



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection

THE FABER CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Part of the PAINSLEY CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Cotton Lane, Cotton, Staffordshire, ST10 3DN

Inspection date	3 rd & 4 th April 2017
Reporting Inspector	Mr Dominic Collins
Assistant Inspector	Mr Malcolm Tipping

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	70
Appropriate authority	Board of Directors
Chair of Governors	Mr John Pennington
Telephone number	01538 702324
E-mail address	office@faber.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	December 2011
DFE School Number	860 3300
Unique Reference Number	138722
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Green
Previous inspection:	2
This inspection:	2



Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors.
- 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 inspectors observed teaching across 4 RE lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors 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 the chief executive of the Multi Academy Company (MAC), the chair of governors, RE link governor, headteacher/RE subject leader and parish priest.
- The inspectors attended a whole school Mass, a 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.
- The inspectors 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

- The Faber is a smaller than average sized rural Catholic primary school serving the parish of St John's in Alton, Staffordshire.
- The school is part of the Painsley Catholic Academy, a Multi Academy Company (MAC) which also includes Painsley Catholic College, Cheadle.
- The chair of the board of governors is a national leader of governance, the chief executive is a national leader of education.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 45%.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from a minority ethnic heritage is well below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is broadly in line with national expectations.
- The Faber School has undergone significant change since the last inspection. The current headteacher was appointed in September 2015 and two new members of teaching staff have also recently joined the school.
- The school has achieved a number of nationally accredited awards including, Leading Parent Partnership, Dyslexia Friendly – full status, Primary Science Quality Mark and Rights Respecting Schools Award.

Main Findings

- The school leadership, staff and governors share a vision to provide the best possible Catholic education for all pupils.
- The Faber School has a strong Catholic identity and places the spiritual and moral development of all pupils as the highest priority.
- The Faber is a fully inclusive Catholic school where pupils make a very positive contribution to its outstanding Catholic life and benefit greatly from it.

- The school is successful in the practice of self-evaluation because it is directly centred on sharing outcomes of monitoring and evaluation and agreeing appropriate action to address areas identified for inclusion in the school development plan.
- The extremely effective whole school approach to responding to the individual needs of the pupils, characterises the commitment of the school to addressing the principles of its mission.
- Strong, directional leadership and well planned effective teaching in RE ensures pupils make sustained progress in this subject.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

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

- The Catholic life of The Faber School is outstanding.
- The Faber is a welcoming and inclusive Catholic school, where the excellent Catholic ethos is reflected in the happiness of pupils, the united vision of all staff and governors, and the respect that all stakeholders show to each other.
- All pupils are valued and fully integrated into the vibrant school community. Their contribution to and benefit from the Catholic life is very positive. As a consequence, pupils thrive here and are able to develop and practise their faith as maturing Christians.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they are able to articulate its distinctive mission. During conversations with them, they spoke about the school with affection 'it's fun... we are like a big family... we have lots of friends.' They like their teachers and know staff care about them. The evidence of their positive attitudes, relationships and immense pride in their school demonstrates a clear understanding of its value and meaning.
- An outstanding strength of The Faber School is the shared vision of all staff, brought about by their enthusiasm, professional trust and mutual support. They know the pupils well, are excellent role models for them and by example demonstrate a strong commitment to the Catholic ethos of the school.
- All staff recognise their responsibility to monitor and guide pupils throughout the day in accordance with Gospel values, thus ensuring that pupils aspire to the high expectations made of them.
- Senior leaders effectively manage the use of the unique school building to provide a stimulating and purposeful learning environment.
- There is a culture of mutual respect that underpins the excellent relationships throughout the school. The school places high priority on reconciliation and forgiveness when appraising pupil responses to Catholic life.
- Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities the school provides for their personal and moral development. Consequently, they are able to eagerly express their Catholic identity.
- Older pupils are able to accept responsibilities with confidence, pride and maturity. They respond positively to roles such as: playground buddies; mentors to younger pupils and membership of the excellent Mini Vinnies group.
- The school pupil council is a very effective group which meets regularly with staff and projects the views of others. They contribute well to the evaluation of Catholic

life. Suggestions made by them are carefully considered by staff and governors and actioned where appropriate.

