



# Archdiocese of Birmingham

## INSPECTION REPORT

### CORPUS CHRISTI CATHOLIC PRIMARY ACADEMY

### Part of the Pope John XXIII Multi-Academy Company

Ashmore Avenue, Ashmore Park, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, WV11 2LT

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Inspection dates 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> October 2015  
Reporting Inspector Denis Cody

Diocesan Inspection carried out with the framework used for s48 inspections

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Type of School	Academy
Age range of pupils	3-11 years
Number on roll	210
Appropriate authority	The Board of Directors
Chair of Academy Committee	Dr Rob Grinsted
Telephone number	01902 866840
E-mail address	lhg@corpuschristiacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	October 2010
DFE School Number	336 3310
Unique Reference Number	104379

**Headteacher Mrs Lynnette Holden-Gough**

Previous inspection: 2  
This inspection: 2

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DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE



**MAKING CHRIST KNOWN TODAY**

## Evidence

- The inspection was carried out by 2 Diocesan Inspectors.
- 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 inspectors observed three RE lessons with the headteacher.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held a discussion with pupils to evaluate the impact of teaching on their learning over time.
- Meetings were held with the chair of the academy committee, parish priest, the principal and RE co-ordinator.
- The inspectors observed a prayer service and school Mass 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.
- Other documents such as RAISEonline, the development plan, RE action plan and teachers' planning were read alongside the self-evaluation.

## Information about the school

- Corpus Christi is an average size Catholic primary school in the parish of Corpus Christi in Wednesfield, Wolverhampton.
- It is part of the Pope John XXIII Multi-Academy Company formed in March 2015 by 1 secondary school and 3 primary schools.
- The school serves an area which includes pockets of great social deprivation.
- Currently 32 % of pupils are baptised Catholics.
- 18% of pupils are of ethnic minority origin, a figure below average.
- The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average, while the number with special needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below the national average overall.
- Since May 2015 Mrs Holden-Gough has been executive principal of both Corpus Christi and Holy Rosary schools.

## Main Findings

- Provision for Catholic life, collective worship and religious education at Corpus Christi School is good. This is in line with the school's own judgements which are reliable because they are based on accurate self-evaluation.
- In terms of RE, formal and informal structures for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning promote improvement and identify areas for development.
- Planning for Catholic life and RE is given a high priority within the school, but would benefit from a sharper focus on prioritising current initiatives.
- Leadership of the school at all levels is strong and fully committed to promoting the Catholic nature of the school. Therefore there is very good capacity for continued improvement in all aspects of RE and Catholic life.

## School self-evaluation

### Catholic Life and Collective Worship

- The principal and RE co-ordinator provide strong leadership of Catholic life in the school and have a good knowledge of its strengths and areas for development, grounded in accurate self-evaluation.
- An 'ethos and spirituality' priority focusing on aspects of Catholic life is included in the annual school improvement plan. Progress with this priority is monitored by school leaders throughout the year and reviewed at the end of the year.
- The action plan for Catholic life and RE included in the school improvement plan does not sufficiently prioritise current issues and is not clearly linked to prior review. The RE co-ordinator and senior leadership team regularly monitor and evaluate aspects of the Catholic life of the school, for example through observations during assemblies and in classrooms. This leads to new initiatives such as the introduction of collective worship planning sheets to build on and promote good practice, and recognition of the need to provide more opportunities for children to plan and lead collective worship.
- School leaders are actively examining the opportunities provided by Corpus Christi's new status within a MAC to support the development of both Catholic life and RE. For instance a working party of pupils from all four schools has been included in a project to develop a programme of collective worship across the MAC. Similarly a strategic plan is being prepared to preserve and further develop the Catholic life and spirituality of each school and to deepen the faith journeys of all the pupils. These initiatives are still at an early stage so their impact is not yet evident.
- School staff complete an annual ethos questionnaire which reviews the provision and impact of Catholic life in the school and contributes to future planning
- A section on Catholic life is included in the principal's termly report to the academy committee, and both she and the RE co-ordinator regularly report to the committee on issues and developments concerning the Catholic life of the school.
- The parish priest, who is also the RE link governor, and other academy committee members regularly visit school and play an active part, both formally and informally, in planning preparing and reviewing school worship.
- Parent feedback on the quality and effectiveness of Catholic life in the school is obtained through annual questionnaires and informal interviews.

### Governance

- The academy committee has a strong commitment to the school and its members understand the importance of their role in its governance.
- They set great value by its Catholic ethos and work in partnership with the school leadership team to promote and enhance it. At the same time they are confident in holding school leaders to account for their leadership of RE and Catholic life.
- Committee members are well-informed about the Catholic life of the school and play a full part in school improvement planning.

- At termly academy committee meetings the principal reports on Catholic life and RE, and on progress towards achieving school improvement plan priorities.
- Some members of the committee, including the chair, are regular visitors and volunteers in the school and so are very familiar with its Catholic life and how it is reflected in the behaviour, attitudes and relationships of staff and pupils.
- Together with school leaders the committee members are involved in discussing and formulating the RE self-evaluation document and determining its judgements.
- In his role of link governor, the parish priest liaises with the principal and RE co-ordinator in formal and informal planning and reviewing of the school's Catholic life and organised worship.

