. This focus and continual drive for school improvement is a key element in the success of the provision.

The relationship between self-evaluation and improvement planning is very strong. All improvements identified and acted upon by the school have been shared with the governing body. Relationships between the school and governors are strong, as communication is very effective. The school development plan has a very strong focus in raising standards and improving performance across the school. This plan is central to the school's continual improvement and is known by all within the school community.

The school judges the leadership of religious education to be good. The subject leader, leads by example. She is a witness to the faith in every aspect and delivers outstanding teaching. She has supported staff in their own delivery to improve outcomes, which demonstrate impact. Alongside the headteacher, very clear aims have been set to improve provision and standards and these are monitored and evaluated regularly, notably during the termly liturgy group meetings.

The quality of teaching is judged to be good by self-evaluation. This is accurate and reliable; however there is some outstanding provision. Where children experience accelerated learning in lessons they can articulate messages from scripture, relate them to examples of worship and also to modern day living. From very low starting points children make very good progress. Attainment is tracked closely in each year group, termly, and analysis is carried out on pupils who appear to be not making the same rate of progress as others, thus informing future actions. The evaluation of teaching and learning is judged to be good. Evidence is collated and analysed through book trawls, pupil interviews, lesson observations, effective feedback which in turn informs action planning which is at the heart of the drive to continually improve standards.

Overall effectiveness of the school¹

Pupils leave St Modwen's equipped with excellent foundations, knowledge and a love of their faith. Children throughout the school speak of their understanding of the faith, Jesus' message to us through the Gospel and how we try to be more like him.

Pupils' attainment in RE on entry to the school is limited. Detailed tracking procedures demonstrate that they make good progress. By the time they reach Key Stage 2 the large majority of pupils are making good progress and some are making exceptional progress. The tracking of pupil progress identified slower rates of

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.

progress for boys, in line with their SEN data. However, this does not significantly impact over time.

The quality of teaching is good overall, with some outstanding lessons. Pupils experience challenge and high expectations within their lessons. They have opportunities to reflect and consider messages found in the Gospels, and to develop their independence in learning. One pupil was able to compare a message found in a gospel story to a direct link to a response said during Mass. Younger pupils were able to identify that, like Zacchaeus, we can try to change during Lent. Pupils experience a variety of activities within their RE lessons that enable them to demonstrate effectively their learning outcomes. They clearly enjoy RE lessons, learning and sharing knowledge of the faith and speaking freely about understanding it well. Pupils experience a rich and creative curriculum in supporting all aspects of their spiritual, moral and vocational development. Older pupils have the opportunity to experience residential visits to the Catholic youth retreat centres of Alton Castle and The Briars.

The contribution of pupils to the Catholic life of the school and collective worship and the extent to which they benefit from them are excellent. In discussions with pupils, they can articulate their understanding of vocation of 'doing something special for God'. Pupils are very clear on their mission, to lead, and to be apostles. This was evidenced by talking about their roles in supporting Foundation children at mass and observing them during assemblies. One pupil added, *'by setting a good example, the younger children will naturally follow, and they will pass on this knowledge when they are older, following the chain of goodness'*. Pupils' behaviour in school is exemplary. They set excellent standards throughout the school as 'prayer buddies' for younger children during acts of collective worship, supporting their learning of the responses during Mass.

There is a very strong 'natural' integration of the school and parish. Weekly Mass is celebrated in the school, alongside members of the parish and governors. The parish priest is a regular visitor to school, not just in a pastoral role but also as a spiritual leader of the community of the school, and is steadfast and resilient in the high expectations he promotes. Governance is highly effective through the very strong parish links within the school. The Year of Faith receives a high prominence in school and four days have been designated for professional development of staff.

Leadership of RE is very good. A very strong vision permeates the school, driven by the headteacher and subject leader. The Catholic ethos is very prominent, displayed throughout the school, and staff and pupils immerse themselves within this. Staff fully understand that the Catholic ethos of the school reinforces the Word of God in the daily rigours. Innovative strategies by the RE subject leader have created clear, directional aims which allow progression for the children to deepen the knowledge of their faith through the liturgical seasons. This was evident by each class promoting a simple 'theme', clearly displayed and known by the children, as they explored each unit from the diocesan strategy. There are robust strategies of planning, evaluation and review with regard to the provision.

Collective worship at St Modwen's was observed in the form of a Stations of the Cross liturgy, and two key stage assemblies. The assemblies were based on the *Wednesday Word* which the subject leader delivers each week based on the forthcoming Gospel. The children are provided with challenge, questioned and encouraged to explore the word, once they have discovered it. The 'word' is then displayed around school, discussed in lessons and is 'alive' for the week. The word

is then heard throughout the school, through the week, promoted in lessons and at the weekly Mass.

The Gospel is very much alive at St Modwen's. The children have regular opportunities to meet Christ through the excellent provision the community provides.

Recommendations

Monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of collective worship more formally.



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March 2013

Dear Parents and Carers

Section 48 (Diocesan) Inspection of St Modwen's Catholic Primary School, Burton on Trent, February 2013

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 judged its overall effectiveness in its Catholic life and collective worship to be outstanding. The inspection found this judgement to be justified. The school ensures that the Gospel is alive, heard repeatedly, and central to its life. The Catholic ethos is readily apparent in all the school offers. Pupils enjoy their time and experiences at school, and enjoy learning about the faith and the messages it gives. The majority of pupils achieve well whilst some achieve exceptionally. The quality of teaching in RE is good, with some outstanding provision. Many opportunities are provided for the pupils to lead, organise and participate actively in worship. All forms of collective worship are a strength of the school. Leaders and managers are deeply committed to the Church's mission, and a source of inspiration within the community.

St Modwen's is an excellent Catholic school. We have recommended that for the school to improve even further, that opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of collective worship more formally would enable the school to confidently judge the quality of provision being offered.

I was warmly welcomed during the two day inspection visit, by the school community. I met many pupils and discussed their thoughts of their school with them. They were all polite, well mannered and very welcoming. Their standards of behaviour were impeccable as was their attitude to school '*where everyone cares about you*' and their expressions of enjoyment in RE. They are a real credit to the school, and to you, their families. I was lifted by the children, in their worship, their prayer, their work and their play. I was privileged in inspecting your school and thoroughly enjoyed my short time at St Modwen's.

I understand the children will move to a 'new' building very soon, exciting times are ahead, so I wish you and the school community every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Edward Byrne
Diocesan Inspector