- The continual empowerment of pupils by staff in all areas of school life is a strength of the school.
- Pupils are able to relate their own daily lives to the way Jesus lived and articulate their views thoughtfully, with a confident maturity. It is evident, through their general demeanour, that they are mindful of the effect their actions have on others. Behaviour of pupils is exemplary.
- The school strongly promotes the notion of vocation. Pupils understand that God is calling them to use their gifts to live out their personal vocation. As part of pupils' appreciation of vocation in their faith journey, they are invited to reflect on their own vocation through participating in the annual parish Vocation Day and a school day of prayer for vocations.
- Pupils are guided to recognise that by aspiring to understand fully and practise the Catholic virtues, they are fulfilling the message of the Gospel values.
- Interesting and informative religious areas and displays of pupils' work are prominently featured all around the school. Classroom environments are bright and attractive. Each has a distinctive prayer focus which creates a positive atmosphere for praying and learning together.
- Chaplaincy provision for the school is exemplary. The parish priest, who is also the link governor for RE, has formed an effective liaison in supporting and promoting the Catholic life of the school. He makes regular visits and works closely with all the staff as a key partner in planning sacramental preparation and supporting the delivery of the Diocesan RE programme. This support is much valued and appreciated by all.
- Pupils eagerly engage in the question and answer sessions that the parish priest conducts with them. This is an extremely effective strategy for deepening their understanding of the Gospel values. It also enables the link governor for RE to evaluate the impact of the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- The school benefits from the excellent provision of a lay chaplain, who has established the Mini Vinnies group, retreat activities, the Rainbows programme, support for various charity events and provides valuable input to collective worship. Following the success of her work with The Faber School, she now supports other schools in the MAC.
- The combined work of chaplaincy support forms a powerful combination and has a very significant effect on the quality of Catholic life at The Faber School.
- Collective worship is outstanding. Prayer and worship underpins the Catholic life of the school.
- Collective worship is given a high priority in the continuing development of the spiritual direction of the school.
- Pupils are exposed to a variety of worship styles. In addition to traditional prayers and reflection, they are encouraged to compose their own petitions and spontaneous prayers. Sensory and symbolic forms of prayer are used very effectively.
- Pupils' response to collective worship is very positive. They participate with a genuine enthusiasm and are eager to express their thoughts when sharing prayer intentions publicly.

- In order to support and encourage pupils, staff ensure that times of prayer are conducted in a calm, reflective atmosphere. Pupils are further engaged by their growing involvement in preparing and leading whole school and class collective worship. The pupils particularly enjoy singing their school hymn which reflects the school mission values.
- Celebration of the Eucharist is given the highest priority. Mass celebrated in school during the inspection was an uplifting experience, reflected by the reverent participation of the pupils who served, read and sang joyfully. Pupils are involved in evaluating collective worship and they are invited to reflect on their participation in the Mass.
- Pupils enjoy celebrating a variety of religious feasts and seasons throughout the liturgical year and have an excellent understanding of their importance. When questioned, pupils eagerly explained why preparations during Advent and Lent are centred on spiritual nourishment through prayer, worship and reflection.
- In order to deepen pupils' understanding of the importance of prayer, they are able to attend retreats arranged at Alton Castle during Lent and as part of the sacramental programme.
- Each child is presented with a Bible and 'prayer bags' are available to support family prayer at home.
- Through encouragement and support pupils are now becoming more confident in preparing and leading collective worship. The school plans to develop these skills further.
- Testimony to the pupils' enjoyment of prayer and worship, is the voluntary participation of Key Stage 2 pupils in the work of the Mini Vinnies group, who meet regularly with the lay chaplain.
- Under the direction of the headteacher, the school has developed effective strategic planning for the Catholic life of the school; in conjunction with the high quality support of the chaplaincy and the enthusiasm of staff, this has resulted in collective worship being an outstanding strength of the school.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership of Catholic life and Collective Worship

- The leadership of Catholic life and collective worship of the school is outstanding.
- The school's leadership is deeply committed to the Church's mission in education. They share a strong commitment to the Catholicity of the school and places the spiritual and moral development of the pupils as their highest priority.
- Governors know the school well, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and are dedicated in supporting the school to be successful in its mission.
- The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and sets high standards and expectations for all members of the school community. She is supported by her very able assistant headteacher and a dedicated staff team. In union with the governing body, they are passionate about providing the very best Catholic education for all pupils and are constantly seeking ways to improve provision.