## Religious Education

- Judgements about the quality and impact of teaching in RE are supported by an extensive programme of lesson observations, learning walks and book trawls. Each is followed by feedback, recommendations and the sharing of good practice, and where appropriate is used to inform future planning and staff training. The school's judgements were validated during the inspection.
- RE is well led by the subject co-ordinator who maintains an overview of the quality of teaching by monitoring lesson planning and supporting colleagues, including newly qualified and non-Catholic staff.
- The senior leadership team regularly monitors books and planning to ensure teaching is challenging and appropriate to the needs of learners.
- Pupil interviews provide evidence about attitudes towards RE and the quality of their learning and understanding.
- By attending local cluster group meetings and reporting back to staff the co-ordinator ensures the school keeps abreast of new diocesan initiatives regarding teaching, assessment and the curriculum. For example, following recent co-ordinator training, the whole school has this term adopted the diocesan initiative on 'Values and Virtues'.
- Academy representatives are kept informed of developments in RE through school visits and reports from the principal and RE co-ordinator.
- Judgements about pupils' learning and attainment are supported by assessments carried out across the school, starting with baseline assessment on entry to Reception class and thereafter assessment in each class at the end of every unit of the scheme of work. The accuracy of teachers' assessments has been tested and strengthened by moderating samples of pupils' work alongside colleagues from other schools both in the deanery and the MAC.
- Teachers and support staff are familiar with pupil attainment data and use it in setting targets and monitoring progress. However the school could make greater use of pupil performance data in its self-assessment, improvement planning and support for individual pupils by analysing it more thoroughly. In addition to individual and class performance, attainment could be monitored for example by key stage, gender and pupil premium entitlement, and the performance of Catholic pupils could be examined.

- RE targets linked to the school improvement plan priorities are included in the performance management arrangements for all staff and progress is monitored throughout the year.
- As part of the evaluation of RE, each term the co-ordinator monitors examples of pupils' work from across the ability range in each year group and the outcomes are shared with the principal.
- Termly pupil progress meetings examine pupil attainment and progress and help identify strategies to offer support where necessary.
- The curriculum is under constant review to ensure that appropriate learning activities are provided to meet the needs of all pupils. This year the school has identified the need to deepen children's thinking skills in RE and to develop their understanding of the skills associated with Attainment Target 2, 'Learning from Religion.'

### **Overall effectiveness of the school<sup>1</sup>**

- Records over recent years follow a consistent pattern. Baseline assessments show that most pupils enter school with very little knowledge or experience of religion, but all children subsequently make at least satisfactory progress, most make good progress and some make exceptional progress in RE.
- Pupils enjoy RE lessons and their learning and progress in RE is in line with learning and progress in other subject areas.
- Teaching in RE is at least good, often outstanding and has been consistently improving over time. Teachers have good subject knowledge in RE, they make good use of ICT and use a cross-curricular approach to engage and motivate pupils.
- Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and assessment techniques such as questioning, detailed feedback during lessons, and peer and self-assessment are used to promote learning. 'Green growth' comments are included in marking, designed to challenge children and move them on in their learning.
- Pupils' work is regularly assessed and attainment and progress recorded in line with diocesan recommendations.
- Ten percent of curriculum time is dedicated to RE and the RE curriculum is based on the Diocesan Strategy for RE, adapted to support pupils in developing higher order skills of reflection and debate.
- The curriculum supports children taking part in the parish sacramental preparation programme led by the parish priest and catechists.
- The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of, and respect for, the beliefs held by people of other faiths and to visit their places of worship.
- For children in Years 5 and 6 there is a programme of family life and sex education which includes input from the school nurse.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

- All members of the school community are involved in the Catholic life of the school throughout the day. The school motto – JOY, reminding everyone that you put Jesus first and Others before Yourself - is widely displayed around the school, featured on the school uniform and is constantly referred to.
- The school's Catholic life is reflected in pupils' ability and willingness both to express their own views and beliefs with confidence and respect those of others.
- Children enjoy helping to prepare and taking part in a variety of acts of worship, in small groups, in their classes or as a whole school. They take part reverently in school and parish Masses as altar servers, readers and singers.
- Pupils are encouraged to understand the importance of prayer in developing their personal relationship with God. In their worship they have opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection, and use both formal and informal prayers. As they move through the school they become more familiar with different forms of prayer and prayer styles and display a growing confidence with each.
- Pupils and their families are encouraged to play an active part in the prayer life of both school and parish.
- The school motto helps to promote spiritual, moral and vocational development through its emphasis on putting the needs of others before our own. In response pupils are keen to assume roles of service and support within the school. Older pupils become buddies, peer mentors or rainbow buddies for younger children.
- The same spirit of service and vocation is evident as the children put their faith into action by enthusiastic support for charitable fundraising in aid of local and national charities.
- Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of right and wrong and understand the need to forgive as well as be forgiven.
- 'British values' are clearly linked with gospel values, promoted in each classroom and taught through the RE curriculum and prayer assemblies. These values are reflected in the positive relationships and attitudes within the school.

### **Recommendations**

- Streamline the RE improvement plan to prioritise current issues and indicate links with previous review and assessments
- Introduce greater analysis of pupil performance data to ensure all key groups achieve well