- Central to all areas of Catholic life at The Faber School is the guidance given through its mission, which is shared, practised and understood by the school community and serves as a reference for self-evaluation and quality assurance.
- A pupils' version of the school's mission is shared in the form of a song; the deputy head boy and head girl, spontaneously and enthusiastically, sang this to the inspectors during a learning walk around the school.
- New staff benefit from a comprehensive induction and receive excellent support from the school leadership, thus ensuring a thorough understanding and application of evaluation processes.
- The accuracy of school self-evaluation provides an essential foundation to support its drive towards continuous improvement.
- As a consequence of establishing a systematic approach to self-evaluation, rooted in a thorough knowledge and awareness of the school as a whole, the leadership is able to successfully promote its Catholic life.
- The school has developed a variety of formal and informal processes to determine the quality of its Catholic life that include: audits, learning walks and focused observations, conducted by the headteacher, staff, parish priest and link governor.
- The contribution pupils make to the evaluation process through school council representations, questionnaires, surveys and discussions, are valued and encouraged. Their eager and perceptive responses enable the school leadership to evaluate the extent pupils benefit from and participate in the Catholic life and mission of the school.
- Outcomes of monitoring are also shared with staff and subsequent evaluations form the basis of a comprehensive development plan that is broken down into specific focus areas that are regularly reviewed and updated.
- Governors are kept fully informed of all monitoring and evaluation outcomes, through their visits to school and analysis of detailed reports from the mission and strategy and the standards and provision committees.
- Directors are fully involved in monitoring the progress of focus areas outlined in the school development plan. The headteacher also presents an annual report for directors.
- The school's accurate self-evaluation ensures that governors and senior leaders are clearly aware of the school's strengths and areas for development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Leadership, outcomes from and provision for religious education

- The provision of religious education at The Faber School is good. Although the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is low, pupils make consistently good progress in religious education throughout the school.
- Pupils' tracking and assessment data, demonstrate that pupils' knowledge and understanding of RE is in line with diocesan expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2 evidence shows a significant rise in attainment from baseline data.
- Widening the monitoring of achievement to include Catholic and non-Catholic pupils would enable the school to identify any gaps in attainment or progress for these key groups of learners.

- A continuous cycle of practical and effective range of systems are used by the school leadership for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in order to determine the impact of RE provision. These include monitoring of lesson planning, RE lesson observations and evaluating the quality and content of pupils' work. Evaluation of monitoring informs the school development plan and this has resulted in improved outcomes for pupils in RE.
- Collaboration by staff is strong and they are closely supported by the RE subject leader and school chaplaincy. As a result of the high quality support they receive, both Catholic and non-Catholic members of staff are confident in their subject expertise and they are able to plan and deliver interesting and well balanced lessons to engage the pupils fully.
- Accurate self-evaluation of RE teaching has influenced the deployment of classroom support staff. This has had a significant impact on the quality of learning for individuals and groups of pupils, who now benefit from a programme of targeted and effective support.
- Monitoring outcomes show that the quality of teaching in RE is at least good with some outstanding teaching observed during the inspection.
- Each lesson is characterised by succinct developmental planning based on pupils' prior learning, clear learning objectives and well matched activities to engage all learners.
- Pupils clearly enjoy their RE lessons and like to be challenged. They have developed good attitudes to learning. They respond enthusiastically to: well differentiated tasks; teacher questioning, and opportunities to collaborate and engage in discussions, where they offer their opinions and consider those of others.
- Where outstanding teaching was observed, role play was used effectively in order to crystallise pupils' thoughts and their understanding of the learning objectives.
- Most pupils are good independent writers and the evidence of their work in RE books, which they declare as 'the most important', reveal good coverage of the Diocesan Strategy.
- Teachers' feedback in pupils' books provides excellent guidance on how to improve work further. Pupils' respond positively to these comments.
- Evidence of inspection outcomes confirm the accuracy of school self-evaluation. The clear directional guidance of the school leadership, committed enthusiastic staff and supportive challenging governors, form a powerful combination with a shared vision to drive the teaching and learning of RE.
- The school successfully creates opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of other faiths through a comprehensive programme that is followed across each key stage.
- A review of the moderation of RE in relation to other core subjects, and its inclusion in MAC wide moderation, would also ensure a uniform approach to evaluating pupil outcomes.

Recommendations

In order to improve the school should:

- The school should widen their analysis of monitoring achievement to ensure it includes significant key groups such as Catholic and non-Catholic pupils.
- Review the moderation of RE to :
 - Ensure it is comparable to that of other core subjects.
 - Include some moderation within the MAC into the school's monitoring cycle.
- Broaden pupils' skills for preparing and leading collective worship.